

April 17, 2014

Richard Fernandez of Belmont Club posted on Leland Yee the California Dem caught in a gun running scandal. He closed the post with the following pull quote. You can forget about the rest unless you wish to learn about the ins and outs of CA Dem politics. ... *America was founded on the notion that most politicians can only be expected to be ornery, low-down, crooks. Nobody in those days was fool enough to believe they could be Light-workers, Messiahs and create a world without guns. Thus in the Founder's view the only way to guard against rogues was to ensure that government remained as small as possible relative to its essential jobs; to change those in office frequently and often, like we change underwear.*

The Founders saw roguery as the byproduct of high office. And so they wrote a constitution — you know, the document more than a hundred years old that nobody smart reads any more — to keep the weeds down. For they knew better than our modern enlightened that any politician sufficiently powerful to disarm the people is sufficiently powerful to sell missiles bought from Russia to Muslim rebels in Mindanao.

Unless one remembers this there is no defense against crooks in high places. The Yee scandal highlights the single most important problem in contemporary American politics: the absence of an anti-central government insurgency within the Democratic Party. The Democrats and Republicans are now two factions of one party: the Party of the Establishment.

Only the Tea Party, and groups loosely occupying the same political space, are actively fighting for smaller government. They represent a faction which threatens to divide the GOP and may deny nominal Republicans the success which the Democratic Party has so far achieved. Like them or hate them, they are an authentic rebellion which is why the Washington establishment despises them so.

But for some reason the Democratic Party has no equivalent. The base will never vote against the collectivists. In the end better a Yee or a "D" than Tea. Success has been bought at the price of betraying one of the founding tenets of America, limited government. Democrats of all persuasions are agreed that more government is better; that the individual is the enemy; that the collective is the wave of the future. This lockstep guarantees the permanent majority. If so then such a party — whether you call it Democrat or Republican — has traded off that guaranteed majority for the expense of an unlimited number of Leland Yees.

Perhaps the choice is not between Democrat and Republican in the long run — but between individual liberty or subordination to rank hypocrisy. If history is any guide many, perhaps even the majority, will choose welfare over freedom. Give me bread and call me stupid, but only give me bread. Lord Bevin boasted upon creating the welfare state "I stuffed their mouths with gold." People today are not so demanding. They'll be happy with chump change.

This is fun. [Steven Malanga](#) in City Journal writes about an anthropologist whose research results defied conventional wisdom. Malanga describes it as "Napoleon Chagnon's study of human nature in the Amazon—and the academy." The savages in the academic world are the more dangerous. Rousseau's idea of the noble savage, which has created more mischief than any other philosophical concept, has never been debunked as well as by Chagnon's studies. No wonder he has to be attacked by the bien pensants.

Anthropologist Napoleon Chagnon's heart was pounding in late November 1964 when he entered a remote Venezuelan village. He planned to spend more than a year studying the indigenous Yanomamo people, one of the last large groups in the world untouched by civilization. Based on his university training, the 26-year-old Chagnon expected to be greeted by 125 or so peaceful villagers, patiently waiting to be interviewed about their culture. Instead, he stumbled onto a scene where a dozen "burley, naked, sweaty, hideous men" confronted him and his guide with arrows drawn.

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*Chagnon spent decades studying the Yanomamo first-hand. What he observed challenged conventional wisdom about human nature, suggesting that primitive man may have lived in a Hobbesian state of "all against all"—where the concerns of group and individual security were driving factors in how society developed, and where a sense of terror was widespread. His work undercut a longstanding politically correct view in anthropology, which held that Stone Age humans were noble savages and that civilization had corrupted humanity and led to increasing violence. Chagnon's reporting on the Yanomamo subsequently became unpopular and was heavily attacked within some academic circles. He endured accusations and investigations. *Noble Savages* is Chagnon's engrossing and at times hair-raising story of his work among the Yanomamo and the controversies his discoveries stirred up. ...*

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Undaunted, Chagnon plunged even further into the thicket of political incorrectness. In a 1988 Science article, he estimated that 45 percent of living Yanomamo adult males had participated in the killing of at least one person. He then compared the reproductive success of these Yanomamo men to others who had never killed. The unokais—those who had participated in killings—produced three times as many children, on average, as the others. ...

