

February 16, 2014

In an effort to describe the healthcare rollout, Bart Simpson is quoted by John Podhoretz, “I didn’t think it was physically possible, but this both sucks and blows.” *I could rage on and on about Monday’s gobsmacking announcement that the Obama administration is once again unilaterally delaying a key aspect of its health-care law and what this act of astonishing royalism suggests about the president and his fundamental disrespect for the American system of checks and balances.*

But I’m not going to. Instead, with all the dignity that a 52-year-old man and father of three can bring to the task, I will offer these observations instead:

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Charles Krauthammer on a few of the ways Obamacare hurts jobs.

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But doesn’t this undermine the whole idea of universal health coverage? Of course it does, but Obamacare was so structured that it is crushing small business and killing jobs. It creates a major incentive for small businesses to cut back to under 50 employees to avoid the mandate. Your business becomes a 49er by either firing workers or reducing their hours to below 30 a week. Because that doesn’t count as full time, you escape both the employer mandate to buy health insurance and the fine for not doing so.

With the weakest recovery since World War II, historically high chronic unemployment and a shockingly low workforce participation rate, the administration correctly fears the economic consequences of its own law — and of the political fallout for Democrats as millions more Americans lose their jobs or are involuntarily reduced to part-time status.

Conservatives have been warning about this for five years. This is not rocket science. Both the voluntary and forced job losses were utterly predictable. Pelosi insisted we would have to pass the law to know what’s in it. Now we know.

Jennifer Rubin provides a link to Jon Stewart's takedown of the president's latest ambassador picks. Follow the link in her post and wait through a 30 second spot. It's worth your time.

... How in the world can the Democrats confirm these people? Frankly, we're going to get a whole lot more of these ridiculous nominees due to the evisceration of the filibuster. The temptation to do so increases, and the administration can't very well turn to their big shot donors and say, "I'd like to, but the Senate you know . . ." If there were ever the perfect example of why the filibuster is needed this is it. ...

... This is yet another instance in which politics trumps virtually everything else in the administration. Sending unqualified ambassadors to important nations is actually minor compared to shifting the Afghanistan withdrawal to get troops home before the 2012 election. It is ironic that the president who came into office as a purported wonkish intellectual, an ideal technocrat, has in so many instances reflected the worst of mindless partisan politics.

It's hard to remember that voters took the transformational and inspirational rhetoric of 2008 seriously. All of that has gone by the wayside as Obama has dug in both rhetorically and ideologically. But what likely brings both Democrats and Republicans together is their horror at a president who lacks the competence and will to govern well. The ambassadorial picks are only the tip of iceberg, of course. It's small compared to Obamacare or the disastrous Syria policy, but it is all of a piece.

And it's not just our friends on the right who are disgusted by the ambassador picks. Here's WaPo editors.

... All presidents appoint some ambassadors who are not professional diplomats. Most have been harmless; a few have been stellar. Mr. Obama, however, has considerably stretched the boundaries of previous presidential records, both in quantity and in apparent disregard for quality. The president promised in 2009 to increase professional appointments, and the State Department said last Friday that it aims for a 70-30 split between career and political ambassadors. Yet, so far in his second term, 53 percent of Mr. Obama's appointments have been political, according to the American Foreign Service Association. A third have been fundraisers for his campaigns.

The bundlers are going not just to London, Brussels and Vienna, where their roles may be largely decorative, but also to countries where relations with the United States are troubled. In addition to Mr. Mamet, Mr. Obama is dispatching fundraiser and soap-opera producer Colleen Bradley Bell to Hungary, a NATO country whose government has a disturbing record of undermining democratic institutions. At her confirmation hearing, Ms. Bell was unable to spell out U.S. interests in Budapest other than "to promote business opportunities, increase trade."

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in Washington and yet require skilled diplomacy. It's no wonder that Argentina, the third-largest economy in Latin America but a perennial trouble spot, was tended by career diplomats under the four presidents who preceded Mr. Obama. His use of the Buenos Aires embassy and so many others as political plums signals a disregard for U.S. foreign interests.

