

December 10, 2013

Hillary Clinton's lack of a position on the Iran deal is proof of her courage deficit according to [Jennifer Rubin](#).

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In refusing to make known her views on this, as on the Syria debacle, she is trying to deprive critics of later criticizing a misstep. But in fact the misstep is having uppermost in her mind only the zeal for public office. She has her own foreign debacles to deal with (e.g, Benghazi, siding with Hugo Chavez's stooge in Honduras and the Russian reset). Add to those her reticence on the most important national security issue in decades and you have a 2016 contender who, like the 2008 Hillary, is more a gender symbol than a leader. Perhaps that is why she is beatable by a charismatic and/or truly accomplished competitor.

[Seth Mandel](#) posts on the faint praise that the Dems damn Hillary with.

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The problem for Clinton is that she has a sympathetic judge in Glasser, who penned a Foreign Policy cover [profile](#) of Clinton last year that was celebratory despite not having much to celebrate. Yet when Glasser asks around the foreign-policy community about Clinton's accomplishments at State, those on the left side of the political isle seem to all bypass the question itself and move right onto why she had no accomplishments. You have to wonder what the answers would be if Clinton weren't presumed to be the next Democratic nominee for president. ...

[Daniel Greenfield](#) posts on all the awards given to H. Clinton. Greenfield goes on a little too long, but it's still fun.

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If Hillary had not accidentally taken what would become a controversial position, while trying to cast a safe vote, all that anyone would remember about her time in the Senate is that she was inducted into the National Women's Hall of Fame for "opening new pathways for women in leadership".

That was quite an accomplishment considering that she was the 32nd female senator. ...

... Hillary is obsessed with winning and certain that she will lose. Everything she has done throughout the years was calculated to make defeat as unlikely as possible... including taking the position of Secretary of State while doing as little as possible in that role. Instead of inspiring people, she has built up a bulletproof resume while taking as few risks as possible. And that insecurity may be her undoing.

For 13 years, Hillary has done little except abuse public office to map out her future presidential

run. By the time the election actually takes place, she will have spent nearly two decades or a third of her adult life focused on running for president.

At the Benghazi hearings, Hillary famously demanded to know what difference it made. The same can be said of her life.

Jennifer Rubin also posts on Hillary's baggage.

Hillary Clinton may be the overwhelming front-runner for the Democratic presidential nomination in 2016, but she's going to have to deal with some knotty problems sooner or later. She can't ignore forever either her party or the media's entreaties to talk on important subjects.

The first problem surely is health care. President Obama won't allow it to be repealed, so the Affordable Care Act will be hanging there, damaged and disliked for Clinton to address. Will she throw it and her former boss overboard, call for a single-payer plan as a sop to the left and risk scaring off the electorate in Nov. 2016?

It's not like the problem is going to go away. According to one poll, a majority of young people think the law will be repealed — next year. You can bet these people won't bother to sign up for a program they consider a goner. Couple that with news reports of scamming and a 10 percent error rate and the incentive for the millions who must sign up to make the scheme work pretty much vanishes. Obamacare threatens to hang over Clinton's campaign like low-hanging fog. Frankly, before long she may be begging Obama to get rid of it so she doesn't have to deal with it. (It won't help that Obamacare closely resembled the health-care plan she ran on in 2008.)

The other problem is her record at the State Department. It is supposed to qualify her for the presidency. Instead it's becoming a burden. ...

The Atlantic has a look at higher education done right.

LaGuardia Community College is a GED machine. At this urban school, near the Long Island Expressway in the New York City borough of Queens, the prep courses for the state's high school equivalency exam aren't just textbook reviews—they are professional-development classes. There is a course for would-be health workers, another for business students, and yet another for anyone interested in technology and engineering.

LaGuardia's free classes, funded by state, city, and foundation grants, have a months-long waiting list. Students willing to pay for courses (at about \$3.50 per hour of instruction) can usually get a spot in the next scheduled class, although those fill up, too. Most students are black or Latino.

