

November 9, 2014

Roger Simon sets the tone for how we might think about the last week's results.

... Too bad there's no time to celebrate. We almost lost our country. There's no time to lose getting it back.

Depending on whether Barack Obama decides to behave like an adult or not in the face of massive defeat, all Hell can break loose in the next few months. He can subvert Congress and initiate an absurd amnesty program that nobody wants except for perhaps some random aging members of La Raza. Just as bad, or maybe worse — it involves weapons of mass destruction — he can subvert Congress again and sign a deal with the Iranian mullahs that, on latest reports, relies on our good friends the Russians to police the Iranian nuclear program. How insane is that? Ask any Ukrainian.

And that's only getting started. The litany of possible mischief small and large is endless from Obamacare to accusations of racism (how else could Obama lose?) to that monumental absurdity the "War on Women." (That one doesn't seem to be working out too well lately with the Senate filling up with Republican women.) ...

... Okay, now I'm going to celebrate. But just for a few hours. In the end, it's just like tennis. The minute you think you're ahead, you start to lose. Stay hungry.

Craig Pirrong at Streetwise Professor has a note of caution.

... Practically, however, I think the results will be fairly barren, and may in fact set the stage for a Constitutional crisis, or crises. Obama is still president, and can block any substantive legislation emerging from the solidly Republican Congress. More ominously, given Obama's personality, ideological rigidity, and hatred of Republicans (and I do think he viscerally hates them), confrontations are inevitable. Obama will not take his whipping and emerge more conciliatory and willing to compromise. To the contrary, to someone of his narcissistic temperament, yesterday's repudiation is an existential affront that he must confront. He will channel his inner Alinsky, and attempt to use every executive power to achieve results that he cannot implement through legislation. He will double down on the divisive rhetoric and policies that he has employed in the past couple of years. A Constitutional confrontation over immigration, or some other issue (climate?), could well result when Obama attempts to exert executive power unilaterally.

Perhaps most importantly, his obsession with completing a deal with Iran, which has warped virtually every aspect of American foreign policy (Syria most notably) lays the groundwork for confrontation as he will likely attempt to implement it without Congressional approval. The substantive ramifications of such a deal are also very frightening, because they could lead to an even greater crisis in the Middle East and an intensification of the Shia-Sunni/Arab-Persian conflict that is already the source of chaos and misery. It is beyond bizarre that a man who claims to strive for nuclear disarmament is pursuing, Ahab-like, a deal that would likely lead to the nuclearization of the most unstable and conflict-ridden part of the world. ...

Jennifer Rubin posts on Wednesday's presser.

President Obama is a singularly ungracious and non-self-reflective person. In his press conference today he refused yet again to acknowledge reality.

He tried to downplay the Democrats' loss of the Senate by talking to the two-thirds of people who did not vote. He tried to insinuate that it was a bipartisan rejection. He reminded us several times that he is still president. ("I'm the guy elected by everybody.") He boasted about an economy most voters think is rotten. He has, however, learned nothing. After a historic repudiation, he is staying the course and still threatens unilateral action by year's end on immigration reform. One would have thought his policies were not on the ballot or that his party saw historic losses in consecutive midterm elections. He defiantly announced that he will veto some bills and that Congress won't like his executive actions. He insisted it had to be his way: "If there are ideas that the Republicans have that I have confidence will make things better for ordinary Americans, the fact that the Republicans [are] suggesting it, as opposed to a Democrat — that'll be irrelevant to me. I want to just see what works." In other words he sees no reason to compromise; Republicans must agree with him. ...

David Harsanyi on the press conference too.

In his post-midterm press conference today, President Barack Obama reaffirmed his commitment to taking executive action on immigration, "before the end of the year." Obama argued that most Americans desire reform and consequently he has an imperative to act. Because, as everyone knows, polls, rather than elections, are by far the best measurement of what the electorate desires.

If Obama moves forward a number of things are bound to happen: First, and most definitely, there will be no way Republican leadership can engage the administration in any meaningful bipartisan legislation for the next two years. With a freshly enraged base, the GOP will be powerless to work with the White House unless it's willing to risk civil war. Second, kicking off a new round of needless acrimony highlights the fiction that Obama has any intention of recalibrating his strategy and finding common ground moving forward.

An example of perfect puerile presidential petulance comes from the tete a tete with Michael Jordan. **Yahoo Sports** has the story of Jordan saying The One was a "sh*tty" golfer. We didn't include any of that in Pickings because it was of little consequence, but then the childish chief narcissist had to respond and it became a story.

"[T]here is no doubt that Michael is a better golfer than I am," Obama said. "Of course if I was playing twice a day for the last 15 years, then that might not be the case."

Obama rounded out his response with a final burn on Jordan, whose NBA franchise returned to its original name this season, saying, "He might want to spend more time thinking about the Bobcats — or the Hornets."

Given the nationwide Republican wave in Tuesday's elections, perhaps Obama has bigger problems than what His Airness thinks of his golf game.

Scott Johnson of Power Line also posted on the Michael Jordan kerfuffle and then compares that to reactions to the election.

President Obama is a man who does not respond well to criticism. He can't even fake it. When Michael Jordan recently observed that Obama is a "shitty golfer," to take just one small example, Obama responded in a Milwaukee radio interview that he gave to lend his magic touch to Wisconsin gubernatorial candidate Mary Burke the day before the midterm elections: "[T]here is no

doubt that Michael is a better golfer than I am.” Obama couldn’t leave it at that: “Of course, if I was playing twice a day for the last 15 years, then that might not be the case. You know, he might want to spend more time thinking about the Bobcats — or the [NBA’s Charlotte] Hornets.” (Jordan is part of the Hornets ownership group and the team is off to a poor start.)