Tammy Bruce calls him the "Mrs. Fletcher of Politics."

First, it's important that you know I think President Obama was born in the United States. I also think he may be the love child of the television character Mrs. Jessica Fletcher of "Murder, She Wrote."

Think about it: Wherever Mrs. Fletcher went, someone ended up dead. Wherever Mr. Obama goes, a part of America gets punched in the face, falls into a coma or dies. Oh, sure, both characters seem nice enough, but inviting either to dinner (or to run the country) portends something disastrous.

When Mr. Obama received the Nobel Peace Prize for waking up one morning, we should have known it would invite chaos. They give him the prize, he lobs missiles into Libya, loses Afghanistan and Iraq and Libya to al Qaeda, sides with a tyrant against the Egyptian people, and draws a faux "red line" for Syria (did he hear it in a movie?), managing to make Bashar Assad even more powerful than he was before.

Ask the Syrian people (those who haven't been gassed to death yet), what they think of Mr. Obama's foreign-policy prowess.

Recently, a Reuters report wondered if the Japan-China relationship was "at its worst." Well, if Mr. Obama's track record continues, it will be soon. ...

Tech Dirt says yup Direct TV has dropped the Weather Channel and instead is showing people the weather.

The Weather Channel has been well-deserving of mockery over the last few years, whether its for their efforts to sex up storms by naming them (in the process creating a nation of weather neurotics who become hysterical about drizzle), or for an ocean of TV and website content that has absolutely nothing to do with the weather (here's some funny faces, yuk yuk). As such, their recent battle with DirecTV over retransmission fees doesn't find the company getting much sympathy. Especially when the channel tries to argue that people will die without their inane assortment of non-weather-related content.

Normally in such retransmission disputes the content company has some leverage over the satellite or cable TV provider because what they're withholding has somewhat irreplaceable value to the viewer (say, like "Breaking Bad"). In The Weather Channel's case, their belief that they somehow held an exclusive over weather forecasting, combined with the fact that they have increasingly gotten worse at their one and only job, has given DirecTV the upper hand in the ongoing feud. After pulling the channel from the lineup back in January, DirecTV continues to

battle The Weather Channel in a very simple way -- by simply offering viewers the weather for a change ...

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Lake Superior hasn't completely frozen over in two decades.

But an expert on Great Lakes ice says there's a "very high likelihood" that the three-quadrillion-gallon lake will soon be totally covered with ice thanks to this winter's record-breaking cold.

The ice cover on the largest freshwater lake in the world hit a 20-year record of 91 percent on Feb. 5, 1994.

Jay Austin, associate professor at the Large Lakes Observatory in Duluth, Minn., told CNSNews.com that he expects that record will be broken this winter when the most northern of the Great Lakes becomes totally shrouded in ice. ...

Washington Post **Obamacare's war on jobs** by Charles Krauthammer

In the ongoing saga of the Affordable Care Act, oddly referred to by Democrats as the law of the land even as it is amended at will by presidential fiat, we are beginning to understand the extent of its war on jobs.

First, the [Congressional Budget Office](#) triples its estimate of the drop in the workforce resulting from the disincentive introduced by Obamacare's insurance subsidies: 2 million by 2017, 2.3 million by 2021.

Democratic talking points gamely defend this as a good thing because these jobs are being given up voluntarily. [Nancy Pelosi spoke lyrically](#) about how Obamacare subsidies will allow people to leave unfulfilling jobs to pursue their passions: "Think of an economy where people could be an artist or a photographer or a writer without worrying about keeping their day job in order to have health insurance."

Nothing so lyrical has been written about work since Marx (in "[The German Ideology](#)") described a communist society that "makes it possible for me to . . . hunt in the morning, fish in the afternoon, rear cattle in the evening, criticize after dinner."

Pelosi's vision is equally idyllic except for one thing: The taxes of the American factory worker — grinding away dutifully at his repetitive mind-numbing job — will be subsidizing the voluntary unemployment of the artiste in search of his muse. A rather paradoxical position for the party that poses as tribune of the working man.