Gail Mellow, LaGuardia's president, says postsecondary educators who don't reach out to high school dropouts are ignoring many of the young people who most need their help. In big cities such as New York, almost 40 percent of students who enter high school don't finish. "To really educate the American populace," she says, "we cannot forget people who did not graduate from high school." ...

Right Turn

Hillary's courage deficit

by Jennifer Rubin

Hillary Clinton, former secretary of state and presidential aspirant, has particular expertise and, I would argue, particular responsibility to speak out on the Iran deal. Other presidential contenders may not have the expertise she does, and they certainly have not been privy to the classified information that she has. Nevertheless, she chooses to remain silent, waiting to see how the wind blows.

But wait. That doesn't sound like the smartest woman in the universe who is destined to be the next president. So she is now leaking vague hints about her stance to allies. [Politico reports](#):

Former Secretary of State Hillary Clinton favors giving diplomacy with Iran a chance to work but has lingering worries about the country making good on its pledges in the recent interim deal to freeze its nuclear program, as well as its support of global terrorism and the Bashar Assad regime in Syria, a source familiar with her thinking said.

Clinton has not yet commented publicly on the deal, which was arrived at after talks in Geneva between her successor, Secretary of State John Kerry, and Iranian officials on Saturday evening. And she seems unlikely to jump in with a statement anytime soon.

The double-talk and platitudes don't really tell us much of anything about her views. Pass sanctions? Wait on sanctions? Eliminate all enrichment or let the Iranians continue in violation of six U.N. resolutions? The on-the-one-hand-but-on-the-other routine is almost comical: "She has her eyes wide open, the allies argue, and has a record of muscularity against Iran, pre-dating her time at State, that speaks to it. She also worries about the fact that the deal doesn't address Iran's support of terrorism, a fact that critics of the accord have made note of, and Tehran's involvement in supporting the regime of Bashir [sic] Assad in Syria." So which is it — compromise with the state sponsor of terrorism or not?

There is plenty to be worried about. [Iran's plutonium reactor](#) is unaffected by the interim deal. Iran is free to pursue its [ballistic missile program](#). Aren't these threats to American security? She won't say.

This is the calculated careerism for which she is famous. Timid when the stakes are high (e.g., she was mum on gay marriage until even Ohio Republican Sen. Rob Portman made known his support), she has never been one to carve her own intellectual or political space. She was a dutiful senator with no particular achievement. She was a secretary of state with oodles of frequent flyer miles but no doctrine or accomplishment. Like so many celebrities famous for being famous, she is presidential only by virtue of racking up items to put on her resume and coveting the presidency. Perhaps it is time she earned the presidency through political courage or imaginative policy.

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the 2008 Hillary, is more a gender symbol than a leader. Perhaps that is why she is beatable by a charismatic and/or truly accomplished competitor.

Contentions

[Dems' Harsh Appraisal of Hillary Clinton](#)

by Seth Mandel

Though it's probably not intended this way, Politico Magazine editor Susan Glasser's [verdict](#) on Hillary Clinton's legacy as secretary of state is revealed before readers get to the first sentence. The headline of the piece is, naturally: "Was Hillary Clinton a Good Secretary of State?" But the subheadline gives it away: "And does it matter?" Thus, the article seems to be making excuses for Clinton before even revealing what must be excused.

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Glasser asked Aaron David Miller for his assessment, which was this:

"Hillary was risk-averse; Kerry isn't. He's risk-ready." Of course, Miller argues, 2016 politics "explains partly why she didn't own a single issue of consequence." The other reason is President Obama himself, "the most controlling foreign policy president since Nixon."

Clinton was inconsequential; the real question, to her fellow liberals, concerns who they can blame for this. (Surely not Hillary!) Miller tosses in the obligatory nod to "the Republican obsession with Benghazi," but it only serves to remind readers that Democrats are crassly uninterested in the tragedy over which they presided.