This unfunny gibe wasn’t enough for Obama. He deepened his critique of Jordan: “I love the man, though. He brought [the Chicago Bulls] a lot of championships. He does like talking trash sometimes, even when he doesn’t know what he’s talking about.” Obama’s sympathetic radio interviewer found this hilarious. The New York Daily News has posted the entire interview at the link. I’m embedding it below. You can check it out yourself.

I may be wrong about that example, but I’m not wrong about this one. Obama is seething with anger in response to the repudiation he and his policies received in the midterm elections. It comes through loud and clear in the press conference he held to address the results of the midterm elections (White House video below, White House transcript [here](#), Washington Post transcript [here](#)). I can also say with certainty Obama rejected the good advice that Peggy Noonan offered him before the votes were counted. Noonan advised him to be gracious in defeat and gave him a good example. (The example was George W. Bush’s, and it was brilliant.) Sorry, but Obama doesn’t do gracious. ...

Now even Chris Matthews is fed up. We get this from [National Review](#).

MSNBC host Chris Matthews expressed dismay over President Obama’s post-election press conference on Wednesday, calling him entirely deaf to the millions of Americans who voted against his plan to grant executive amnesty for as many as 6 million illegal immigrants.

“The people, if you look at the polling, their problem is illegal immigration,” he said. “He says, ‘I’m going to fix the problem.’ He doesn’t mean he’s gonna stop illegal immigration. He’s not going to do anything to stop illegal hiring, which is the magnet for illegal immigration, really. He’s going to basically say, ‘I’m going to deal with them by giving them green cards.’”

“What bothered me about him tonight — he keeps talking about common ground,” Matthews said. “Damn it, there’s very little common ground between left and right! But what there is, is compromise.”

“There’s something in this guy that just plays to his constituency, and acts like there’s no other world out there,” the MSNBC host lamented. “And that’s going to be a collision at the end of this year like you’ve never seen. I do believe it’s will be waving a red flag in front of the bull. I think Mitch McConnell’s headed for a fight with the president.”

Jonathan Tobin has more on the presser.

... Rather than taking a page from Bill Clinton’s book and understanding that he had to adjust his policies and ideas to political reality, Obama seems to think he has no lessons to learn from the voters who broadly rejected the policies that he told us last month were on the ballot yesterday.

Asked several times by members of the press if he was prepared for genuine compromise, all he gave them was the usual boilerplate he’s been employing throughout his presidency about being willing to listen to Republicans if they come up with reasonable ideas. The only problem with that: he believes the only one with reasonable ideas is Barack Obama. ...

And Tobin also had lists of the biggest winners and biggest losers in the Wave of 2014.

The 2014 midterms turned out to be the wave election that Republicans dreamed of and Democrats dreaded. But amid the debris of what turned out to be a stunning repudiation of the administration, there are some people who must be judged to be the big winners and losers on both sides. Here's my list:

The Winners:

*The first and most obvious winner is **Mitch McConnell** who will be the majority leader in January. Earlier in the year, he looked to be under siege in his race for reelection but ran among the smartest campaigns in the country as he first swamped a Tea Party challenger and then destroyed Alison Lundergan Grimes, the candidate the Clintons helped handpick to oppose him, in the general election. McConnell finally gets his chance to run the Senate and the man in position to put the heat on President Obama even if he won't have an easy time with some members of his caucus.*

***Tom Cotton** came into 2014 as the most hyped GOP Senate candidate but was thought to have run a lackluster campaign that turned an easy win into a nail biter. In the end, he won his Arkansas seat in a landslide. That puts him back into the conversation as the most highly regarded young (37) Republican and a future leader of his party.*

*In the course of the last year **Joni Ernst** ...*

Boston Herald columnist posts on the results from Hillary's perspective.

Hillary Clinton put her political clout and even her political future on the line in this election — from Massachusetts to New Hampshire and in races clear across the country — and as the dust settles this morning we'll see how it paid off.

The news that Republicans took control of the Senate despite Clinton's best efforts doesn't bode well for her desire to become the next president of the United States. ...

... But don't worry about Hillary. To explain away any weak points in the national Democratic mosaic, Hillary Clinton has what every political Clinton needs — a fall guy.

That would be President Obama. Expect to see Obama shoulder a lot of the blame for a lot of Democratic woes, thanks to his abysmal job approval ratings and back-to-back scandals, from Obamacare's stumbling launch, to the renewal of combat operations in Iraq and now Syria, to Ebola ... the list goes on.

Roger L. Simon

Hooray for the Wave: Now Forget It



Republicans won an historic wave victory on Tuesday of amazing proportions. They will probably end up with 54 Senate seats (after Mary Landrieu takes an almost inevitable swan dive in a December run-off) and came within a whisker of ending up with an astounding 56. No one that I know of was predicting that — not even Sean Hannity on a fifth martini. And then there were the gubernatorial races. Massachusetts, Maryland and Illinois? Are there any blue states left? Obama destroyed them all. (Well, there's still California — but we're working on it.)

Too bad there's no time to celebrate. We almost lost our country. There's no time to lose getting it back.

