

November 26, 2014

Kevin Williamson writes on the small man in the big office.

*... In an elected official, patriotism means, among other things, elevating the interests of the country above the interests of party and career. President Obama has failed to do that, seems personally incapable of doing that, and in fact has done the opposite. He might be reminded, at the very least, that his presidential duty is to the citizens of the United States, not to citizens of other countries, regardless of where they happen to be located at any given moment. But the very idea of taking that seriously seems foreign to him.*

*We already knew that Barack Obama is a coward – a man who, to take one obvious example, pronounced himself opposed to gay marriage right up until the millisecond that political calculation demanded he do otherwise, and who now believes that it is mandated by the Constitution. His putting off his amnesty announcement until after the election – and his dishonest refusal to acknowledge that it is an amnesty – is another example. We already knew that he is a liar (“If you like your coverage . . .”) and have some reason to suspect that he is a fool. **But the fundamental problem is that he is a lawyer, one without the intellectual or moral equipment to be anything more than a litigator of the picayune.** For President Obama and his enablers, the law is a species of magic: He is entitled to do whatever he pleases, even when it plainly violates both the national interest and our longstanding habits of government, if he can simply think of a way to say the right words in the right order as he acts. That isn’t governance – that’s alchemical hokum, transforming the dross of Democratic political ambition into pure gold.*

*There are many defects with that model of government, but the largest one is that the words “illegal” and “legal” no longer have any meaning. If a sufficiently powerful person or faction demands that the illegal should be the legal, then it is so. Never mind the law – and certainly never mind the lawmakers, who are increasingly irrelevant in our emerging Gaullist, strongman form of government. Charles de Gaulle and his supporters at least had the intellectual honesty to call that form of government what it is: rule by decree.*

*And he may yet get away with it. But a wiser and better man would not try to.*

John Fund suggests the president will have as much trouble in the courts as he did at Saturday Night Live.

*... Saturday Night Live ran a wicked parody of his moves, turning inside out the old 1970s Schoolhouse Rock skit on how a bill becomes a law. “There’s actually an even easier way to get things done around here, and it’s called an executive order,” Obama (played by Jay Pharoah) proclaims as he shoves cast member Kenan Thompson, who is dressed as a Bill, down the Capitol Steps. Actor Bobby Moynihan then shows up smoking a cigarette and dressed as an Executive Order. He sings, “I’m an executive order, and I pretty much just happen.” The “little boy” who is there to learn how government works then asks, “Wait a second, don’t you have to go through Congress at some point?” “Aw, that’s adorable, you still think that’s how government works,” Executive Order responds, as “President Obama” smirks nearby. The Bill (Thompson) climbs back up the stairs to warn: “Look at the midterm elections. People clearly don’t want this.” Obama kicks him down the stairs again. It’s Obama as a bully, unwilling to listen to others. ...*

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The Court held that a president may use the limited powers granted him in the Constitution but that his “power to see that the laws are faithfully executed refutes the idea that he is to be a lawmaker.”

President Obama may indeed see himself as a modern-day Lincoln, acting boldly to address a national “emergency” of immigration — conveniently timed to fall just days after the midterm elections. But it is far more likely that the public and eventually the courts will see him as closer to the figure that *Saturday Night Live* portrayed: an overreaching bully whose own previous statements undermine his brand-new assertions.

**Streetwise Professor** posts on more slights of our allies.

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*The Australian reports of another example. Obama spurned the advice of the US ambassador to Australia, and delivered a truculent speech that directly attacked the Australian government’s climate change policies: ...*

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*And for what is Obama slagging our allies? A farcical war on CO2.*

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*That’s Obama’s America. No worse friend. No better enemy. Two years cannot pass quickly enough.*

Back to GruberGate just so we can highlight this from **Howie Carr**.

***... Do you realize that every last one of the many disasters that has befallen this nation in the last half-century can be traced right back here to the banks of the Charles River?***

*C’mon down, Jonathan Gruber, economics professor at MIT. He’s the moonbat who, after engineering the ongoing fiasco that is Obamacare, then took a nationwide victory lap in which he repeatedly described the American people as “too stupid” to realize the Democrats were destroying their health care.*

*Maybe he’s right about our stupidity. After all, he cashed in \$392,000 worth of federal no-bid contracts to wreck the best health care system in the world, plus another \$1.6 million or so in various state wrecking-ball contracts.*

*This goober, I mean Gruber, now says that when he sneered about how stupid Americans are, he made a mistake. Oddly, he made the same “mistake” five times (and counting). When you say something publicly five times, it’s part of your stump speech.*

***The Unaffordable Care Act — from the same Beautiful People who gave you Vietnam, the War on Poverty, the Immigration Reform Act of 1965, global warming, SSI, busing, gay marriage and gender reassignment. ...***

**Matthew Continetti calls the far left Dems the "De Blasio Democrats."**

*... The movement that launched a 50-state strategy has been reduced to a 50-enclaves strategy. Democrats are limited to the majority-minority districts, cities, and coastal bastions of the liberal coalition. This is a somewhat surprising outcome for a party that trumpets its populism and democratic heritage. What has surprised me most, however, is the brazenness with which the president and his allies declare their apathy toward public sentiment as expressed in elections that Democrats lose. Who cares about the Americans who bothered to vote on November 4, they say. They’re not our people.*

*“To the two-thirds of voters who chose not to participate in the process yesterday, I hear you, too,” Obama said at his post-election press conference. How can he hear these voters? Dental fillings? By what means does he divine their hopes, fears, and needs? A Ouija board?*