Glasser sums up the Democrats' opinions on Hillary as belonging to one of three groups:

As for the Democrats, Clinton's advocates tend to come in several camps, which can be broadly summed up as The Timing Just Wasn't Right group; the Blame the White Housers; and the Asia Pivot Was a Really Big Deal crowd ("her major accomplishment," the Brookings Institution's Michael O'Hanlon told me, and "too often underappreciated").

Brutal—*those are her "advocates."* The first two speak for themselves; the third is obviously grasping at straws, since the administration's "pivot" to Asia was mostly repairing the damage President Obama's first term did to our Pacific alliances with the occasional painfully obvious declaration about the region that suggests members of the Obama administration have just recently discovered China's existence.

Now, it should be noted that some of the justifications for Clinton's tenure offered by her "advocates" are accurate. Obama really does exercise obsessive control over everything, and

his anti-interventionist inclinations did in fact win out more often than Clinton may have liked. Readers may think those like Miller who blame Obama are taking the easy way out, but other Clinton supporters have him beat: Steve Sestanovich, a former State Department official under Hillary's husband, blames—you guessed it—George Bush. (His logic is that the world existed before the Obama administration—he knows, he was there!—and thus Hillary didn't start the fire, it was always burning since the world's been turning, etc.)

But Anne-Marie Slaughter, now the president of the New America Foundation, can top that. If you're wondering just how incoherent an attempt to praise Clinton as consequential would be, wonder no more:

Her case for Clinton, in fact, is explicitly about politics—and Clinton's willingness to integrate them into the traditionally stodgy, big man-to-big man diplomacy long favored at the State Department (and arguably now being resurrected by Kerry). "Foreign policy has always been the furthest thing from retail politics; she brought them much closer together and institutionalized as much of her approach as possible in the very bones of the State Department. ... Hillary took diplomacy directly to the people in ways that cannot produce a treaty or negotiated agreement, but that are essential to advancing America's interests over the longer term," Slaughter argues. "What she should be remembered for in a 2016 campaign is proving that she could represent the American people day in and day out in the long, hard slog of regular politics, in between the rare shining moments of success. She was and is beloved around the world, as an inspiration, as an example of an America in which a woman could run for president, nearly win her party's primary, lose with grace and then prove that adversaries can work together for the sake of their country."

So there you have it: the case for Hillary isn't much better than the case against her, but it's always someone else's fault anyway. The second half of that assessment is a gift due to her signal that she wants to be the next president. Subtract that, and you've probably got what her "advocates" really think of her. But if Clinton does indeed run for president, her opponents aren't likely to be so kind.

Sultan Knish

[The Inevitable Hillary](#)

by Daniel Greenfield

Hardly a week goes by without Hillary Clinton receiving another award.



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National Defense University Foundation in the Ronald Reagan Building and the Hermandad Award from the Mexican American Leadership Initiative.

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(If you're keeping track, Hillary has come out against malaria, epilepsy and AIDS. No word on her position on shingles—but reportedly she's against it.)

At this rate, if a bunch of elderly left-wing Swedes toss her the Nobel Peace Prize early on, the way they did to Obama, it will barely rate mention among all the other glittering trophies that have been bestowed on a woman whose only actual accomplishment was being married to a crooked governor with good political instincts and sharp elbows.

Hillary Clinton's accomplishments as a lawyer, like her accomplishments as a senator and a secretary of state, don't actually exist. The more awards Hillary gets, the fewer people will wonder about her qualifications. Like the fake doctor with 200 equally fake diplomas on the wall; the award blitz is a pathetic case of overcompensation. The giant pile of awards creates the illusion of qualification for someone who never even won political office on her own merits—let alone did anything worthwhile or interesting while there.