Depending on whether Barack Obama decides to behave like an adult or not in the face of massive defeat, all Hell can break loose in the next few months. He can subvert Congress and initiate an absurd amnesty program that nobody wants except for perhaps some random aging members of La Raza. Just as bad, or maybe worse — it involves weapons of mass destruction — he can subvert Congress again and sign a deal with the Iranian mullahs that, on latest reports, relies on our good friends the Russians to police the Iranian nuclear program. How insane is that? Ask any Ukrainian.

And that's only getting started. The litany of possible mischief small and large is endless from Obamacare to accusations of racism (how else could Obama lose?) to that monumental absurdity the "War on Women." (That one doesn't seem to be working out too well lately with the Senate filling up with Republican women.)

And then there are the Clintons who have been in their Westchester bunker all night long working the phones while staring at walls of televisions and plotting their way back, speaking of the "War on Women." There must be another way. It doesn't matter what to them. Power is all.

So what should Republicans do? Stand up and lead, obviously. Come up with programs and put them through the House and Senate. Do away with Obamacare, either in one gulp or, if that's not possible, piecemeal.

But they all should make a monumental and immediate outreach to African Americans. No group has been so brutally screwed over by the Democratic Party — and I suspect more than a few of them are beginning to realize it. Republicans should take this opportunity to come up with some fresh ideas and communicate with them, and with Latinos, and Asians, and with women, and break the back of our identity politics that is so reactionary and divisive, so hurtful to the very people it pretends to help.

This victory creates the beginning of an opportunity to end it. It won't be easy. Identity politics is so deeply entrenched in our culture sometimes I think we're a bunch of Shiite tribesmen building IEDs south of Fallujah. But think of this — even a thirty percent inroad by Republicans into the black vote would change the political landscape of our country beyond recognition. And it would do so much for all those minority groups into the bargain.

Okay, now I'm going to celebrate. But just for a few hours. In the end, it's just like tennis. The minute you think you're ahead, you start to lose. Stay hungry.

Streetwise Professor

Election 2014: Emotionally Satisfying, But Practically Fraught

by Craig Pirrong

I of course take some satisfaction from last night's election results, though I think their practical consequences will be limited, and perhaps fraught. This was an immense repudiation of Obama. The loss was a humiliation of the president, even compared to the 1994, 2006, and 2010 routs of the president's party. Democrats were crushed at every level of government, from the Senate, to governorships, to the House, to state legislatures. Hell, the Republicans even won governor's races in Maryland and Massachusetts. Races that had been rated as close (Georgia, Kansas, Kentucky) turned into absolute routs. (Pollsters rank a close second to Obama in The Biggest Loser results from last night.)

It will be amusing to watch Obamabots attempt to 'splain things in the next few days. After he claimed that his policies were on the ballot—all of his policies—the Dems will no doubt turn themselves into Dervishes in spinning the results to show that they had nothing to do with The One. I was particularly amused that Jay Carney said that Democratic senate candidates would have done better if they had not run away from Obama. Oh, Jay. You still have the ability to say the most outlandish things with a straight face! In truth, if Gardiner or Braley had run as proud supporters of the Obama agenda and leadership, their margins of loss would have doubled.

Practically, however, I think the results will be fairly barren, and may in fact set the stage for a Constitutional crisis, or crises. Obama is still president, and can block any substantive legislation emerging from the solidly Republican Congress. More ominously, given Obama's personality, ideological rigidity, and hatred of Republicans (and I do think he viscerally hates them), confrontations are inevitable. Obama will not take his whipping and emerge more conciliatory and willing to compromise. To the contrary, to someone of his narcissistic temperament, yesterday's repudiation is an existential affront that he must confront. He will channel his inner Alinsky, and attempt to use every executive power to achieve results that he cannot implement through

legislation. He will double down on the divisive rhetoric and policies that he has employed in the past couple of years. A Constitutional confrontation over immigration, or some other issue (climate?), could well result when Obama attempts to exert executive power unilaterally.

Perhaps most importantly, his obsession with completing a deal with Iran, which has warped virtually every aspect of American foreign policy (Syria most notably) lays the groundwork for confrontation as he will likely attempt to implement it without Congressional approval. The substantive ramifications of such a deal are also very frightening, because they could lead to an even greater crisis in the Middle East and an intensification of the Shia-Sunni/Arab-Persian conflict that is already the source of chaos and misery. It is beyond bizarre that a man who claims to strive for nuclear disarmament is pursuing, Ahab-like, a deal that would likely lead to the nuclearization of the most unstable and conflict-ridden part of the world.

Moreover, the major challenges that the nation faces are still primarily an executive responsibility, as they relate mainly to foreign policy. ISIS is still in Iraq and Syria. Ebola is still in Western Africa. The Mullahs are still in Tehran. Putin is still in Ukraine. And Obama is still in the White House. Given that reality, as emotionally satisfying as yesterday's verdict is, and as much as it represents a verdict on Obama's foreign policy failures specifically, it will not fundamentally affect the crises that beset us, and given Obama's personality, any effect may be for the worse.

Right Turn

[Obama press conference: Oh, this is why Republicans won](#)

by Jennifer Rubin

President Obama is a singularly ungracious and non-self-reflective person. In his press conference today he refused yet again to acknowledge reality.