*I have a test to determine the lunacy of a Democratic talking point: If E.J. Dionne is the only reporter who parrots it, then it’s too crazy for most journalists. Sure enough, writes Dionne, by issuing his unconstitutional executive order, Obama “is paying close attention to the feelings of a very important group of voters—the tens of millions who supported him two years ago but were so dispirited that they stayed away from the polls on November 4.” It’s the silent majority—so silent it does not even vote.*

*This is too much for the press corps but not for liberal politicians. Asked during his trip to D.C. about a recent poll showing a stark racial divide in his approval rating, Bill de Blasio said, “I question whether they are getting the totality of the citizens of the city.” He must have forgotten that he too won an election with record low turnout. Ladies and gentlemen, I give you the de Blasio Democrats: extremists who gratify special interests while disregarding public opinion. It is a vanishing breed. At this rate, soon only E.J. will be left.*

**The progressives are waging war on suburbia according to Joel Kotkin.**

*... You are a political party, and you want to secure the electoral majority. But what happens, as is occurring to the Democrats, when the damned electorate that just won’t live the way—in dense cities and apartments—that you have deemed is best for them?*

*This gap between party ideology and demographic reality has led to a disconnect that not only devastated the Democrats this year, but could hurt them in the decades to come. University of Washington demographer Richard Morrill notes that the vast majority of the 153 million Americans who live in metropolitan areas with populations of more than 500,000 live in the lower-density suburban places Democrats think they should not. Only 60 million live in core cities.*

*Despite these realities, the Democratic Party under Barack Obama has increasingly allied itself with its relatively small core urban base. Simply put, the party cannot win—certainly not in off-year elections—if it doesn't score well with suburbanites. Indeed, Democrats, as they retreat to their coastal redoubts, have become ever more aggressively anti-suburban, particularly in deep blue states such as California. "To minimize sprawl" has become a bedrock catchphrase of the core political ideology.*

*As will become even more obvious in the lame duck years, the political obsessions of the Obama Democrats largely mirror those of the cities: climate change, gay marriage, feminism, amnesty for the undocumented, and racial redress. These may sometimes be worthy causes, but they don't address basic issues that effect suburbanites, such as stagnant middle class wages, poor roads, high housing prices, or underperforming schools. None of these concerns elicit much passion among the party's true believers.*

*The miscalculation is deep-rooted, and has already cost the Democrats numerous House and Senate seats and at least two governorships. Nationwide, in areas as disparate as east Texas and Maine or Colorado and Maryland, suburban voters deserted the Democrats in droves. ...*

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## National Review

### [A Small Man in a Big Office](#)

***The president's operating principle appears to be that democracy is what you can get away with.***

By Kevin D. Williamson

My mother was, in her modest way, an Ayn Rand villain, someone who lived by the moral principle that John Galt mockingly summarized: "It is your *need* that gives you a claim to rewards." She believed that being poor gave one a warrant to exploit any situation to one's own material benefit. The results of this were generally comical, if cringe-inducing: On the few occasions upon which we found ourselves staying in motels, she and her husband would steal practically everything that was not nailed down: towels, bathrobes, ashtrays — this was in the pre-Enlightenment era, when hotel rooms still had ashtrays and Gideon Bibles. Come to think of it, there were a couple of Gideon Bibles in our house, too, the provenance of which was suspicious. This belief was not limited to economic concerns: She was an enthusiastic partisan of the intentional, strategic foul in football, and of the proposition that athletes should attempt, when possible, to inflict disabling injuries on their opponents. Having been initiated into the ancient mystery cult that is West Texas high-school football, I knew these beliefs to be barbarous, heretical. The Lubbock High School Westerners had a fine long tradition of losing with honor.

I have seen a high-school football coach refuse to shake the hand of his opposite number after a football game in response to perceived affronts to sportsmanship, and that's a serious thing. (They take it seriously in that other kind of football, too.) It's basically Sampson biting his thumb at Abraham in the opening of *Romeo and Juliet*. "When good manners shall lie all in one or two men's hands, and they unwashed, too, 'tis a foul thing." You don't shake hands with somebody who has behaved dishonorably.

I do not think I would shake hands with Barack Obama.

My friend Jay Nordlinger describes the president as operating according to what we might call the Warhol Doctrine: "Democracy is what you can get away with." And why shouldn't he? A lawyer or 20 could make a plausible legal case that the president is legally permitted to proceed as he has (and also that the law clearly forbids this, which is why the analysis of lawyers is of limited interest to me), just as you could make a case that, old-fashioned ideas about sportsmanship or gentlemanly behavior be damned, if the rules of the game make intentional fouls strategically useful, then one should commit those fouls when doing so is desirable.

This is, as many have pointed out, a problematic line of argument. The Congress would be legally within its rights to, e.g., refuse to fund government operations, filibuster in the Senate every single appointment that President Obama attempts to make, impeach him and everybody he has appointed to office, declare war on Canada and Togo, pass a law requiring that all future U.S. coinage be made out of papier-mâché and glitter, etc. Why shouldn't Republicans impeach the president? There are practical considerations, of course: They probably would fail to convict him. But practical considerations are not the only considerations — surely there are higher and worthier motives at work than mere political calculation.

What stops a defensive tackle from intentionally injuring a halfback even if he thinks he can get away with it — even if he is willing to suffer the consequences of the foul — is sportsmanship. What stops a politician from adopting a what-you-can-get-away-with strategy is, under normal circumstances, patriotism. Congress forgoes impeaching the president every time it would be convenient for the legislative majority to do so not merely out of narrow self-interest, but because doing so would violate our constitutional principles even if the letter of the law could be interpreted to permit that course of action. It would be bad for the country. In an elected official, patriotism means, among other things, elevating the interests of the country above the interests of party and career. President Obama has failed to do that, seems personally incapable of doing that, and in fact has done the opposite. He might be reminded, at the very least, that his presidential duty is to the citizens of the United States, not to citizens of other countries, regardless of where they happen to be located at any given moment. But the very idea of taking that seriously seems foreign to him.