... Critics, meanwhile, charged Chagnon with faking his data and branded him a racist. He found it difficult to get back into Venezuela to continue his studies. His problems intensified as the field of anthropology changed and cultural anthropologists increasingly began to reject the scientific method that Chagnon pursued in favor of a postmodernist approach. Chagnon calls these new anthropologists believers, not scientists. They saw their field not as a path of inquiry but as a means of social change—one that condemned the industrialized, capitalist nations for exploiting natural resources and “peaceful” primitive peoples. ...

We have a few items that look at GOP fortunes in coming elections. Paul Mirengoff looks forward to 2016 and sees Wisconsin's Scott Walker doing well.

Scott Walker has a 16 point lead (56-40) among likely voters in his race for governor, according to a poll from Wisconsin Public Radio/St. Norbert's. Among registered voters, his lead is essentially the same (55-40).

The survey was conducted between March 24 and April 3. A Marquette University survey conducted between March 20-23 also showed Walker with a nice, though smaller, lead. In that poll, Walker outdistanced Democrat Mary Burke 48-41.

Revealingly, Walker fares well in an electorate that does not seem particularly conservative and that, if anything, appears to be slightly to the left of American voters in general. Among those surveyed in the WPR/St. Norbert's poll, 48 percent had a favorable view of President Obama; 50 percent had an unfavorable view. Obama generally fares worse than that in national polling. In addition, Wisconsin's liberal Senator Tammy Baldwin had a positive rating — 44 percent approve; 33 percent disapprove.

In this context, Walker's popularity is particularly striking. 59 percent approve of his performance, while only 39 percent disapprove. ...

Jennifer Rubin says Virginia Republicans are starting to smile.

Ed Gillespie's Senate campaign is touting big fundraising numbers, \$2.2 million in the first quarter, for the GOP adviser-turned candidate who is challenging Sen. Mark Warner (D-Va.). Campaign manager Chris Levitt announced in a statement: “In less than a full quarter, the Gillespie campaign raised more money than any other Republican Senate challenger in the country. Virginia voters know that they have an opportunity not only to replace a Senator who's voted 97 percent of the time with President Obama, but to replace Harry Reid as Senate Majority Leader. Our first quarter report shows strong support from across the Commonwealth and reflects enthusiasm for Ed Gillespie's plans to put Virginians first and unleash job creation.” He will need that money since Warner is a prodigious fundraiser himself (bringing in \$2.7 million during the first quarter).

Gillespie's numbers reflect a few positive trends for the GOP. The Virginia state party was down in the dumps just a few months ago after losing the gubernatorial and two other statewide races in the wake of the federal government shutdown. Now with a viable Senate candidate, donors and activists have perked up. ...

And Jason Riley says there will be a race in New Hampshire.

In the second half of March, Republican Scott Brown raised an impressive \$275,000 to challenge incumbent Democratic Sen. Jeanne Shaheen of New Hampshire.

"That sum came despite Brown not holding any fundraisers or paying any staff to work on raising money for him," reports the Hill newspaper. It came "simply from donations contributed to his website or via check in the mail, while he toured New Hampshire in his truck on a listening tour."

Before Mr. Brown entered the race, Ms. Shaheen was expected to win in a walk; the closest GOP challenger, former U.S. Sen. Bob Smith, trailed her by 14 points. Ms. Shaheen is still the favorite, but Mr. Brown's fundraising ability and name I.D. mean that she now has a real race on her hands.

...

Mirengoff also posts on FL -13, the race that was so closely watched a month ago.

There will be no replay this November of that closely-watched special congressional election in Florida last month in which Republican David Jolly defeated Democrat Alex Sink. The Democrat says she will not run.

This leaves the Dems searching for a respectable candidate to challenge Jolly. Meanwhile, Jolly can accrue the advantages, financial and otherwise, of incumbency.