He tried to downplay the Democrats' loss of the Senate by talking to the two-thirds of people who did not vote. He tried to insinuate that it was a bipartisan rejection. He reminded us several times that he is still president. ("I'm the guy elected by everybody.") He boasted about an economy most voters think is rotten. He has, however, learned nothing. After a historic repudiation, he is staying the course and still threatens unilateral action by year's end on immigration reform. One would have thought his policies were not on the ballot or that his party saw historic losses in consecutive midterm elections. He defiantly announced that he will veto some bills and that Congress won't like his executive actions. He insisted it had to be his way: "If there are ideas that the Republicans have that I have confidence will make things better for ordinary Americans, the fact that the Republicans [are] suggesting it, as opposed to a Democrat — that'll be irrelevant to me. I want to just see what works." In other words he sees no reason to compromise; Republicans must agree with him.

On foreign policy he was, to be generous, fuzzy. We have offered Iran a "framework" of unspecified terms, but Iran will have to decide whether to accept, he said. He mouths the platitude that a bad deal is worse than no deal, but virtually no informed observers on the Hill think he knows the difference between a good and bad deal. He insisted Iran has complied with an interim deal, ignoring its refusal to cooperate with inspectors. He refused to say if we are winning the war against the Islamic State, although he will ask Congress for an authorization for use of force. Insisting he would not solve Syria's problems, he implicitly renounced his demand for years that Bashar al-Assad must go. If ever there was a display justifying more robust congressional stewardship of national security, this was it.

In Hillaryland, you wonder what they make of this. Will they be forced to defend a clueless president still unmoved by voters' resounding anti-Obama message? The more antagonistic he becomes toward the majorities in both houses, the more dangerous it will become for Hillary Clinton to remain aligned with him and his policies. She cannot run and win offering a third Obama term.

All in all it did not bode well for the next two years, but it does provide an attractive target for Republicans to run against in 2016. (We can't take this anymore!) It also suggests that the voters were right to hamstring him and send minders to keep things from getting far worse internationally and more lawless at home. It was, most of all, a reminder of why he is unpopular.

The Federalist

Obama: F* It, I'm Doing Amnesty**

by David Harsanyi

In his post-midterm [press conference](#) today, President Barack Obama reaffirmed his commitment to taking executive action on immigration, "before the end of the year." Obama argued that most Americans desire reform and consequently he has an imperative to act. Because, as everyone knows, polls, rather than elections, are by far the best measurement of what the electorate desires.

If Obama moves forward a number of things are bound to happen: First, and most definitely, there will be no way Republican leadership can engage the administration in any meaningful bipartisan legislation for the next two years. With a freshly enraged base, the GOP will be powerless to work with the White House unless it's willing to risk civil war. Second, kicking off a new round of needless acrimony highlights the fiction that Obama has any intention of recalibrating his strategy and finding common ground moving forward.

More consequentially, though, Obama has basically admitted again that he believes the president—if he's passionate enough about a certain issue—is free to craft legislation. And by consistently equating his forthcoming executive action with bills passed by Congress, Obama acknowledges the purpose of his unilateral moves is to enact new policies or pressure Republicans into giving him what he wants. Which is a big problem if you care about the Constitution.

Obama:

And, you know, I think that the best way, if folks are serious about getting immigration reform done, is going ahead and passing a bill and getting it to my desk. And then the executive actions that I take go away. They're superseded by the law that is passed. And I will engage any member of Congress who's interested in this in how we can shape legislation that will be a significant improvement over the existing system.

Who knew it was Congress's role to pass laws so that they could supersede the actions of the executive branch? Is that how this works? The president's legal basis for moving forward on immigration rests on prosecutorial discretion – which will be liberally defined, no doubt. This could include deferring deportations of illegal immigrants or unilaterally granting them work authorizations – but it will almost certainly create some new form of amnesty, in the purest sense of the word, for illegal immigrants.

I certainly don't fancy myself a legal scholar, but there is almost no doubt this would plunge DC into both political and legal crisis. Which might very well be the point. The White House does best when it finds new ways to vilify conservatives. Immigration is a perfect way to initiate the fight. Perhaps this is a fight it wants. Then again, that plan could backfire, as even those of us who believe immigration reform would be beneficial might find the autocratic instincts of the president more off-putting than the status quo. It's not difficult to imagine that large numbers of moderates and independents may find the idea of the president simply altering the status of millions of people through executive fiat may not work out for Democrats. But I suspect we're going to find out.

Yahoo Sports

[President Obama says Jordan should worry about Hornets, not his golf game](#)

by Ryan Ballengee

It took him a week, but President Barack Obama responded to Michael Jordan's comment that he's a "sh***y golfer."

[In a pre-midterm election interview with Milwaukee radio station WJMR](#), host Earl Stokes asked Obama about Jordan's jab in a recent interview with Ahmad Rashad. Jordan was asked to name his dream foursome.

"I've never played with Obama but I would," said Jordan. "But no, that's okay, I'd take him out. He's a hack, it would be all day playing with him."

When questioned by Rashad, who has played golf with Obama, who typically shoots in the 90s, Jordan quipped, "I never said he wasn't a great politician, I'm just saying he's a sh***y golfer."

Obama thinks Jordan got some bad info about the president's golf skills.

"Michael wasn't very well informed about this, I think he might've just been trying to give Ahmad an extra ratings boost on his show," Obama said.

The President, who has played 200 times in almost six years as president, then suggested he might be more able to give Jordan, a 3 handicap, a run for his money on the links if he could play more often.

"[T]here is no doubt that Michael is a better golfer than I am," Obama said. "Of course if I was playing twice a day for the last 15 years, then that might not be the case."

Obama rounded out his response with a final burn on Jordan, whose NBA franchise returned to its original name this season, saying, "He might want to spend more time thinking about the Bobcats — or the Hornets."