In the reductio ad absurdum of entitlement liberalism, White House spokesman [Jay Carney was similarly enthusiastic](#) about this Obamacare-induced job loss. Why, Obamacare creates the “opportunity” that “allows families in America to make a decision about how they will work, and if they will work.”

If they will work? Pre-Obama, people always had the right to quit work to tend full time to the study of butterflies. It’s a free country. The twist in the new liberal dispensation is that the butterfly guy is to be subsidized by the taxes of people who actually work.

In the traditional opportunity society, government provides the tools — education, training and various incentives — to achieve the dignity of work and its promise of self-improvement and social mobility. In the new opportunity society, you are given the opportunity for idleness while living parasitically off everyone else. Why those everyone else should remain at *their* jobs — hey! I wanna dance, too! — is a puzzle Carney has yet to explain.

The honest liberal reply to the CBO report is that a disincentive to work is inherent in any means-tested government benefit. It’s the unavoidable price of helping those in need because for every new dollar you earn, you lose part of your subsidy and thus keep less and less of your nominal income.

That’s inevitable. And that’s why we have learned to tie welfare, for example, to a work requirement. Otherwise, beneficiaries could choose to live off the dole forever. That’s why the [1996 Gingrich-Clinton welfare reform](#) succeeded in [reducing welfare rolls by two-thirds](#). It is not surprising that the same Obama administration that has been [weakening the work requirement for welfare](#) is welcoming the disincentive to work inherent in Obamacare.

But Obamacare’s war on jobs goes beyond voluntary idleness. The administration is now conceding, inadvertently but unmistakably, Obamacare’s other effect — involuntary job loss. On Monday, the administration unilaterally [postponed and weakened the employer mandate, already suspended through 2015](#), for yet another year.

But doesn’t this undermine the whole idea of universal health coverage? Of course it does, but Obamacare was so structured that it is crushing small business and killing jobs. It creates a major incentive for small businesses to cut back to under 50 employees to avoid the mandate. Your business becomes a 49er by either firing workers or reducing their hours to below 30 a week. Because that doesn’t count as full time, you escape both the employer mandate to buy health insurance and the fine for not doing so.

With the weakest recovery since World War II, [historically high chronic unemployment](#) and a shockingly low workforce participation rate, the administration correctly fears the economic consequences of its own law — and of the political fallout for Democrats as millions more Americans lose their jobs or are involuntarily reduced to part-time status.

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NY Post

'ObamaCare both sucks and blows'

by John Podhoretz

I could rage on and on about Monday's gobsmacking announcement that the Obama administration is once again unilaterally delaying a key aspect of its health-care law and what this act of astonishing royalism suggests about the president and his fundamental disrespect for the American system of checks and balances.

But I'm not going to. Instead, with all the dignity that a 52-year-old man and father of three can bring to the task, I will offer these observations instead:

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Nyah nyah nyah nyah nyah.

Face it, all of you who celebrated and wept and danced when it passed back in March 2010, all of you who viewed it as the historic moment of transformation for the United States: This law is a lemon.

As Bart Simpson once said, "I didn't think it was physically possible, but this both sucks and blows."

It's what early computer geeks used to call a "kludge," which Webster's defines as "a system made up of poorly matched components." It was a workaround solution to an enormous problem it is only going to make worse.

Remember: The law passed in March 2010. It was to go into full effect on Jan. 1, 2014. That means the administration had almost four years to get its ducks into a row. Four years. That was more time than it took us to win World War II, which we fought across three continents, a bunch of islands and two oceans.

And yet here we are, four years later, and the administration has spent the past six months effectively rewriting the law for both political and practical reasons.

It shouldn't be able to do this, because it is, you know, a law. The president doesn't write laws. Congress does. He signs them and it's his job to implement them. If he can't write laws, he can't rewrite them either.

But he is, and without resistance. Someone would have to stop him from doing it. But Democrats won't stop him from doing anything, and the changes he's making actually do limit ObamaCare's deleterious effects, so Republicans have no incentive to stop him.