Rep. Steve ("Not all Republican law makers are racists") Israel, the Democratic Campaign Committee Chairman, had lobbied hard for Sink to have another go, according to the Washington Post. Now he is trying to put a happy face on his latest setback:

Pinellas residents have voted time and again for commonsense solutions instead of reckless partisanship, which is why we are confident our Democratic nominee can prevail on Election Day.

I'm sure Bill Young, the longtime Republican congressman from Pinellas for whom Jolly once worked, would have appreciated the compliment.

Not all Democrat politicians are bullshitters, but Israel is.

The Republican take is closer to the mark. "Washington Democrats can't even convince their die-hard career politicians to walk the plank this November," said Katie Prill, a spokeswoman for the National Republican Congressional Committee.

Belmont Club

Yee Gads

by Richard Fernandez

“State Sen. Leland Yee withdrew from the California secretary of state race Thursday, one day after his arrest on public corruption charges,” according to [SFGate](#).

This followed a chorus of calls from [California Democrats](#) demanding Yee’s resignation because he was ruining the brand. “California Democratic senators – wary from months of scandals – called for the immediate resignation of state Sen. Leland Yee, saying Wednesday that charges of gun trafficking and public corruption leveled against their colleague are ‘appalling’.”

“I want Leland Yee gone,” a furious Senate Leader Darrell Steinberg said of the San Francisco Democrat who is a 2014 candidate for secretary of state. Steinberg said he is immediately removing Yee from all committee assignments.

Steinberg’s reaction to the latest scandal – the third to hit the headlines this year – represented a departure from earlier calls for justice to play out after the conviction of state Sen. Rod Wright of Baldwin Park (Los Angeles County) on voter fraud charges. The Senate leader took a stronger position after the arrest of state Sen. Ron Calderon of Montebello on bribery charges this year by calling on the Los Angeles County Democrat to resign or be suspended.

Both of those legislators are on a paid leave of absence pending the legal completion of their cases.

Steinberg said Yee faces charges that “create a huge cloud over the institution.”

“Obviously, he can’t come back,” said Steinberg, who then added, “well, if he’s acquitted he can.”

The [Sacramento Bee](#) wrote that Yee “had few close ties”. “Yet Yee has been viewed as a somewhat isolated legislator during his nearly dozen years in the Assembly and Senate. A refrain Wednesday among people speaking privately was that Yee plays things close to the vest and regularly left his colleagues unsure of his true feelings.” Which is to say now that Leland has been busted that nobody wants to acknowledge knowing him.

The demands for his resignation are understandable. The California gun control advocate is pretty unpopular [just now](#). “State Sen. Leland Yee, an outspoken advocate of gun control and open government, was arrested Wednesday on charges that he conspired to traffic in firearms and traded favors in Sacramento for bribes – campaign cash paid by men who turned out to be undercover FBI agents.” Not only was he possibly insincere in his gun control act, he was apparently willing to deal with [Russian arms dealers](#) and Muslim rebels.

[CBS News](#) recounts some of the charges:

Yee is also accused of accepting tens of thousands of dollars in campaign contributions and cash payments to provide introductions, help a client get a contract and influence legislation. He or members of his campaign staff accepted at least \$42,800 in cash or campaign contributions from undercover FBI agents in exchange for carrying out the agents' specific requests, the court documents allege.

Yee discussed helping the agent get weapons worth \$500,000 to \$2.5 million, including shoulder-fired automatic weapons and missiles, and took him through the entire process of acquiring them from a Muslim separatist group in the Philippines to bringing them to the United States, according to the affidavit by FBI Special Agent Emmanuel V. Pascua.

He was unhappy with his life and told the agent he wanted to hide out in the Philippines, according to the affidavit.

The Philippines. Yes, quite the place to be. But not if you're the kind of Democrat that Leland Yee presented himself as. Still Yee may have felt a kinship for that Island Paradise "where the best is like the worst, Where there aren't no Ten Commandments an' a man can raise a thirst." A place where there are strict gun laws and where schoolchildren in Basilan come to class with M-16s.