Given the nationwide Republican wave in Tuesday's elections, perhaps Obama has bigger problems than what His Airness thinks of his golf game.

Power Line

Obama persists

by Scott Johnson

President Obama is a man who does not respond well to criticism. He can't even fake it. When Michael Jordan recently observed that Obama is a "shitty golfer," to take just one small example, [Obama responded](#) in a Milwaukee radio interview that he gave to lend his magic touch to Wisconsin gubernatorial candidate Mary Burke the day before the midterm elections: "[T]here is no doubt that Michael is a better golfer than I am." Obama couldn't leave it at that: "Of course, if I was playing twice a day for the last 15 years, then that might not be the case. You know, he might want to spend more time thinking about the Bobcats — or the [NBA's Charlotte] Hornets." (Jordan is part of the Hornets ownership group and the team is off to a poor start.)

This unfunny gibe wasn't enough for Obama. He deepened his critique of Jordan: "I love the man, though. He brought [the Chicago Bulls] a lot of championships. He does like talking trash sometimes, even when he doesn't know what he's talking about." Obama's sympathetic radio interviewer found this hilarious. The New York Daily News has posted the entire interview at the link. I'm embedding it below. You can check it out yourself.

I may be wrong about that example, but I'm not wrong about this one. Obama is seething with anger in response to the repudiation he and his policies received in the midterm elections. It comes through loud and clear in the press conference he held to address the results of the midterm elections (White House video below, White House transcript [here](#), Washington Post transcript [here](#)). I can also say with certainty Obama rejected the [good advice](#) that Peggy Noonan offered him before the votes were counted. Noonan advised him to be gracious in defeat and gave him a good example. (The example was George W. Bush's, and it was brilliant.) Sorry, but Obama doesn't do gracious.

It understates matters considerably to say that Obama was not inclined to construe the results as a reflection on him and his policies. As he had when given the opportunity during the campaign, Obama reiterated the greatness of his record in office. He will generously accept the support of Republicans when they agree to advance his agenda: "I was encouraged that this year Republicans agreed to investments that expanded early childhood education. I think we've got a chance to do more on that front." There's always a chance to spend more on "early childhood education" and call it "investments."

And not just "early childhood education," of course. "We've got some common ideas to help more young people afford college and graduate without crippling debt, so that they have the freedom to fill the good jobs of tomorrow and buy their first homes and start a family." It's painful.

There won't be any changes made: "[T]he fact is, I still believe in what I said when I was first elected six years ago last night." I think he said something about fundamentally transforming the United States.

One form Obama's anger takes is disparagement of the election results. "[T]o everyone who voted, I want you to know that I hear you. To the two-thirds of voters who chose not to participate in the process yesterday, I hear you, too." In the radio interview above, Obama describes the nonvoters as those sitting at home on their couches. What does he hear them saying? They aren't saying, and neither is Obama.

Obama's reference to voter turnout goes back to an old left-wing theme I recall reading at the time of Ronald Reagan's election in 1980. Some pundit observed that Reagan's rout of Carter was illusory. Reagan had beaten Carter 51-41 in the popular vote and won an electoral college landslide, but only half of the voting age population had voted. Reagan had won half of that half and thus only received the votes of 25 percent of the voting age population. Despite appearances, Reagan had achieved an unimpressive victory that didn't mean much of anything.

The first question at yesterday's press conference was a good one: "You said during this election that while your name wasn't on the ballot, your policies were. And despite the optimism that you're expressing here, last night was a devastating night for your party. Given that, do you feel any responsibility to recalibrate your agenda for the next two years, and what changes do you need to make in your White House and in your dealings with Republicans in order to address the concerns that voters expressed with your administration?" Obama gave a winding answer that can be summarized as "no."

In the course of the answer, he observed: "I'm the guy who's elected by everybody, not just from a particular state or a particular district. And they want me to push hard to close some of these divisions, break through some of the gridlock, and get stuff done. So, the most important thing I can do is just get stuff done and help Congress get some things done."

it turns out that what Obama "hears" is an echo of his reelection in 2012. When it comes to the historic results of the midterm elections just concluded, however, Obama is actually hard of hearing. The Framers set up the House as the people's body, and the people have just sent an enhanced Republican majority to Congress based on their opposition to Obama's leading policies.

Obama reminded his audience that he is president of the United States (we remember!) and reiterated his vow to take unilateral action to regularize the status of millions of illegal aliens. Enormous ingenuity has gone into this formulation: "[W]hat I'm not going to do is just wait. I think it's fair to say that I have shown a lot of patience and have tried to work on a bipartisan basis as much as possible. And I'm going to keep on doing so. But in the meantime, let's figure out what we can do lawfully though executive actions to improve the functioning of the existing system." What he means to do is overcome the legal constraints of current law...but "lawfully," of course.

In response to the follow-up question, Obama went on at length about his pending executive action to regularize illegal aliens. He'd prefer to do it the old-fashioned, constitutional way, in which Congress enacts a law. But if they won't, he will. Put to one side the fabricated history here:

On immigration, I know that concerns have been expressed that, well, if you do something through executive actions, even if it's within your own authorities, that that will make it harder to pass immigration reform. I just have to remind everybody, I've heard that argument now for a couple of years. This is an issue I actually wanted to get done in my first term. And we didn't see legislative action.

And in my second term, I made it my top legislative priority. We got really good work done by a bipartisan group of senators, but it froze up in the House. And, you know, I think that the best way, if folks are serious about getting immigration reform done, is going ahead and passing a bill and getting it to my desk.