The rewriting began even before the famous Web site made its debut on Oct. 1, 2013. A month earlier, Patrick Hedger of the conservative activist group FreedomWorks delineated 11 provisions in the health-care law the administration had unilaterally revised or delayed. (Another eight had either been repealed or defunded by Congress along the way; one was declared unconstitutional by the Supreme Court.)

By far the biggest was a one-year delay in the so-called “employer mandate,” imposing fines on businesses that do not provide health care to their full-time workers. On Monday, that delay was extended to two years for smaller businesses — because, you know, once you delay something one year, why not two? Why not 10?

The way this is going, the administration could just repeal every provision of the law unilaterally and still claim its historic legislation had passed and was its signature accomplishment. After all, it will still be on the books. It’s the law. It just won’t be enforced, like the law that says you can’t pick your feet in Poughkeepsie.

The disastrous healthcare.gov rollout beginning in October led to a series of other delays and postponements.

ObamaCare apologists are at the ready with excuses and explanations: Republican obstructionism slowed things down. The constitutional challenges slowed things down. Resistance from GOP governors slowed things down.

Come now. The administration had untold numbers of federal employees and more than 1,300 days to do what it had to do inside its own shop to prepare. The law didn’t go into effect for 500 days after the Supreme Court refused to put it out of its misery in June 2012.

The simple fact of the matter is, it couldn’t get things to work because ObamaCare is unworkable. It’s a jury-rigged mess that needs about 300 moving gears to mesh perfectly for it to function at all. It’s pretty clear that it never will. (And, yes, I feel sorry for the millions of people the law has already harmed, and the tens of millions more that it’s set to harm.)

The question is whether we’re going to spend decades layering new systems on top of the kludge or whether we’re going to be sensible about this and throw the whole thing out. And start anew.

It is a painful moment for all those who believed, and still seem to believe, in the world-changing and epoch-making properties of the Affordable Care Act. To them I extend the world-weary sympathies of a man in middle age who knows the meaning of disappointment and loss .□.□.

Naaaaah. Nanny nanny boo boo.

Right Turn

[Ambassadors are only the tip of the iceberg](#)

by Jennifer Rubin

On one hand, it is the stuff of which [comedy is made](#):

It is even worse, of course. These [folks](#) seem to [know little](#) about the [place they will be assigned](#). [Pamela Harriman](#) they are not. No one begrudges a donor or two getting a cushy job, but the number and poor quality is bracing. Didn’t President Obama have any impressive moneymen?

As funny as it may be, the ambassadorial disgrace raises a number of important issues:

1. How in the world can the Democrats confirm these people? Frankly, we're going to get a whole lot more of these ridiculous nominees due to the evisceration of the filibuster. The temptation to do so increases, and the administration can't very well turn to their big shot donors and say, "I'd like to, but the Senate you know . . ." If there were ever the perfect example of why the filibuster is needed this is it.
2. This is a grave insult to the competent foreign service officers and the State Department itself. It suggests what they do is irrelevant or even silly. The buffoons ironically were put there by the administration for which the answer to every problem is "diplomacy."
3. Former Virginia governor Bob McDonnell must be wondering why he is looking at jail time. His big cat donor gave far less than the ambassadorial picks and got a whole lot less in return (a couple of phone calls, a couple of appearances). The only difference was that the time span between the "gifts" in the case of McDonnell and the favors was very short compared to the lag between raising 6 or 7 figures and getting the ticket to Norway, Argentina or Iceland. But as a legal matter, that is of no significance. Corruption is corruption for governors and for presidents, or it isn't for either.
4. With the Argentina appointment, Obama continues his disregard for our hemisphere and fails to recognize that if we don't develop close and beneficial relationships with the nations, they will fall under the power of nefarious forces. Argentina-U.S. [relations](#) haven't been great [of late](#) as its government tries to [cozy up to Iran](#), and this only emphasizes the suspicion that Obama isn't much interested in reorienting Argentina. As [Jonathan Turley put it](#), "Now, after years of tense relations, Argentina is watching Obama send someone who has not even bothered to visit the country — fulfilling a stereotype of insular Americans. This is not like some distinct, dangerous spot like Yemen (which no bundler would want). Argentina is hard to miss for people traveling in the region."
5. This is yet another instance in which politics trumps virtually everything else in the administration. Sending unqualified ambassadors to important nations is actually minor compared to shifting the Afghanistan withdrawal to get troops home before the 2012 election. It is ironic that the president who came into office as a purported wonkish intellectual, an ideal technocrat, has in so many instances reflected the worst of mindless partisan politics.