We already knew that Barack Obama is a coward — a man who, to take one obvious example, pronounced himself opposed to gay marriage right up until the millisecond that political calculation demanded he do otherwise, and who now believes that it is mandated by the Constitution. His putting off his amnesty announcement until after the election — and his dishonest refusal to acknowledge that it is an amnesty — is another example. We already knew that he is a liar ("If you like your coverage . . .") and have some reason to suspect that he is a fool. But the fundamental problem is that he is a lawyer, one without the intellectual or moral equipment to be anything more than a litigator of the picayune. For President Obama and his enablers, the law is a species of magic: He is entitled to do whatever he pleases, even when it plainly violates both the national interest and our longstanding habits of government, if he can simply think of a way to say the right words in the right order as he acts. That isn't governance — that's alchemical hokum, transforming the dross of Democratic political ambition into pure gold.

There are many defects with that model of government, but the largest one is that the words "illegal" and "legal" no longer have any meaning. If a sufficiently powerful person or faction demands that the illegal should be the legal, then it is so. Never mind the law — and certainly never mind the lawmakers, who are increasingly irrelevant in our emerging Gaullist, strongman form of government. Charles de Gaulle and his supporters at least had the intellectual honesty to call that form of government what it is: rule by decree.

And he may yet get away with it. But a wiser and better man would not try to.

## National Review

### [Lincoln — or Schoolyard Bully?](#)

*Even some of Obama's allies cast a cold eye on his penchant for lawmaking.*

by John Fund

President Obama held a private screening of the Steven Spielberg movie *Lincoln* at the White House in late 2012, and an ABC News reporter tweeted that Obama was “incredibly moved” by the movie, which depicts how President Lincoln used both high- and low-minded tactics to secure passage of the anti-slavery 13th Amendment. That screening may have set Obama on a path to his new unilateral executive actions to protect illegal immigrants from deportation.

Obama apologists, from Yale Law professor Bruce Ackerman to House Democratic leader Nancy Pelosi, are calling Obama's move akin to a modern version of Lincoln's Emancipation Proclamation.



But there are other interpretations. *Saturday Night Live* ran a wicked parody of his moves, turning inside out the old 1970s *Schoolhouse Rock* skit on how a bill becomes a law. “There’s actually an even easier way to get things done around here, and it’s called an executive order,” Obama (played by Jay Pharoah) proclaims as he shoves cast member Kenan Thompson, who is dressed as a Bill, down the Capitol Steps. Actor Bobby Moynihan then shows up smoking a cigarette and dressed as an Executive Order. He sings, “I’m an executive order, and I pretty much just happen.” The “little boy” who is there to learn how government works then asks, “Wait a second, don’t you

have to go through Congress at some point?” “Aw, that’s adorable, you still think that’s how government works,” Executive Order responds, as “President Obama” smirks nearby. The Bill (Thompson) climbs back up the stairs to warn: “Look at the midterm elections. People clearly don’t want this.” Obama kicks him down the stairs again. It’s Obama as a bully, unwilling to listen to others.

It’s no wonder that the White House and its allies aren’t citing the recent elections or polls in defending their actions. An NBC News/Wall Street Journal poll taken ahead of Obama’s move found that voters opposed him taking executive action without approval from Congress by 48 to 38 percent. Even among Hispanics, only 43 percent favored the action versus 37 percent who opposed it.

Many legal scholars also believe Obama’s executive orders are on shaky ground. Yale Law professor Peter Schuck laid out his concerns in an op-ed in the *New York Times* entitled “Why Congress Can Impeach Obama”:

Obama, a former constitutional law professor, once rejected the very arguments he now embraces. Last year he said that extending amnesty beyond the so-called Dreamers (the children of undocumented immigrants brought here at an early age) would be “ignoring the law in a way that I think would be very difficult to defend legally.” It is hard to think of a confession more damning to his position in a court of law, in a congressional court of impeachment, and in the court of public opinion.

Several statewide elected officials are scrambling to be the first in line to file lawsuits against the president on immigration. Kansas Secretary of State Kris Kobach, an immigration specialist, has compiled a list of more than a dozen ICE agents he says are eager to file suit, claiming that President Obama is ordering them to break the oath they took to enforce the nation’s immigration laws. Greg Abbott, incoming governor of Texas, a state with an estimated 1.7 million illegal immigrants, told *Fox News Sunday* that his state has standing to sue President Obama for burdening it with mandates that dictate it must subsidize education, medical, and welfare costs for undocumented workers.

President Obama might find that his previously expressed attitudes on constitutional issues render his audience unsympathetic when it comes to federal courts. In the last two years, the Supreme Court has 13 times unanimously ruled against the Obama administration on key constitutional questions. The unanimous rulings have included his own appointees, Sonia Sotomayor and Elena Kagan.

During the height of the Korean War, President Harry Truman acted to block a potential strike of America’s steel mills by ordering his secretary of Commerce to seize control of the mills. The Supreme Court ruled, in a 6–3 decision, that the president’s actions had violated the Constitution. The Court held that a president may use the limited powers granted him in the Constitution but that his “power to see that the laws are faithfully executed refutes the idea that he is to be a lawmaker.”