And then the executive actions that I take go away. They're superseded by the law that is passed. And I will engage any member of Congress who's interested in this in how we can shape legislation that will be a significant improvement over the existing system. But what we can't do is

just keep on waiting. There is a cost to waiting. There's a cost to our economy. It means that resources are misallocated.

When the issue of unaccompanied children cropped up during this summer, there was a lot of folks who perceived this as a major crisis in our immigration system. Now, the fact is that those numbers have now come down and they're approximately where they were a year ago or two years ago or a year before that.

But it did identify a real problem in a certain portion of the border where we've got to get more resources. But those resources may be misallocated separating families right now that most of us, most Americans would say probably we'd rather have them just pay their back taxes, pay a fine, learn English, get to the back of the line, but we'll give you a pathway where you can be legal in this country.

So, where I've got executive authorities to do that, we should get started on that. But I want to emphasize once again, if in fact Republican leadership wants to see an immigration bill passed, they now have the capacity to pass it and hopefully engaging with me and Democrats in both the House and the Senate, it's a bill that I can sign because it addresses the real concerns that are out there. And the sooner they do it, from my perspective, the better.

Congress is to provide him the law he wants to take the place of the unilateral executive action he intends to take. Obama claims he will limit his action to those within "executive authorities" (as construed by Eric Holder), but this is window dressing. It's all very orderly. Except that it's not the order established by the Constitution of the United States.

National Review

Chris Matthews: Obama 'Acts Like There's No Other World Out There' But His

By Brendan Bordelon

MSNBC host Chris Matthews expressed dismay over President Obama's post-election press conference on Wednesday, calling him entirely deaf to the millions of Americans who voted against his plan to grant executive amnesty for as many as 6 million illegal immigrants.

"The people, if you look at the polling, their problem is illegal immigration," he said. "He says, 'I'm going to fix the problem.' He doesn't mean he's gonna stop illegal immigration. He's not going to do anything to stop illegal hiring, which is the magnet for illegal immigration, really. He's going to basically say, 'I'm going to deal with them by giving them green cards.'"

"What bothered me about him tonight — he keeps talking about common ground," Matthews said. "Damn it, there's very little common ground between left and right! But what there is, is compromise."

"There's something in this guy that just plays to his constituency, and acts like there's no other world out there," the MSNBC host lamented. "And that's going to be a collision at the end of this year like you've never seen. I do believe it's will be waving a red flag in front of the bull. I think Mitch McConnell's headed for a fight with the president."

Contentions

Arrogant Obama Has Learned Nothing

by Jonathan S. Tobin

Last night as the country was absorbing the midterm election results, [the New York Times reported](#) that President Obama was “irritated” about the Democrats’ stunning defeat but that he did not consider the outcome to be a “repudiation” of himself or his administration. In response, some talking heads on the cable news networks suggested that given some time to reflect on events, he would take responsibility for a historic drubbing. They were wrong. When the president came out to face the public at his White House press conference this afternoon, it was clear that not only would he refuse to take blame for his party’s losses but was unchastened by the experience.

Though the press had wondered what adjective he would use to describe a defeat similar in magnitude to a 2010 midterm election that he dubbed a “shellacking,” his speech writers appeared not to have employed a thesaurus. The most he would say was that “Republicans had a good night.” But this unwillingness to acknowledge the magnitude of the outcome was merely the prelude to a lengthy display of presidential arrogance that made it clear he had no intention of taking the voters’ lack of confidence to heart or changing a thing about a presidency that the majority of Americans no longer regard favorably.

Rather than taking a page from Bill Clinton’s book and understanding that he had to adjust his policies and ideas to political reality, Obama seems to think he has no lessons to learn from the voters who broadly rejected the policies that he told us last month were on the ballot yesterday.

Asked several times by members of the press if he was prepared for genuine compromise, all he gave them was the usual boilerplate he’s been employing throughout his presidency about being willing to listen to Republicans if they come up with reasonable ideas. The only problem with that: he believes the only one with reasonable ideas is Barack Obama.

As for the American people, he dismissed their votes as merely a symptom of restlessness and impatience, not a reasoned assessment of his conduct in office. If there was any conclusion to be drawn from their votes, he took it as a slap at both Republicans and Democrats. As far as he is concerned, what the people want is for Congress to “get stuff done.”

It’s true that Republicans in Congress have favorability ratings even lower than the president’s awful poll numbers. But to claim that the voters took an equally dim view of both sides of the partisan divide is to ignore the results. Democrats took a beating around the country as an anti-Obama backlash tarnished their brand and even some highly unpopular Republicans wound up winning races easily that had been thought to be hard slogs. With his party suffering massive losses in the Senate and the House and even in governor’s races where Democrats suffered from their association with the president, it is simply impossible to honestly assert that what happened was a bipartisan anti-incumbent wave. Instead of a “Seinfeld election” about nothing, it was an anti-Obama six-year itch of historic proportions.

Speaking prior to Obama’s press conference, incoming Senate Majority Leader Mitch McConnell urged the president to work with Republicans and accept the olive branch he was offering. But he also warned him that if he ignored the election results and moved ahead with plans to use executive orders to legalize millions of illegal immigrants, he would be immediately “poisoning the well” and making bipartisan deal-making far more difficult.

Yet that is exactly what Obama seems intent on doing. His attitude about immigration was no different than his stance on every other issue where he differs from Congress: It's my way or the highway. If a Republican-controlled Congress doesn't want him doing end runs around their constitutional authority, Obama says their only choice is to pass bills he likes. If not, he will act on his own.