Chicago is probably working to become like that. A few more decades under gun control advocates and it may get there. But why was Yee trying to become California Secretary of State, a position which supervises elections and voter rolls? Because people go where they can thrive. [Willy Sutton](#), the robber, explained why he was drawn to banks.

Why did I rob banks? Because I enjoyed it. I loved it. I was more alive when I was inside a bank, robbing it, than at any other time in my life. I enjoyed everything about it so much that one or two weeks later I'd be out looking for the next job. But to me the money was the chips, that's all. Go where the money is...and go there often.

Which raises the question of why — since voter fraud is said to be nonexistent — Leland Lee should aspire to being [California Secretary of State](#) — as were several other Democrats. "Yee [was] running for Secretary of State, one of a half-dozen Democrats competing in the race. During a candidates' forum in Southern California earlier this month, Yee talked about the challenges of succeeding as an immigrant and focused on voter legislation he's gotten passed. One bill, enacted last year, makes it possible for voters to register online."

If Yee was — as the authorities allege — a man up to no good there must have been some angle he was planning to work in that lofty position.

One commenter at SFGate remarked there were times when corruption was so rampant that he believed it was not just a case of the odd bad apple but the whole barrel of apples being infested with worms. He might have been surprised to learn the Founders agreed with him. James Madison wrote to the people of New York:

If men were angels, no government would be necessary. If angels were to govern men, neither external nor internal controls on government would be necessary. In framing a government which is to be administered by men over men, the great difficulty lies in this: you must first enable the government to control the governed; and in the next place oblige it to control itself. A dependence

on the people is, no doubt, the primary control on the government; but experience has taught mankind the necessity of auxiliary precautions.

America was founded on the notion that most politicians can only be expected to be ornery, low-down, crooks. Nobody in those days was fool enough to believe they could be Light-workers, Messiahs and create a world without guns. Thus in the Founder's view the only way to guard against rogues was to ensure that government remained as small as possible relative to its essential jobs; to change those in office frequently and often, like we change underwear.

The Founders saw roguery as the byproduct of high office. And so they wrote a constitution — you know, the document more than a hundred years old that nobody smart reads any more — to keep the weeds down. For they knew better than our modern enlightened that any politician sufficiently powerful to disarm the people is sufficiently powerful to sell missiles bought from Russia to Muslim rebels in Mindanao.

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Only the Tea Party, and groups loosely occupying the same political space, are actively fighting for smaller government. They represent a faction which threatens to divide the GOP and may deny nominal Republicans the success which the Democratic Party has so far achieved. Like them or hate them, they are an authentic rebellion which is why the Washington establishment despises them so.

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City Journal

Welcome to the Jungle

Napoleon Chagnon's study of human nature in the Amazon—and the academy

by Steven Malanga



Noble Savages: My Life Among Two Dangerous Tribes—The Yanomamo and the Anthropologists, by Napoleon A. Chagnon (Simon & Schuster, 544 pp., \$32.50)

Anthropologist Napoleon Chagnon's heart was pounding in late November 1964 when he entered a remote Venezuelan village. He planned to spend more than a year studying the indigenous Yanomamo people, one of the last large groups in the world untouched by civilization. Based on his university training, the 26-year-old Chagnon expected to be greeted by 125 or so peaceful villagers, patiently waiting to be interviewed about their culture. Instead, he stumbled onto a scene where a dozen “burley, naked, sweaty, hideous men” confronted him and his guide with arrows drawn.

Chagnon later learned that the men were edgy because raiders from a neighboring settlement had abducted seven of their women the day before. The next morning, the villagers counterattacked and recovered five of the women in a brutal club fight. As Chagnon recounts in *Noble Savages: My Life Among Two Dangerous Tribes—The Yanomamo and the Anthropologists* (originally published in 2013 and now appearing in paperback), he spent weeks puzzling over what he had seen. His anthropology education had taught him that kinsmen—the raiders were related to those they'd attacked—were generally nice to one another. Further, he had learned in classrooms that primitive peoples rarely fought one another, because they lived a subsistence lifestyle in which there was no surplus wealth to squabble about. What other reason could humans have for being at one another's throats?