President Obama may indeed see himself as a modern-day Lincoln, acting boldly to address a national “emergency” of immigration — conveniently timed to fall just days after the midterm elections. But it is far more likely that the public and eventually the courts will see him as closer to the figure that *Saturday Night Live* portrayed: an overreaching bully whose own previous statements undermine his brand-new assertions.

## Streetwise Professor

### Obama's FOF Foreign Policy

by Craig Pirrong

The Marines have a saying: "No better friend. No worse enemy." Obama is hell-bent on reversing that formulation.

One leg of his foreign policy could be dubbed FOF: F' Our Friends. I've discussed one example of that recently: Obama's inveterate opposition to the Keystone XL pipeline, and his fact free defense of his indefensible position. In adhering to this position, Obama is giving Canada the back of his hand.

*The Australian* reports of another example. [Obama spurned the advice of the US ambassador to Australia, and delivered a truculent speech that directly attacked the Australian government's climate change policies:](#)

The US embassy, under the leadership of ambassador John Berry, advised the President, through his senior staff, not to couch his climate change comments in a way that would be seen as disobliging to the Abbott government, sources have revealed.

When *The Weekend Australian* put this information to the US embassy, a spokesman said: "As is the case with all presidential speeches, President Obama's remarks at the University of Queensland in Brisbane were prepared by the White House."

It is normal practice when the US President makes an overseas visit that the ambassador in the country he is visiting is consulted about the contents of major speeches. It is unusual, though not unprecedented, for an embassy's advice to be ignored.

The Obama speech in Brisbane was added to the President's program at the last minute. During his extensive talks with Tony Abbott in Beijing at APEC, Mr Obama did not make any mention of a desire to make a speech, or of any of the contentious climate change content of the speech.

Only in Naypyidaw, in Myanmar, immediately prior to the leaders travelling to Brisbane for the G20 summit, did the US party demand that the President make a speech and that it be to an audience of young people. At the speech, the President did not acknowledge the presence of Governor-General Peter Cosgrove.

Despite repeated Australian requests, White House officials refused to provide a text of the speech to their Australian hosts in advance, and did not provide a summary of what would be contained in the speech.

Mr Obama's repeated references to the climate change debate in Australia, his accusation that Australia was an inefficient user of energy and his repeated references to the Great Barrier Reef, which has figured heavily in the climate change debate, have led observers to conclude that the speech was a deliberate swipe at the Abbott government.

Historians of the US-Australia relationship are unable to nominate a case of a visiting president making such a hostile speech for the host government.

That's our Barry. Always the gracious guest, always making history. (If you can't access the article through the previous link, you should be able to get there from [here](#).)

Canada and Australia have been stalwart allies for years. Both are fighting beside the US against ISIS and Afghanistan. The Australians fought with us in Viet Nam. Of course both made huge contributions in WWII, especially once their sizes are considered. Both are highly responsible and constructive nations. To a considerable degree, they share a common heritage with us, and a common belief in liberty and representative government.

Maybe it's something about the Anglosphere. Obama's animus against the UK (which has also fought shoulder-to-shoulder with America in Afghanistan, Iraq, Kuwait and now against ISIS) is well-known.

And for what is Obama slagging our allies? A farcical war on CO2.

While the FOF campaign is in full swing, Obama continues his Ahab-like pursuit of a deal with a nation that has been assiduously killing Americans for 25 years.

That's Obama's America. No worse friend. No better enemy. Two years cannot pass quickly enough.

## **Boston Herald**

### **Jonathan Gruber is just another goober from Cambridge**

by Howie Carr

So here's this geeky nerd, overeducated, greedy, pompous, thinks he's the smartest guy in the room while simultaneously engineering a public-policy disaster of the first magnitude — and not only is he from Massachusetts, he's from Cambridge.

Stop me if you've heard this one before.

Why is it that Massachusetts produces so many of these "pointed-headed intellectuals who can't park a bicycle straight," as the late Democrat George C. Wallace used to say?

Do you realize that every last one of the many disasters that has befallen this nation in the last half-century can be traced right back here to the banks of the Charles River?

C'mon down, Jonathan Gruber, economics professor at MIT. He's the moonbat who, after engineering the ongoing fiasco that is Obamacare, then took a nationwide victory lap in which he repeatedly described the American people as "too stupid" to realize the Democrats were destroying their health care.

Maybe he's right about our stupidity. After all, he cashed in \$392,000 worth of federal no-bid contracts to wreck the best health care system in the world, plus another \$1.6 million or so in various state wrecking-ball contracts.

This goober, I mean Gruber, now says that when he sneered about how stupid Americans are, he made a mistake. Oddly, he made the same "mistake" five times (and counting). When you say something publicly five times, it's part of your stump speech.

The Unaffordable Care Act — from the same Beautiful People who gave you Vietnam, the War on Poverty, the Immigration Reform Act of 1965, global warming, SSI, busing, gay marriage and gender reassignment.

Asked about Prof. Goober, Nancy Pelosi said, “Who he?” Then some video was produced of Madame Botox citing his no-bid brilliance. A moonbat in-the-satchel reporter from Vox pooh-poohed the goober’s role as “mostly number-crunching.” Two years earlier this same bumkisser said he “pretty much wrote Obamacare.”

The first place this moonbat millionaire’s obnoxious comments turned up was on a website of the University of Pennsylvania (which made fake Indian Granny Warren an affirmative-action hire back in the 1990s).

As soon as Penn realized that its video might be causing consternation to Dear Leader, it excised the footage.

Nothing to see here, comrades. Move along.