It's been a while since there was an inevitable candidate in American politics four years before an actual presidential election. It's been even longer since there was a candidate so barren of actual accomplishments and so devoid of anything resembling content.

Hillary traipses around the country and the world picking up awards and delivering speeches for six figures a pop; but the only words that come out of her mouth are boring cliches.

Receiving an AIDS award from Elton John's foundation, she announced insightfully, "We still have a long way to go." Strangely enough this is what people who have never had AIDS or

treated AIDS have been saying while receiving AIDS awards since the disease first became a celebrity cause.

At Oceana, Hillary declared, "More and more people appreciate what oceans mean to them." At the University of Buffalo, she expressed the hope that we could "move away from the slash and burn politics, the name calling, the excessive partisanship" and at the Women of the World summit declared that the United States had "come so far, but there is still work to be done."

You might even say... there's a long way to go.

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At the awards ceremony, Hillary coined the wholly original phrase, "I don't think there has ever been a better time to be a woman than in the United States of America in the 21st century."

But Hillary is always being honored as a revolutionary leader for just showing up. If she has something positive to say about the oceans, teaching little girls or fighting AIDS; there's an award in it for her. If Hillary daringly says that reading is good today; tomorrow she wins a Pulitzer. That's how low the Hillary bar has been set.

As Secretary of State, Hillary Clinton traveled a lot. The [National Constitution Center honored her](#) because, in their words, "she traveled to more countries than any other Secretary of State".

Also because she "used social media to engage citizens". It certainly sounds better than honoring her for abusing the State Department to prep for a presidential run with a non-stop world tour while neglecting desperate pleas for help from the Benghazi mission which had been under siege for months.

And that's the best that can be said about a term that wrapped up with that election shakedown that had been her endgame all along, the murder of four Americans and Hillary pounding the table and demanding to know what difference it made. As every foundation, think-tank, university, charity and non-profit that has rushed to cover her in golden medals, orders and awards will tell you... none at all.

But despite the awards, there is very little enthusiasm even among Democrats for President Hillary. Jeffrey Katzenberg, Hollywood's leading liberal, came out for her saying, "I think she's the best candidate currently available for either party." Considering that Hillary is really the only Democrat semi-officially running now, not counting Joe Biden, that's damning with faint praise.

There's a reason that liberals are fantasizing about an Elizabeth Warren run. Warren is even less charismatic, more off-putting and more cliché-prone than Hillary, but you do know what she stands for. "Socialism today, Socialism tomorrow, Socialism forever." Hillary Clinton stands for the same thing; but she has spent decades trying to be discreet about it.

Instead of letting her "You didn't build that" freak flag fly in a safe blue state like Warren did, Hillary Clinton has carefully crafted a completely safe image. That was what undid her candidacy in 2008. Given a choice between a candidate who stood for a whole range of things and one who stood for being president; they chose Obama. Eight years later; no one still has any idea what she stands for.

Hillary's calculated vacuousness smacks of paranoia. At a time when Democrats want some red meat, she tries to be less partisan than Obama. At all her award ceremonies, she speaks in clichés and stays away from anything that anyone could find controversial or memorable. There's no way that she can offend anyone if she spends all her time emitting contentless clichés.

Beneath the bland rhetoric is a paranoid control freak obsessed with controlling and shaping every aspect of her image. Her partner [in this endeavor is Media Matters' David Brock](#); a man whose legendary paranoia rivals her own, who had been hospitalized for a mental breakdown after believing that people were trying to kill him and who allegedly used an illegally armed security team to protect him from "right-wing assassins".



Together Brock and Clinton have already shut down a number of friendly film and television projects about Hillary while Brock peddles "The Benghazi Hoax"; a book that smacks of Hillary Clinton's old obsession with a vast right-wing conspiracy. A Hillary biopic in which the former first lady is played by an actress capable of conveying actual human emotion would do her image a lot more good than Brock's paranoid rantings. But it would appear that Brock's paranoid mindset mirrors her own.