Chagnon spent decades studying the Yanomamo first-hand. What he observed challenged conventional wisdom about human nature, suggesting that primitive man may have lived in a Hobbesian state of “all against all”—where the concerns of group and individual security were driving factors in how society developed, and where a sense of terror was widespread. His work undercut a longstanding politically correct view in anthropology, which held that Stone Age humans were noble savages and that civilization had corrupted humanity and led to increasing violence. Chagnon's reporting on the Yanomamo subsequently became unpopular and was heavily attacked within some academic circles. He endured accusations and investigations. *Noble Savages* is

Chagnon's engrossing and at times hair-raising story of his work among the Yanomamo and the controversies his discoveries stirred up.

Chagnon faced numerous challenges simply in gathering material on the Yanomamo, starting with the difficulty of communicating with his subjects. Their language is unwritten and unrelated to any others spoken in South America, a testament to their long isolation. They didn't even have a clear sense or delineation of individual words when Chagnon began working with them. He struggled to find symbols for sounds in the Yanomamo language that had no equivalent in English. Math was an issue, too. Chagnon was conducting a detailed study that included compiling extensive demographic data to understand how Yanomamo culture operated. But the Yanomamo have no numbers past two, and they don't use calendars, so they have little idea how old they are, or how far in any unit of measure one village might be from another. Compiling a census of a single village was a time-consuming chore.

Chagnon met numerous physical dangers. To reach remote villages, he traveled for days through dense jungles, often guided by friendly Yanomamo who had only a general sense of where the village they were seeking might be located. He faced jaguars, poisonous snakes, and occasionally hostile villagers. He unwittingly became embroiled in the disputes among villages merely because of whom he chose as a guide, learning in the process that the Yanomamo nursed grudges against one another that sometimes endured for years. He survived several plots against himself and his guides in hostile places. His ability to escape harm during tense encounters in remote villages may have had something to do with the shotgun he always carried.

After a year of studying Yanomamo language and customs, Chagnon began to piece together how their society worked. The Yanomamo had no king or nobles to rule villages scattered throughout a vast area. Instead, villages governed themselves, largely through so-called "headmen"—leaders who often rose to power because they had a large number of kin as allies within a village. Individual villages often made alliances with other villages because the inhabitants of both settlements were part of extended family—related through marriage, for instance—and could offer one another mutual protections. "Political status among the Yanomamo depended to a very large extent on the numbers and kinds of biologically defined (genetic) relatives one has," he writes. His findings challenged the "fundamental message of Marxist social science that dominated most departments of anthropology in the 1960s"—that political power in early societies arose over successful battles to control "strategic resources," not through biology or kinship.

Chagnon's observations led him into dangerous intellectual areas. From his initial contacts with the Yanomamo, he'd noticed how prevalent violence was in their culture. He determined that as many as 30 percent of all Yanomamo men died in violent confrontations, often over women. Abductions and raids were common, and Chagnon estimated that as many as 20 percent of women in some villages had been captured in attacks. Nothing in his academic background prepared him for this, but Chagnon came to understand the importance of large extended families to the Yanomamo, and thus the connection between reproduction and political power. As Chagnon notes, biologists found his observations unsurprising and consistent with much they already knew; but to anthropologists, the notion that primitive societies fought extensively, and did so over women for the sake of reproductive rights, made Chagnon a heretic.

Undaunted, Chagnon plunged even further into the thicket of political incorrectness. In a 1988 *Science* article, he estimated that 45 percent of living Yanomamo adult males had participated in the killing of at least one person. He then compared the reproductive success of these Yanomamo men to others who had never killed. The *unokais*—those who had participated in killings—

produced three times as many children, on average, as the others. Chagnon suggested that this was because *unokais*, who earned a certain prestige in their society, were more successful at acquiring wives in the polygamous Yanomamo culture. “Had I been discussing wild boars, yaks, ground squirrels, armadillos or bats, nobody . . . would have been surprised by my findings,” he writes. “But I was discussing *Homo sapiens*—who, according to many cultural anthropologists, stands apart from the laws of nature.”