Hey, professor, I’m sorry you were the last guy picked up on the softball team and that you had your lunch bag stomped on the playground when you were a wimpy little kid. But that’s no excuse for grabbing millions to wreck the health care plans of everyone who wasn’t born with a silver spoon in their mouths and didn’t have a rich uncle on Wall Street to get them into an Ivy League college.

How much do you want to bet this pampered puke from Cambridge has a trust fund? And that he thinks anyone who wasn’t born with one is ... □stupid.

## Free Beacon

### The De Blasio Democrats

#### *Liberal, extreme, and contemptuous of public opinion*

by Matthew Continetti

Bill de Blasio, the New York mayor, says he knows why Democrats lost the 2014 election. Income inequality defines our times, [he said during a visit to Washington this week](#), and his party did not talk about the issue enough. De Blasio needs a hearing aid. Democrats speak of little else.

Dodging questions about Hillary Clinton, de Blasio praised Elizabeth Warren. He called the liberal heroine “one of the indispensable voices” among Democrats, and appeared with her at a [Center for American Progress](#) event later that day. The policy conference featured other darlings of the left: Julian Castro, Tammy Baldwin, Kamala Harris, Bishop Gene Robinson, Gina McCarthy, and John Podesta. Listening to the speakers, you would not have known that two weeks earlier liberalism had encountered its worst setback in decades.

Indeed, President Obama and congressional Democrats have shown no signs of rethinking their political and policy strategies following the 2014 election. The president has veered left, calling for government regulation of the Internet, agreeing to a burdensome climate deal with China, and ordering an amnesty for millions of illegal immigrants. Harry Reid elevated Warren to a leadership position and voted to kill the Keystone Pipeline—as well as Mary Landrieu’s Senate career. Nancy Pelosi, [the most unpopular congressional leader in the country](#), is going nowhere.

The gap between Democratic performance and liberal behavior is stunning. President Obama is responsible for [two of four postwar GOP landslides](#), polls show Americans [dissatisfied with Washington](#) and eager to have [congressional Republicans set the agenda](#), and there is growing fear among Democratic [consultants](#) and [journalists](#) that the party is [headed](#) toward [more defeats](#). How have liberals responded? By blowing a raspberry in all of our faces.

The case of Ben Ray Lujan is instructive. This week Pelosi chose the New Mexico Democrat [to run the Democratic Congressional Campaign Committee](#). Young and Hispanic, Lujan represents the “coalition of the ascendant” upon which Democrats have placed their hopes for a liberal future. But Lujan is a political novice—elected to Congress in 2008—from a deep blue majority-minority district. He boasts a 100 percent rating from the ACLU and a 97 percent rating from the League of Conservation Voters. [A member of the Progressive Caucus](#), he voted for its [far-left budget](#). This is the guy Democrats want recruiting candidates in Missouri, Iowa, North Carolina, and Virginia?

Obama, Reid, and Pelosi have forgotten how they won the majority. The liberal resurgence began in 2004 when Barack Obama denounced partisanship and ideology at the Democratic National Convention. The next year Howard Dean unveiled the “[Fifty State Strategy](#)” to expand the Democrats’ appeal. The goal was to be competitive everywhere. Rahm Emanuel and Chuck Schumer recruited candidates that appealed to suburbanites and the white working class. Obama in 2008 sold himself as a redemptive figure transcending the grievances and gridlock of the past. Strong candidates, an unpopular war, and economic downturn began a period of liberal ascendancy that is ending only now.

Either the Democrats do not recognize the connection between the tactics they employed once in power and their diminishing clout today, or they do not care. They went ahead with an unpopular health care law despite the blazing “stop” signal that was Scott Brown’s election in 2010. They betrayed their pledges on campaign finance to run the most expensive negative campaign in history in 2012. They abolished the judicial filibuster to pack the D.C. court of appeals with liberals before Republicans won the Senate in 2014. The next step is to test the limits of Obama’s executive authority before he leaves office in 2017.

Jeffrey Bell and Frank Cannon described the Obama approach in a 2012 *Weekly Standard* essay. “The essence of the Obama strategy was an odd combination of moral lecturing and raw power—Harvard married to the Chicago Way,” [they wrote](#). On Obamacare, “The administration focused on mobilizing the left power base (labor, the social left, AARP, and Hollywood) and moving through special interests (hospitals, insurance companies, Fortune 500) to assemble, piece by piece, an economic and lobbying juggernaut.” The process was polarizing, vindictive, corrupting. And it worked.

The Obama strategy does not make for a popular presidency or Democratic Party. But it is remarkably successful in delivering goods to liberal interest groups. It has given the president what he wants: Obamacare, a second term, and an immigration weapon he believes he can wield against Republicans. But there have also been costs: a recasting of his public image, the loss of Congress, the failure to restore trust in government, and who knows what consequences to come.

The movement that launched a 50-state strategy has been reduced to a 50-enclaves strategy. Democrats are limited to [the majority-minority districts, cities, and coastal bastions of the liberal coalition](#). This is a somewhat surprising outcome for a party that trumpets its populism and democratic heritage. What has surprised me most, however, is the brazenness with which the president and his allies declare their apathy toward public sentiment as expressed in elections that Democrats lose. Who cares about the Americans who bothered to vote on November 4, they say. They’re not our people.

“To the two-thirds of voters who chose not to participate in the process yesterday, I hear you, too,” [Obama said at his post-election press conference](#). How can he hear these voters? Dental fillings? By what means does he divine their hopes, fears, and needs? A Ouija board?