This is the main point of his remarks. Though he spoke at times of being willing to have more drinks or rounds of golf with Republicans or members of Congress—something most presidents understand is part of their job but which Obama regards as being somehow beneath his dignity—the president believes such meetings are merely an opportunity for others to listen to him and learn the errors of their ways. In his view, “getting stuff done” means Republicans passing liberal legislation, not him being willing to agree to some of the GOP agenda.

Listening to Obama discuss the need to accommodate or even listen to critics, it's easy to see he still thinks of himself as the adult in rooms full of petulant children that an unkind fate has forced him to supervise. Rather than treat opponents as equals who must be met halfway, even after six years of failure with Congress, Obama still seems to believe he is, at worst, a constitutional monarch who must suffer the indignity of hobnobbing with commoners even if he would rather die than relinquish his royal prerogatives.

Though the president did the right thing last night by calling election winners from both parties and scheduling a meeting with congressional leaders on Friday, based on today's performance there is no reason to think the next two years will be any different from those that preceded them when it comes to Obama working with his opponents.

It is one thing to be undaunted by electoral reversals. It is quite another to pretend that such petty annoyances are unworthy of your attention. Though he was the one who reminded us in January 2013 that “elections have consequences” when he was asked about working with defeated Republicans, this is a president who believes that he doesn't have to heed the verdict of the voters if it goes against him and his allies. That, and not congressional squabbling, is the answer to the question voters ask about why Washington doesn't function properly.

Contentions

[The Biggest Winners and Losers of 2014](#)

by Jonathan S. Tobin

The 2014 midterms turned out to be the wave election that Republicans dreamed of and Democrats dreaded. But amid the debris of what turned out to be a stunning repudiation of the administration, there are some people who must be judged to be the big winners and losers on both sides. Here's my list:

The Winners:

The first and most obvious winner is **Mitch McConnell** who will be the majority leader in January. Earlier in the year, he looked to be under siege in his race for reelection but ran among the smartest campaigns in the country as he first swamped a Tea Party challenger and then destroyed Alison Lundergan Grimes, the candidate the Clintons helped handpick to oppose him, in the general election. McConnell finally gets his chance to run the Senate and the man in position to put

the heat on President Obama even if he won't have an easy time with some members of his caucus.

Tom Cotton came into 2014 as the most hyped GOP Senate candidate but was thought to have run a lackluster campaign that turned an easy win into a nail biter. In the end, he won his Arkansas seat in a landslide. That puts him back into the conversation as the most highly regarded young (37) Republican and a future leader of his party.

In the course of the last year **Joni Ernst** went from a national unknown to the leading Republican dragon slayer who turned a likely Democratic hold to a GOP Senate pickup in Iowa. The first woman sent to D.C. from the Hawkeye State, she turned out the most effective ad of the campaign in which she spoke of castrating hogs and making the pigs in Washington squeal. Forget about Sarah Palin and Michel Bachmann. Ernst is the new female star of the Tea Party with a bully Senate pulpit.

Ted Cruz wasn't on the ballot and his GOP nemesis McConnell got a major promotion. But Republican control of the Senate will also make him more important and bring even more attention to his guerrilla campaign against both the Republican establishment and the Obama administration as he prepares for a presidential run.

Scott Walker's struggles to win reelection as Wisconsin governor were supposed to tarnish his hopes for the presidency. But rather than being knocked off by another huge effort by the unions and liberal super-PACs, he wound up prevailing by a convincing margin that will boost his credibility for 2016. Though he is still untested on the national stage, winning three elections in five years elevates him to the first tier of GOP candidates if, as is expected, he runs for president.

Chris Christie didn't have a very good 2014 that started off with Bridgetate and ended with a video in which he told a critic to "sit down and shut up." But as head of the Republican Governors Association, he has to get some of the credit for a GOP wave that saw major wins for Republicans in blue states like Illinois, Maryland, and Massachusetts. That gives his flagging hopes for the presidency a much-needed boost.

The only Democrat on our list is **Elizabeth Warren**, another senator who wasn't on the ballot. Being in the minority in the Senate will only enhance her standing as the idol of her party's base. It will also put her in a position to wage her own guerilla campaign to hold President Obama's feet to the fire should he be tempted to try and cut any deals with the GOP Congress.

Losers:

The most obvious loser is President **Barack Obama** for whom this midterm must stand as a personal repudiation even if he chooses to pretend that is not the case. Whether he chooses to try and work with Congress or tries to govern on his own with executive orders of questionable legality, the lame duck period of his presidency begins now.

The other obvious loser is **Harry Reid** who gets demoted from majority to minority leader. Reid, who ran the Senate with an iron fist and squelched debate from both sides of the aisle, will not find the change invigorating or pleasant.

Even before her party tanked on Tuesday, Democratic National Committee Chair Rep. **Debbie Wasserman Schultz** was already lined up to be the scapegoat for the defeat. The White House has been waging a war on women with her in the cross-hairs for the last three years but the

catastrophic loss may give Obama the opening to finally fire someone that he seems to dislike almost as much as Benjamin Netanyahu.