It's hard to remember that voters took the transformational and inspirational rhetoric of 2008 seriously. All of that has gone by the wayside as Obama has dug in both rhetorically and ideologically. But what likely brings both Democrats and Republicans together is their horror at a president who lacks the competence and will to govern well. The ambassadorial picks are only the tip of iceberg, of course. It's small compared to Obamacare or the disastrous Syria policy, but it is all of a piece.

Washington Post - Editorial **[Ambassadorships are President Obama's political plums](#)**

NOAH BRYSON Mamet is a political consultant who raised at least \$500,000 for President Obama and the Democratic Party in the 2012 election cycle. As of last week, he had [never visited Argentina](#) — which helps explain the ambassador-designate's spotty performance before the

Senate Foreign Relations Committee at his confirmation hearing. [Mr. Mamet repeatedly described Argentina](#) as a U.S. ally, said it was “a mature democracy” and praised its record on human rights.

That provoked a bipartisan tongue-lashing from Sens. Robert Mendendez (D-N.J.), the committee chairman, and Marco Rubio (R-Fla.), who pointed out that the Argentine government under Cristina Fernández de Kirchner has compromised freedom of the press and the judiciary, refused to pay debts to the U.S. government and American bondholders, seized equipment from a U.S. military training mission, undermined an investigation of an Iranian-sponsored terrorist bombing and aligned itself with the rabidly anti-American governments of Cuba and Venezuela. “This is the most unique ally I think we have in the world,” Mr. Rubio dryly noted.

Mr. Mamet probably was only retailing, clumsily, talking points given to him by the State Department, which has a policy of avoiding criticism of Latin America’s populist authoritarians. But his glaring lack of familiarity with the nation where he will soon be the top U.S. official was another illustration of the cavalier nature of President Obama’s recent ambassadorial appointments.

All presidents appoint some ambassadors who are not professional diplomats. Most have been harmless; a few have been stellar. Mr. Obama, however, has considerably stretched the boundaries of [previous presidential records](#), both in quantity and in apparent disregard for quality. The president promised in 2009 to increase professional appointments, and the State Department said last Friday that it aims for a 70-30 split between career and political ambassadors. Yet, so far in his second term, [53 percent of Mr. Obama’s appointments have been political](#), according to the American Foreign Service Association. A third have been fundraisers for his campaigns.

The bundlers are going not just to London, Brussels and Vienna, where their roles may be largely decorative, but also to countries where relations with the United States are troubled. In addition to Mr. Mamet, Mr. Obama is dispatching fundraiser and soap-opera producer [Colleen Bradley Bell](#) to Hungary, a NATO country whose government has a disturbing record of undermining democratic institutions. At her confirmation hearing, Ms. Bell was unable to spell out U.S. interests in Budapest other than “to promote business opportunities, increase trade.”

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Ambassadorial appointments for small allies such as Norway or tough partners including Hungary and Argentina matter because their governments rarely receive the attention of high-level officials in Washington and yet require skilled diplomacy. It’s no wonder that Argentina, the [third-largest economy in Latin America](#) but a perennial trouble spot, was tended by career diplomats under the four presidents who preceded Mr. Obama. His use of the Buenos Aires embassy and so many others as political plums signals a disregard for U.S. foreign interests.