By this point, a segment of the academic community had already been trying to discredit Chagnon for years. In the late 1970s, for instance, a panel Chagnon organized to discuss the role of new biological theories in the study of man’s past was almost cancelled because of objections from cultural anthropologists. The panel proceeded, but protestors attacked the eminent Harvard biologist Edward O. Wilson when he rose to speak, knocking him down and dousing him with cold water. Critics, meanwhile, charged Chagnon with faking his data and branded him a racist. He found it difficult to get back into Venezuela to continue his studies. His problems intensified as the field of anthropology changed and cultural anthropologists increasingly began to reject the scientific method that Chagnon pursued in favor of a postmodernist approach. Chagnon calls these new anthropologists believers, not scientists. They saw their field not as a path of inquiry but as a means of social change—one that condemned the industrialized, capitalist nations for exploiting natural resources and “peaceful” primitive peoples.

Tensions escalated with the 2000 publication of Patrick Tierney’s explosive book, *Darkness in El Dorado: How Scientists and Journalists Devastated the Amazon*. In the preface, Tierney identified himself as an advocate for whom being a “traditional, objective journalist was no longer an option.” He charged that Chagnon and his biologist colleague, James Neel, had caused a measles epidemic among the Yanomamo through a vaccination program designed to test Neel’s theories of the Indians’ genetic fitness. The result, said Tierney, was “ethnocide.” The book also claimed that the Chagnon team withheld medical care from the Yanomamo. Critics piled on, accusing Chagnon again of falsifying his data and staging scenes in documentary films he’d helped make about the Yanomamo. A committee of the American Anthropological Association charged that Chagnon fired a gun into Yanomamo villages to intimidate the residents and that he associated with criminals in Venezuela.

With help from supporters and independent investigators, Chagnon eventually refuted the charges. One former colleague of the anthropologist said that it took him just a few hours of conversations with epidemiologists, including those at the Centers for Disease Control, to dismiss the most serious accusations about the measles epidemic. Numerous scientists reported that the vaccine in question had no record of giving anyone measles. In 2011, the scientific journal *Human Nature* published a long article by Alice Dreger, a professor in the medical and bioethics program at Northwestern, addressing most of the charges against Chagnon. She dismissed much of what Tierney wrote as “falsehoods” and “a fictitious picture” of Chagnon’s actions in the Amazon. Dreger also denounced the American Anthropological Association for conducting an investigation largely run by Chagnon’s critics. But the Association wasn’t alone. *The New Yorker*, a magazine famed for supposedly dogged fact-checking, had run a long article by Tierney, “The Fierce Anthropologist,” without apparently doing much vetting.

Readers can perhaps get a sense of the current state of the anthropology field by considering the most absurd claim against Chagnon: that he was a McCarthyite. The evidence for this was little more than Tierney’s observation that Chagnon grew up in the 1950s in a rural area of Michigan, where “anti-Communist feeling ran high, and where Senator Joseph McCarthy enjoyed strong support.” Critics also sniped at Chagnon for being, in Tierney’s description, “a free-market

advocate.” Harvard evolutionary psychologist Steven Pinker, a Chagnon defender, calls this kind of branding “an irredentist leftism that considers even moderate and liberal positions reactionary.”

The publication of *Noble Savages*, which Chagnon was writing and, apparently, rewriting for some 14 years, has further enhanced the author’s standing after his long battle to restore his reputation. But it has also opened old wounds and raised new worries about the decline of objectivity and the abandonment of truth-seeking in the social sciences. Chagnon concludes by citing the prediction of biologist Paul Gross (co-author of *Higher Superstition: The Academic Left and Its Quarrels with Science*) that “the barefoot anthropologists, the activists, will be teaching your children.” They’re teaching them now, Chagnon assures us.