I have a test to determine the lunacy of a Democratic talking point: If E.J. Dionne is the only reporter who parrots it, then it’s too crazy for most journalists. Sure enough, [writes Dionne](#), by issuing his unconstitutional executive order, Obama “is paying close attention to the feelings of a very important group of voters—the tens of millions who supported him two years ago but were so dispirited that they stayed away from the polls on November 4.” It’s the silent majority—so silent it does not even vote.

This is too much for the press corps but not for liberal politicians. Asked during his trip to D.C. about [a recent poll showing a stark racial divide in his approval rating](#), Bill de Blasio said, “I question whether they are getting the totality of the citizens of the city.” He must have forgotten that he too won an election [with record low turnout](#). Ladies and gentlemen, I give you the de Blasio Democrats: extremists who gratify special interests while disregarding public opinion. It is a vanishing breed. At this rate, soon only E.J. will be left.

## **The Daily Beast** **[The Progressives’ War on Suburbia](#)**

by Joel Kotkin

Obama and the Democrats have embraced the argument that suburbs and sprawl are bad for you. As the last election demonstrated, this is no way to get elected.

You are a political party, and you want to secure the electoral majority. But what happens, as is occurring to the Democrats, when the damned electorate that just won’t live the way—in dense cities and apartments—that you have deemed is best for them?

This gap between party ideology and demographic reality has led to a disconnect that not only devastated the Democrats this year, but could hurt them in the decades to come. University of Washington demographer Richard Morrill [notes](#) that the vast majority of the 153 million Americans who live in metropolitan areas with populations of more than 500,000 live in the lower-density suburban places Democrats think they should not. Only 60 million live in core cities.

Despite these realities, the Democratic Party under Barack Obama has increasingly allied itself with its relatively small core urban base. Simply put, the party cannot win—certainly not in off-year elections—if it doesn’t score well with suburbanites. Indeed, Democrats, as they retreat to their coastal redoubts, have become ever more aggressively anti-suburban, particularly in deep blue states such as [California](#). “To minimize sprawl” has become a bedrock catchphrase of the core political ideology.

As will become even more obvious in the lame duck years, the political obsessions of the Obama Democrats largely mirror those of the cities: climate change, gay marriage, feminism, amnesty for the undocumented, and racial redress. These may sometimes be worthy causes, but they don’t address basic issues that effect suburbanites, such as stagnant middle class wages, poor roads, high housing prices, or underperforming schools. None of these concerns elicit much passion among the party’s true believers.

The miscalculation is deep-rooted, and has already cost the Democrats numerous House and Senate seats and at least two governorships. Nationwide, in areas as disparate as east Texas and Maine or Colorado and Maryland, suburban voters deserted the Democrats in droves. The Democrats held on mostly to those peripheral areas that are [very wealthy](#)—such as Marin County, California or some D.C. suburban counties—or have large minority populations, particularly African-American.

This is not surprising since the policies and predilections of President Obama and his team are based on a largely exaggerated urban mythology. former HUD Secretary Shaun Donovan, for example, has declared the move to the suburbs is “over.” People are, [he has claimed](#), “moving back into central cities and inner ring suburbs.” To help foster this trend, administration policies at HUD and other agencies have been designed to fulfill Donahue’s vision of getting Americans out of their suburban homes and cars and into apartments and trains. These policy initiatives include large “smart city” grants for dense development, restrictions on new building, the promotion of high-speed rail links that would supposedly reconcentrate economic activity in the urban core. The administration’s [strong support](#) for regional governments, and its attempts to force suburbs to diversify their populations (even though they are already where minorities increasingly move) are thinly disguised efforts to promote densification and put the squeeze on suburban growth.

Yet, as census data and electoral returns demonstrate, the demographic realities are nothing like what Donahue and the administration insist. The last decennial census showed, if anything, that suburban growth accounted for something close to 90 percent of all metropolitan population increases, a number considerably higher than in the '90s. Although core cities (urban areas within two miles of downtown) did gain more than 250,000 net residents during the first decade of the new century, surrounding inner ring suburbs actually lost 272,000 residents across the country. In contrast, areas 10 to 20 miles away from city hall gained roughly 15 *million* net residents.

Since 2010, suburban growth has slowed as young people, hampered by a weak economy and tougher mortgage standards, have not been able to buy houses. But while population growth in the same time period has been roughly even between the suburbs and core cities, the suburban population, which is so much larger to start with, has continued to expand at a faster rate. According to demographer Morrill, since 2010 the suburbs have added 4.4 million people compared to fewer than 2 million in core cities.

The big problem here is this: the progressives’ war on suburbia is essentially an assault on the preferences of the middle class. Despite the hopes at HUD, the vast majority of Americans—even in most cities and particularly away from the coasts—actually live in single-family homes in low- to mid-density neighborhoods, and overwhelmingly commute by car. If we measure people by how they actually live, notes demographer Wendell Cox, [more than 80 percent](#) of those in metropolitan areas have what most would consider a suburban life style.

Contrary to the conventional wisdom, there is nothing intrinsically “progressive” about hating suburbs. It was, after all, President Franklin Roosevelt who believed that dispersion and homeownership would make the country much stronger. “A nation of homeowners, of people who own a real share in their land, is unconquerable,” he maintained. This notion of favoring policies that allowed for middle-class and eventually working-class people to own their own homes and a patch of grass was shared by Harry Truman, John Kennedy, and Bill Clinton, all of whom were fairly successful in winning over suburban voters.

Suburbanites are not intrinsically Republican. Clinton, [noted](#) political analyst Bill Schneider, shared suburban voters’ skeptical view of government’s ability to address problems, and won 47 percent of the ++[suburban vote](#) in 1996. Barack Obama, running as a conciliatory pragmatist in 2008, did

even better with some 50 percent. This performance was aided by the growing proportion of racial minorities, including African Americans, who had moved to the suburbs.