Hillary Clinton has played the long game, moving slowly from one position to another, with her eyes on the White House. But in her calculating chess game, she has neglected the details of the present. Hillary lost in 2008 because she was too busy building an inevitable candidacy to give people an actual reason to vote for her. And now she's making the same mistake all over again.

It's easy to be the inevitable candidate when no one is actually running against you. The hypothetical inevitable candidate is rarely someone that people actually want to vote for. Like Mitt Romney, they seem like the sort of man or woman who is probably going to win because everyone says so. When the race heats up, the inevitable candidate collapses and is left behind.

America hasn't had inevitable presidents in a while. The men who have actually managed to score two terms were absurdly unlikely candidates with obvious flaws whose very prospects were met with ridicule. There was nothing inevitable about Ronald Reagan, a former actor, Bill Clinton, a sleazy draft dodger with infidelity issues, George W. Bush, the son of a one-term president prone to mispronounce important words, and Barack Obama, a political amateur and left-wing radical who defended his racist pastor after the latter was caught screaming "God Damn America" after 9/11.

Hillary Clinton's inevitable status is her weakness. Inevitable candidates don't win elections. Just ask John McCain, an American hero and liberal Republican, and Mitt Romney, a man who was born to play the president on television. Or ask Michael Dukakis, the architect of the Massachusetts Miracle, or John Kerry, a man who was not only born to play the president, but who could run on his Vietnam service during wartime.

There will come a time when the awards will stop, when the empty quotes about how she is running because she cares about girls will run out and when she will actually have to give real answers to difficult questions. And that isn't Hillary's strong suit. It's not that Hillary doesn't have any answers; it's that she's too paranoid and controlling to go past her talking points and say what she really thinks.

As a debater, Hillary is rigidly unimaginative. As a politician, she's vacant. And her charisma doesn't exist. The only way that she can get through her own party's primaries and a national election is by scaring away every potential rival by being the inevitable candidate. And that is what the endless Hillary award season is really about.

Hillary Clinton's awards parade isn't meant to impress the voters; but to scare away any opponents who might think that they can do to her in 2016 what Obama did to her in 2008. At galas and dinners, she dons an armor made out of awards, prizes and trophies to manufacture the consensus that she is an accomplished everything and that this will be her election because her victory is inevitable.



But Hillary doesn't really believe that she is the inevitable candidate. If she believed that, she would be less paranoid and controlling... and more capable of relaxing and being herself; whoever that might be. A Hillary with self-confidence wouldn't need David Brock whispering in her ear and would be able to cut loose problematic figures like Huma Abedin and Sidney Blumenthal whose presence is already harming her premature campaign.

Hillary is obsessed with winning and certain that she will lose. Everything she has done throughout the years was calculated to make defeat as unlikely as possible... including taking the position of Secretary of State while doing as little as possible in that role. Instead of inspiring people, she has built up a bulletproof resume while taking as few risks as possible. And that insecurity may be her undoing.

For 13 years, Hillary has done little except abuse public office to map out her future presidential run. By the time the election actually takes place, she will have spent nearly two decades or a third of her adult life focused on running for president.

At the Benghazi hearings, Hillary famously demanded to know what difference it made. The same can be said of her life.

Right Turn

Worries about Hillary Clinton

by Jennifer Rubin

Hillary Clinton may be the overwhelming front-runner for the Democratic presidential nomination in 2016, but she's going to have to deal with some knotty problems sooner or later. She can't ignore *forever* either her party or the media's entreaties to talk on important subjects.

The first problem surely is health care. President Obama won't allow it to be repealed, so the Affordable Care Act will be hanging there, damaged and disliked for Clinton to address. Will she throw it and her former boss overboard, call for a single-payer plan as a sop to the left and risk scaring off the electorate in Nov. 2016?