Steven Malanga is senior editor of City Journal and a senior fellow at the Manhattan Institute.

Power Line

Is Scott Walker on his way to 2016 front-runner status?

by Paul Mirengoff

Scott Walker has a [16 point lead](#) (56-40) among likely voters in his race for governor, according to a poll from Wisconsin Public Radio/St. Norbert’s. Among registered voters, his lead is essentially the same (55-40).

The survey was conducted between March 24 and April 3. A [Marquette University survey](#) conducted between March 20-23 also showed Walker with a nice, though smaller, lead. In that poll, Walker outdistanced Democrat Mary Burke 48-41.

Revealingly, Walker fares well in an electorate that does not seem particularly conservative and that, if anything, appears to be slightly to the left of American voters in general. Among those surveyed in the WPR/St. Norbert’s poll, 48 percent had a favorable view of President Obama; 50 percent had an unfavorable view. Obama generally fares [worse](#) than that in national polling. In addition, Wisconsin’s liberal Senator Tammy Baldwin had a positive rating — 44 percent approve; 33 percent disapprove.

In this context, Walker’s popularity is particularly striking. 59 percent approve of his performance, while only 39 percent disapprove.

Walker’s approval numbers basically track the right direction/wrong direction numbers for his State. 57 percent said that Wisconsin is moving in the right direction, while 38 percent said its moving in the wrong direction. By contrast only 32 percent believe the United States is moving in the right direction. 63 percent think we’re moving the other way.

Let’s assume that Scott Walker is reelected decisively in November. In that event, it’s clear that he will receive a boost among Republicans nationally.

The buzz among Republican accompanying a big Walker victory would probably dwarf the considerable buzz that followed Chris Christie’s runaway win in New Jersey. Many conservatives had serious doubts (or worse) about the New Jersey governor even when he was riding high. No

serious doubts exist for Walker, although most conservatives will want to learn more before embracing him as a presidential candidate.

The other thing that accompanied Christie's big win was intense scrutiny from the mainstream media. Suddenly, his [campaign for local office](#) 20 years ago became an issue. Even his [high school baseball career](#) received attention.

Scott Walker is in for the same treatment. Indeed, it has already started.

But Walker is a less inviting target than Christie. He carries himself with more humility and less bravado (which isn't difficult). And he has been cautious in speaking about issues that don't relate directly to Wisconsin.

I expect that, with a solid victory in November, Scott Walker will become the effective front-runner for the GOP presidential nomination. By effective front-runner, I mean the most likely nominee (assuming he wants the nomination), not necessarily the Republican who polls the best in early surveys.

To the extent that polls show Walker likely to get his solid victory, he can perhaps already be considered the effective front-runner.

Right Turn

[Why Virginia Republicans are smiling](#)

by Jennifer Rubin

Ed Gillespie's Senate campaign is touting big fundraising numbers, [\\$2.2 million in the first quarter](#), for the GOP adviser-turned candidate who is challenging Sen. Mark Warner (D-Va.). Campaign manager Chris Levitt announced in a statement: "In less than a full quarter, the Gillespie campaign raised more money than any other Republican Senate challenger in the country. Virginia voters know that they have an opportunity not only to replace a Senator who's voted 97 percent of the time with President Obama, but to replace Harry Reid as Senate Majority Leader. Our first quarter report shows strong support from across the Commonwealth and reflects enthusiasm for Ed Gillespie's plans to put Virginians first and unleash job creation." He will need that money since Warner is a prodigious fundraiser himself ([bringing in \\$2.7 million during the first quarter](#)).

Gillespie's numbers reflect a few positive trends for the GOP. The Virginia state party was down in the dumps just a few months ago after losing the gubernatorial and two other statewide races in the wake of the federal government shutdown. Now with a viable Senate candidate, donors and activists have perked up. The benefit of a competitive Senate race is that it also helps congressional candidates. This year Barbara Comstock is the front-runner in the GOP primary for Virginia's 10th Congressional District to replace retiring Rep. Frank Wolf, a Republican. She also enjoyed a big fundraising quarter, bringing in \$775,000. Since redistricting in 2010, the 10th has become somewhat more conservative, but Democrats will look for an opening wherever they can get one this year. A strong Senate candidate at the top of the ticket in November will help Comstock.