Washington Times

Barack Obama is the 'Mrs. Fletcher' of politics

Wherever the president goes, trouble follows

by Tammy Bruce

First, it's important that you know I think President Obama was born in the United States. I also think he may be the love child of the television character Mrs. [Jessica Fletcher](#) of "[Murder, She Wrote.](#)"

Think about it: Wherever [Mrs. Fletcher](#) went, someone ended up dead. Wherever Mr. Obama goes, a part of America gets punched in the face, falls into a coma or dies. Oh, sure, both characters seem nice enough, but inviting either to dinner (or to run the country) portends something disastrous.

When Mr. Obama received the Nobel Peace Prize for waking up one morning, we should have known it would invite chaos. They give him the prize, he lobs missiles into [Libya](#), loses [Afghanistan](#) and [Iraq](#) and [Libya](#) to [al Qaeda](#), sides with a tyrant against the Egyptian people, and draws a faux "red line" for [Syria](#) (did he hear it in a movie?), managing to make [Bashar Assad](#) even more powerful than he was before.

Ask the Syrian people (those who haven't been gassed to death yet), what they think of Mr. Obama's foreign-policy prowess.

Recently, a [Reuters](#) report wondered if the [Japan-China](#) relationship was "at its worst." Well, if Mr. Obama's track record continues, it will be soon.



The [White House](#) has announced the president will visit [Japan](#), [South Korea](#), [Malaysia](#) and [the Philippines](#) in April. This is like having [Mrs. Fletcher](#) over for a banquet. Then asking her to stay the night. Seriously, it's time to pray for the entire region.

When Mr. Obama said he was going to fundamentally transform the United States of America, anyone who understood leftist history knew to take him seriously.

History shows us that leftists don't like success, happiness or stability, so unfortunately for us, the hope and change the president had in mind was more in the liberal wheelhouse of hoping for things would change the worse. Boy, what a success he's been.

During his presidency, the downward spiral of America has been so swift Mr. Obama must be hearing that whistling sound familiar until now only to Wile E. Coyote as he plunges off the cliff.

Being dubbed "President Downgrade" after presiding over the nation's first credit downgrade in history would have been bad for any president, but for Mr. Obama, it's not bad enough, as he works diligently for the more appropriate sobriquet "President Crash and Burn."

Just this week, Reporters Without Borders released its 2014 World Press Freedom rankings, revealing U.S. press freedom crashing under the Obama regime.

In the 21st century, the nation that was the first to define and implement freedom of the press as a fundamental principle of a free people, is now ranked 46th in the world. As The Wire so perceptibly put it, "Of the 180 countries ranked, the home of the First Amendment now sits snuggled between Romania and Haiti."

It's not just freedom of speech that's being bundled off to a hospice. The 2014 Index of Economic Freedom was released just last month, revealing the United States has dropped from the Top 10 freest economies.

In its report, the Heritage Foundation attributes this shocking development to "particularly large losses in property rights, freedom from corruption, and control of government spending. ... Substantial expansion in the size and scope of government, including through new and costly regulations in areas like finance and health care, has contributed significantly to the erosion of U.S. economic freedom."

The National Review reminds us when Mr. Obama took office in 2009, we were the sixth-freest economy. Now? We're 12th.

Even Mr. Obama's signature health care law isn't immune from the curse of his own involvement. This week, we saw him unilaterally implement the 27th delay of a significant part of the law.

In giving medium-sized businesses another year to comply with Obamacare requirements, he insisted it was to let them have more time to adjust. So four years' advance notice isn't enough? Obamacare is on life-support. Score another one for [Mrs. Fletcher](#).

It's fascinating how so many people still give the leftist agenda the benefit of the doubt, especially liberals and people of color who are so negatively affected by Mr. Obama's economic folly.

That shouldn't surprise us, though. [Mrs. Fletcher](#) never seemed bothered by her penchant for attracting bad news, and remained the most loved resident of Cabot Cove, despite the pile of bodies in her wake.

For Americans who think collapsing economic and press freedom rankings, chaos in the international arena, and bizarre commitment to bloated and failed federal projects is the “new normal,” think again.