It's not like the problem is going to go away. According to one poll, a [majority of young people](#) think the law will be repealed — *next year*. You can bet these people won't bother to sign up for a program they consider a goner. Couple that with news reports of [scamming](#) and a [10 percent error rate](#) and the incentive for the millions who must sign up to make the scheme work pretty much vanishes. Obamacare threatens to hang over Clinton's campaign like low-hanging fog. Frankly, before long *she* may be begging Obama to get rid of it so she doesn't have to deal with it. (It won't help that Obamacare closely resembled the health-care plan she ran on in 2008.)

The other problem is her record at the State Department. It is supposed to qualify her for the presidency. Instead it's becoming a burden. Benghazi, Libya, is back in the news, reminding everyone it was on her watch that the requests for additional security were ignored, the first ambassador since 1979 was killed and a who's-on-first routine of misleading statements showed an administration lacking both honesty and competence. [The Post reported on Friday](#): "U.S. officials say efforts have stalled to capture about a dozen people secretly charged in the 2012 attack on the American compound in Benghazi that claimed the lives of U.S. Ambassador J. Christopher Stevens and three other Americans. . . . So far, none have been brought to trial and the lack of progress in capturing [suspected ringleader of the attack Ahmed Abu] Khattala has frustrated U.S. intelligence officials and lawmakers who want to see him and the others prosecuted. One official said that Khattala continues to operate in eastern Libya with impunity." And we still haven't gotten the perpetrators as she promised we would. How is it that no one is held accountable?

Is her excuse really going to be "*I didn't now. No one told me. It wasn't my fault.*"? At some point, like Obama's Obamacare rollout, she'll likely need to claim incompetence to avoid the impression of mendacity. More so than on Obamacare, foreign policy was her bailiwick. Russian reset, Iran engagement, Libya policy (or lack thereof) and the rest were her responsibility. Wasn't the failure to negotiate an Iraq status of forces agreement her doing? Did she do anything but speechify and go on bended knee to the Russians to deal with the mass atrocities in Syria? If we had acted under her watch our options would have been infinitely better (because jihadists had not yet poured into Syria). The more it looks like she was a pleasant but incompetent secretary of state who left a mess in her wake, the more she may remind voters of the perils of a rotten executive. And if it was all run by the White House, what qualifications would she really bring to the job?

Clinton's problems are one of many reasons why a GOP governor would match up especially well against her. These are people who took charge and accepted responsibility, dealt with

natural disasters and stubborn bureaucracies. (The governors most likely to run are perfectly positioned to say things like, “*You didn’t get the memo pleading for more security in Libya? You must be joking! What kind of shop were you running over there? I always made sure the most important issues got to my desk. It’s executive skills 101.*”)

Don’t get me wrong. Chances are overwhelming she’ll be the nominee. But Democrats might begin to fret that she’ll be a hobbled one, someone (along with Vice President Joe Biden) burdened by a record and hampered in separating from an administration gasping for breath. Maybe that is why Republicans are coming around to the idea that Clinton is the perfect opponent for them to confront in 2016.

The Atlantic

'We Cannot Forget People Who Did Not Graduate From High School'

A community college in New York City offers GED classes tailored to specific careers—with great results.

by Fawn Johnson



J.D. Pooley/AP

Photo

LaGuardia Community College is a GED machine. At this urban school, near the Long Island Expressway in the New York City borough of Queens, the prep courses for the state’s high school equivalency exam aren’t just textbook reviews—they are professional-development classes. There is a course for would-be health workers, another for business students, and yet another for anyone interested in technology and engineering.