And, finally, Gillespie will continue to make Warner raise and spend money and drain available Democratic funds from other races. Every million dollars spent to save Warner's seat is a million that can't be used in Michigan or Arkansas or Colorado. Certainly, not all the GOP challengers are going to win their races, but many will, and even those who fall short can help revive the party, help congressional candidates and drain Democratic resources. And if 2014 really is a wave year, the tide will sweep in a lot of candidates, making it essential to field quality candidates in all the races. For all these reasons Virginia Republican are very pleased.

WSJ - Political Diary

Scott Brown's Strong Start

by Jason L. Riley

In the second half of March, Republican Scott Brown raised an impressive \$275,000 to challenge incumbent Democratic Sen. Jeanne Shaheen of New Hampshire.

"That sum came despite Brown not holding any fundraisers or paying any staff to work on raising money for him," reports the Hill newspaper. It came "simply from donations contributed to his website or via check in the mail, while he toured New Hampshire in his truck on a listening tour."



Republican Scott Brown

Before Mr. Brown entered the race, Ms. Shaheen was expected to win in a walk; the closest GOP challenger, former U.S. Sen. Bob Smith, trailed her by 14 points. Ms. Shaheen is still the favorite, but Mr. Brown's fundraising ability and name I.D. mean that she now has a real race on her hands.

Republican candidates across the country are making ObamaCare a centerpiece of their campaigns, but Mr. Brown—a former Massachusetts senator—has reason to hope that the law's unpopularity will have even more resonance in the Granite State. "New Hampshire's rollout of the Affordable Care Act has been one of the rockiest in the nation, putting Democratic Sen. Jeanne Shaheen on the front lines of Republican efforts to make the 2014 elections a referendum on the health law," reports Wednesday's Wall Street Journal. "Only a single insurer in the state offers policies through the new law. Ten of the state's 26 hospitals and one fifth of its primary care providers aren't in its network. Residents of Concord, the state capital, have to drive to other cities to get covered hospital care."

Polls currently have Ms. Shaheen up by about 6 points, "but her favorability ratings have declined since the health rollout began in October," says The Journal. "Back then, 57% had a favorable opinion of her and 22% held an unfavorable view. In the April poll, 49% were favorable and 35% unfavorable."

Incumbents polling below 50 percent are considered vulnerable—and all the more so when the challenger is well known and can raise money.

Power Line

Dems get that sinking feeling in FLA-13

by Paul Mirengoff

There will be no replay this November of that closely-watched special congressional election in Florida last month in which [Republican David Jolly defeated Democrat Alex Sink](#). The Democrat says she will not run.

This leaves the Dems searching for a respectable candidate to challenge Jolly. Meanwhile, Jolly can accrue the advantages, financial and otherwise, of incumbency.

Rep. Steve ("[Not all Republican law makers are racists](#)") Israel, the Democratic Campaign Committee Chairman, had lobbied hard for Sink to have another go, according to the [Washington Post](#). Now he is trying to put a happy face on his latest setback:

Pinellas residents have voted time and again for commonsense solutions instead of reckless partisanship, which is why we are confident our Democratic nominee can prevail on Election Day.

I'm sure [Bill Young](#), the longtime *Republican* congressman from Pinellas for whom Jolly once worked, would have appreciated the compliment.

Not all Democrat politicians are bullshitters, but Israel is.

The Republican take is closer to the mark. "Washington Democrats can't even convince their die-hard career politicians to walk the plank this November," said Katie Prill, a spokeswoman for the National Republican Congressional Committee.



"WHO THOUGHT DETROIT WOULD NAME A FEMALE AUTO CEO BEFORE HOLLYWOOD WOULD PROMOTE A FEMALE TALK HOST?"

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