I have a suggestion: Let’s replace the President [Crash](#) and Burn crowd with politicians who actually like the country and are committed to elevating America by reminding us that we are the children of George Washington, Abraham Lincoln and Ronald Reagan.

We simply refuse to be condemned to Banana Republic status. At the end of every “Murder, She Wrote” episode, the crime was solved, and the bad guy was banished. Let’s make sure the same happens here.

Tammy Bruce is a radio talk-show host, New York Times best-selling author

Tech Dirt

[DirecTV Combats Weather Channel Price Hikes By...Actually Showing People The Weather](#)

from the you're-really-not-very-good-at-your-only-job dept

The Weather Channel has been well-deserving of mockery over the last few years, whether its for their efforts to sex up storms by naming them (in the process creating a nation of weather neurotics who become hysterical about drizzle), or for an ocean of TV and website content that has absolutely nothing to do with the weather (here’s some [funny faces, yuk yuk](#)). As such, their recent battle with DirecTV over retransmission fees doesn’t find the company getting much sympathy. Especially when the channel tries to argue that [people will die](#) without their inane assortment of non-weather-related content.

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DirecTV on Monday unveiled a suite of new weather services for its subscribers, including a feature that allows customers to gain access to local weather information at any time...The satcaster said customers tuned to WeatherNation can press the red button on their remote to access instant local weather conditions and outlook. Later this week, short term and extended weather forecasts by zip code will also be integrated into the live WeatherNation broadcast and run automatically on the channel every 10 minutes.

Surely being offered actual information on the weather will outrage viewers who love sitting through a half hour of off-topic infotainment and dreck just to get the snow forecast totals for their neighborhood. Seriously, without The Weather Channel, who’ll tell us [which celebrities like to hunt](#) or provide recipes for [cheesy chicken bites](#)? Usually these retransmission feuds resolve with cable and satellite companies buckling and agreeing to some sort of significant hike (then passed on to

you), though with the sort of stuff The Weather Channel has been producing in recent years, it's not clear if customers will want DirecTV to cave.

CNS News

[Ice Expert Predicts Lake Superior Will Completely Freeze Over This Winter](#)

by Barbara Hollingsworth

Lake Superior hasn't completely frozen over in two decades.

But an expert on Great Lakes ice says there's a "very high likelihood" that the three-quadrillion-gallon lake will soon be totally covered with ice thanks to this winter's record-breaking cold.

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[Jay Austin](#), associate professor at the Large Lakes Observatory in Duluth, Minn., told CNSNews.com that he expects that record will be broken this winter when the most northern of the Great Lakes becomes totally shrouded in ice.

The thickness of the ice on Lake Superior "varies tremendously," from a very thin sheet in some areas near the coast to several feet thick in other spots, Austin says. The National Oceanographic and Atmospheric Administration ([NOAA](#)) reports that the mean thickness of the lake ice is 26 cm, or a little over 10 inches.

Austin attributes the large amount of ice on the lake to the "[extraordinary cold](#) winter we've had," pointing out that Duluth recently experienced an all-time [record](#) of 23 straight days of below-zero temperatures.

The previous record of 22 days was set in 1936 and tied in 1963, according to the National Weather Service.

Austin, who studies the effect of lake ice, predicts that it will have a "very strong influence" on the regional climate this summer, with the "air conditioning [lake] effect" more pronounced than usual.

"Typically, the lake will start warming up in late June, but it will be August before we see that this year," Austin told CNSNews.com.

As of February 10th, ice covered 80.4 percent of all the Great Lakes, compared to 38.4 percent last winter, according to NOAA. That's considerably higher than the lake's long-term average of 51.4 percent under ice.

The record for [maximum ice coverage](#) of 94.7 percent was set in 1979. The lowest ice accumulation occurred in 2002, when just 9.5 percent of the surface of the Great Lakes was frozen solid.





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1/4" OF SNOW



**NORTH BE LIKE "OK, TIME TO GO
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POLAR VORTEX

MY VERSION OF A
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Afghanistan 1970



Iran 70s



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