But as Obama's administration took shape, suburban support began to ebb. In 2012, Obama [lost the suburbs](#) to Romney by a two-point margin. In this year's [congressional elections](#) the GOP edge grew to 12 points in the suburbs, which accounted for a majority of the electorate. The Democrats won by 14 percent in the more urban areas, but these accounted for barely one-third of the total vote. The result was a thorough shellacking of the Democratic party from top to bottom.

Yet even these numbers do not express how critical suburban voters were this year. Much of urban America, particularly in [places](#) like Phoenix, Houston, and Las Vegas, is primarily suburban. They have multiple employment centers and the vast majority of commuters take to the roads. Democrats did not do so well in these cities this year, although the party continues to dominate more traditional inner cities dominated by apartment dwellers and mass transit riders. Some hopeful [conservative commentators](#) have noted a slight increase in GOP votes in some inner cities, but the percentages are still laughably pathetic.

This can be seen in GOP wins in the governor's races. Michigan's Republican Governor Rick Snyder got 6.8 percent of the vote in Detroit. Successful Illinois challenger Bruce Rauner won only 20 percent of Chicago's take, even in the face of gross mismanagement by his Democratic opponent. And Maryland's Larry Hogan won about 22 percent in Baltimore. In all these elections, it was the suburbs—not paltry gains in the cities—that made the difference. Rauner's election, for example, was based largely on a 60 percent margin in Chicago's swing "collar counties." Boston's [suburbs](#), particularly in the more working class south, helped assure the gubernatorial election of GOP candidate Charles Baker in this bluest of blue states. Suburban [voters](#) also played a huge role in the Republicans' biggest win—the Texas governorship—giving GOP candidate Greg Abbott [almost two-thirds](#) of their votes.

Much the same suburban swing can be seen in the critical [senatorial races](#) races where the Democrats lost seats. Iowa Republican Joni Ernst lost the city vote but won 58 percent of suburban electorate, almost equaling her show in the rural areas. In Colorado, [Corey Gardner](#) also secured a large majority among suburban voters, who accounted for roughly half the total electorate. Finally, in the upset of Senator Kay Hagan in North Carolina, successful GOP candidate Thom Tillis ran even better in the suburbs—with some 57 percent of the vote—than he did in the supposedly hardcore conservative countryside.

But the best way to see the suburban impact is to look at the House races. Among the 12 seats that Republicans took from the Democrats, half were located in solidly suburban areas. These included districts surrounding such cities as Raleigh, N.C.; Salt Lake City, which elected black Republican Mia Love; Miami, in a predominately Latino area; Las Vegas, in a suburban district that went for Obama in 2012; and eastern Long Island. The powerful shift in suburban voting also appears to have cost the Democrats two seats in the president's home state—one in the northern suburbs of Chicago and the other in southern Illinois communities adjacent to St. Louis, a district that has been in Democratic hands for three decades.

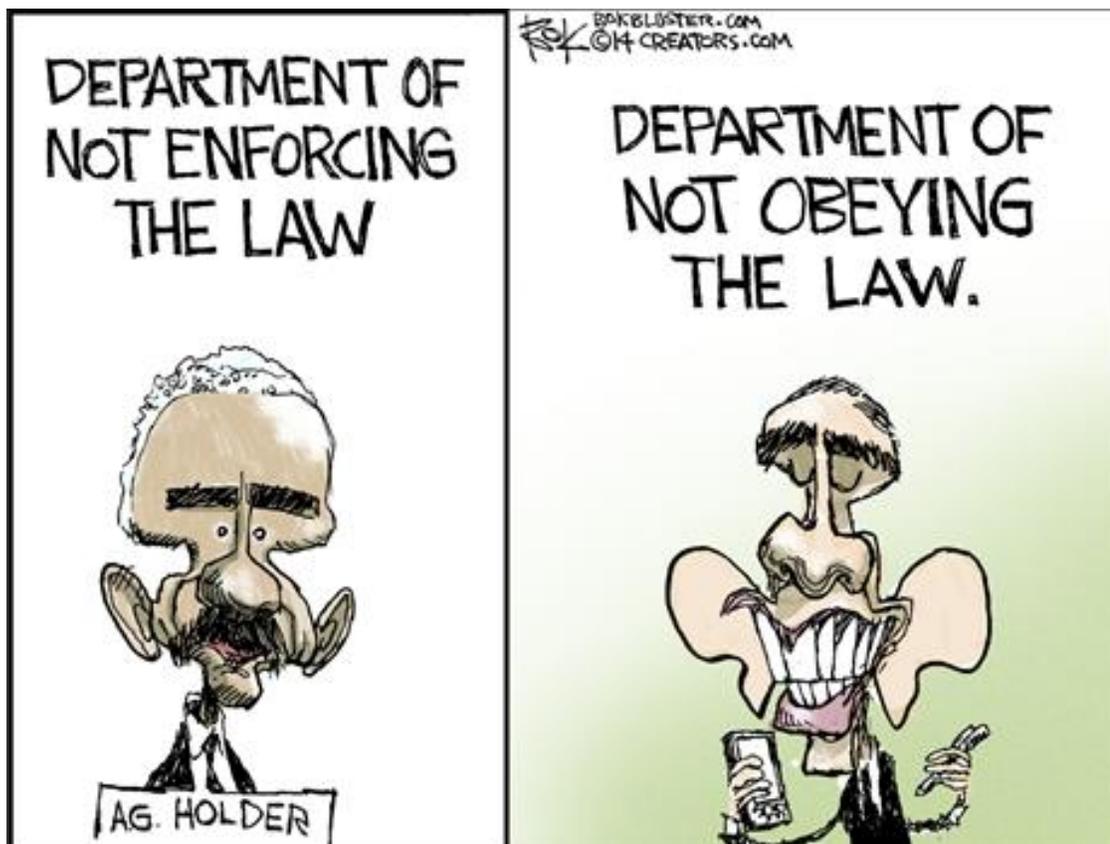
So what does this mean for 2016 and beyond? To be sure, the key Democratic urban-centric constituencies—millennials, single women, minorities—likely will turn out in bigger numbers in the next election. But ultimately their numbers will be somewhat balanced by rural and small town voters, who will continue to support conservatives overwhelmingly. Ultimately there is only one truly contested piece of political turf in this country—the suburbs—and who wins there takes the whole enchilada.