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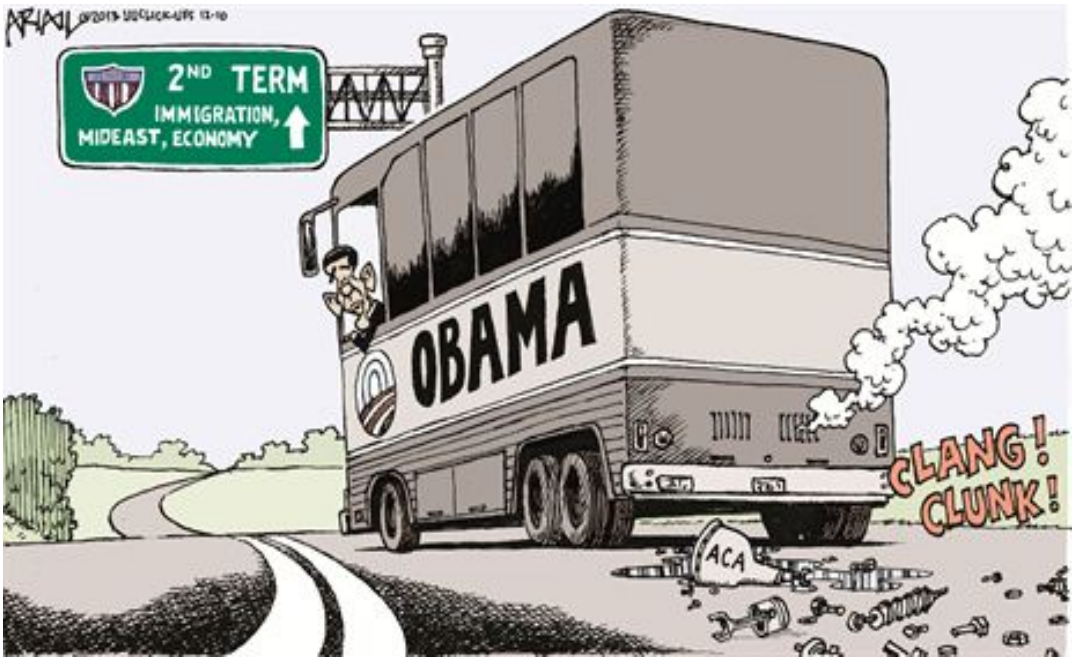
Gail Mellow, LaGuardia's president, says postsecondary educators who don't reach out to high school dropouts are ignoring many of the young people who most need their help. In big cities such as New York, almost 40 percent of students who enter high school don't finish. "To really educate the American populace," she says, "we cannot forget people who did not graduate from high school."

But a General Educational Development certificate alone won't suffice for people who want to make a decent wage. So, three years ago, LaGuardia began tailoring its GED-prep classes toward certain professions. Reading material for aspiring health pros includes a book about three friends trying to become doctors. Math homework for prospective engineers involves interpreting charts and graphs. These professional-development additions to GED classes were intended to create a smooth transition to college classes or more job training. The community college wound up inheriting a lot of its own successful GED students. Seventeen percent of its college students are from the GED program.

Lillian Zepeda was one of them. She dropped out of high school after becoming pregnant with her second child. She decided to go for her GED certificate when she was 20. College courses at LaGuardia followed easily after that. "I hadn't already decided that's what I was going to do, but it was in that [GED] class that I said, 'This is the next step,' " she says. It didn't hurt that LaGuardia applications were waiting for her outside the GED testing facility. She is now enrolled at New York University.

GED classes relevant to a student's desired profession are far more efficient than a textbook-only class in getting people to pass the high school equivalency exam, because they spend more time in class and receive college-prep advice from the staff. The pass rate for LaGuardia's students in the "contextualized curriculum" courses is twice as high as for those who took LaGuardia's regular test-prep class until 2012, 53 percent versus 22 percent. Students who earn their GED certificate through a LaGuardia course are three times as likely to sign up for additional college study—24 percent versus 7 percent.

The presence of so many minority students on campus is also important for demystifying these first-timers' ideas of college. Jane MacKillop, LaGuardia's associate dean of academic and career development, explains, "They come here and they look around and say, 'Everyone here looks like me. I could belong here.' "



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