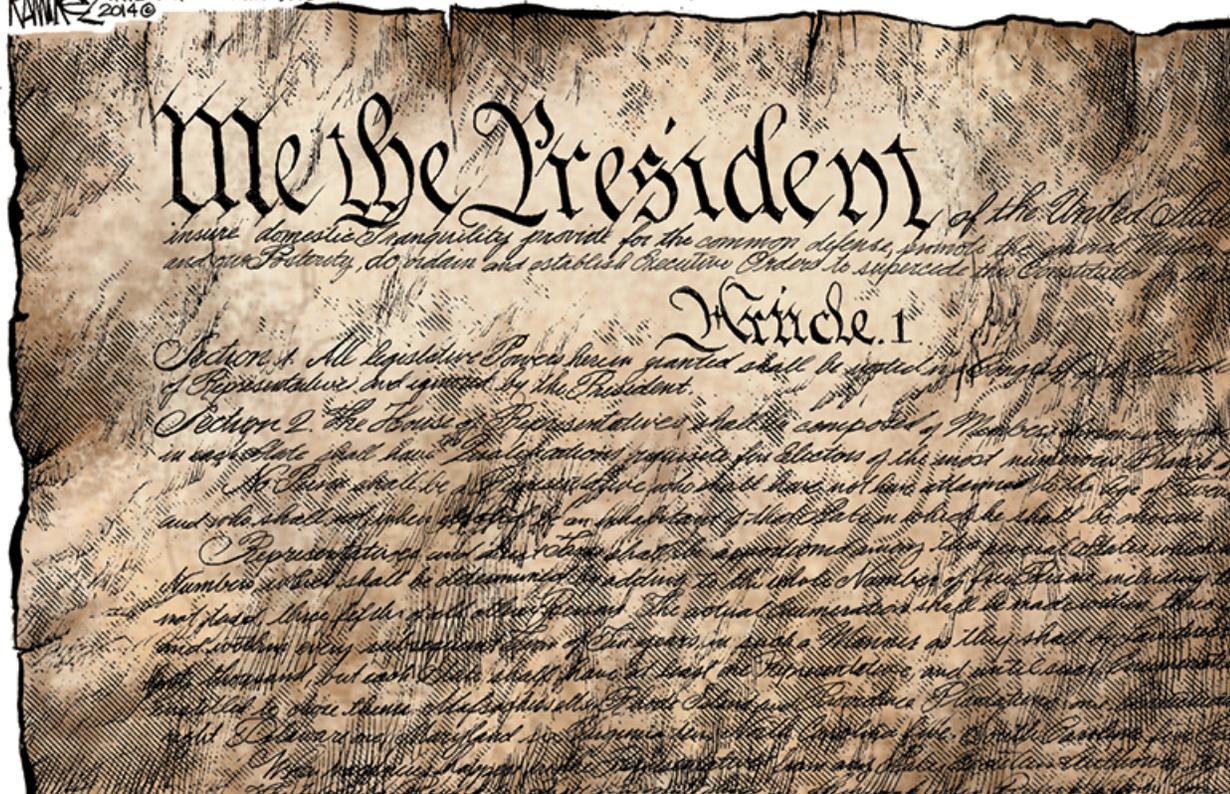
There are those, even [slightly deluded Republicans](#), who believe the country is becoming “more urban” and that therefore the suburban edge will mean less in the years ahead. Yet since 2011 the most rapid growth in country, as noted by Trulia’s [Jed Kolko](#), continues to be in the suburbs and exurbs. Some urban cores have recovered nicely, but most often the surrounding city areas have continued to see slow or negative growth.

Nor is this trend likely to reverse in the near future. As Millennials head into their thirties, [survey data](#) suggests that most are looking for single family houses and most favor suburban locations where increasingly they will be joined by immigrants and minorities. And virtually all the fastest growth urban regions—Houston, Dallas-Ft. Worth, Phoenix, Charlotte—remain largely suburban in form and character, while growth is much slower in the more traditional legacy cities such as San Francisco, New York, or Boston.

None of this suggests that that Republicans can take suburban votes for granted. The suburbs are changing in ways that could help progressives, notably by becoming more heavily minority and Millennial. The preferences of these new arrivals will differ from those of previous suburban generations—particularly their views on immigration, the need for open space and cultural liberalism. That said, how likely is it that these new suburbanites will embrace progressive ideologues who continually diss the very places they have chosen to live?

The progressive “clerisy” and their developer allies may wish to destroy the suburban dream, but they will not be able to stay in office for long with such attitudes. America remains, and likely will remain, a predominately suburban nation for decades to come. This demographic reality means that whoever wins the suburban vote in 2016 and beyond will inherit the political future.





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