The competition for the worst campaign of 2014 is stiff but the title has to go to Iowa Rep. **Bruce Braley** who singlehandedly turned a safe Democratic Senate seat into a Republican pickup. Though, as I noted, Joni Ernst ran a nearly perfect campaign against him, Braley's gaffes will not soon be forgotten. Runners up would be **Alison Lundergan Grimes** who turned a close race against an unpopular Mitch McConnell into a rout. And she still isn't saying whether she voted for Obama. Texas gubernatorial candidate **Wendy Davis** was probably even more inept than Braley or Grimes but doesn't get the title because she would have lost in red Texas even if she ran a perfect campaign. Still, the collapse of her catastrophic and mendacious run for statewide office was as catastrophic as her rise from obscurity via a pro-abortion filibuster last year was meteoric.

She wasn't on the ballot yesterday, but the likely 2016 Democratic presidential candidate **Hillary Clinton** took a hit as much as any other member of her party. The scope of the GOP win and the inability of her party to generate an Obama-style turnout without the president on the ballot should chill Democratic optimism about the next national election. So should the failure of the Clintons to help Democratic candidates around the country.

The one Republican loser on the list is **Scott Brown**. Though he wound up losing by only a whisker in a New Hampshire Senate race that few gave him a chance to win, had he stayed home in Massachusetts and run for governor, he'd have been the one to beat Martha Coakley. Had Brown done so, he'd be governor and have a bright future instead of seeing his career in elective politics finished.

Boston Herald

Midterms are microcosm of Hillary Clinton's clout

by Jaclyn Cashman



Hillary Clinton speaks on behalf of Martha Coakley during last weeks rally at the Park Plaza Hotel.

Hillary Clinton put her political clout and even her political future on the line in this election — from Massachusetts to New Hampshire and in races clear across the country — and as the dust settles this morning we'll see how it paid off.

The news that Republicans took control of the Senate despite Clinton's best efforts doesn't bode well for her desire to become the next president of the United States.

Because if you think Hillary Clinton spent all that time and money crisscrossing the country trying to get fellow Democrats elected or help them keep their seats out of the kindness of her heart — you are sadly mistaken. The goal was to have as many of them beholden to her as possible — and to show that she is someone who can get it done. "It" being to raise massive amounts of money and win votes.

The GOP claimed control of the Senate yesterday by picking off Democratic incumbents in Arkansas, Colorado and North Carolina and holding control of key seats in Kansas, Georgia and Kentucky, while picking up a vacant seat in Iowa. Hillary or Bill Clinton stumped in most of those states, and they wanted winning Democrats there who would owe them favors. She came out of the evening with at least one key win. Jeanne Shaheen in New Hampshire, with its famously first presidential primary, owes her.

But don't worry about Hillary. To explain away any weak points in the national Democratic mosaic, Hillary Clinton has what every political Clinton needs — a fall guy.

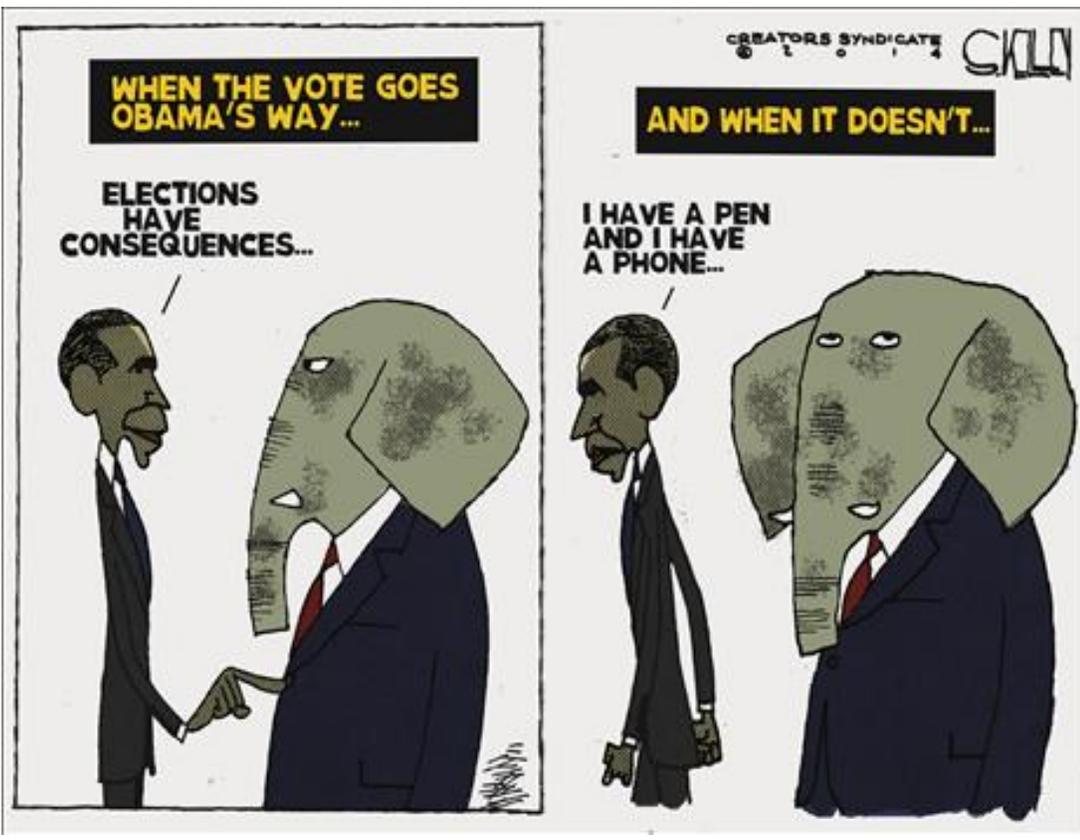
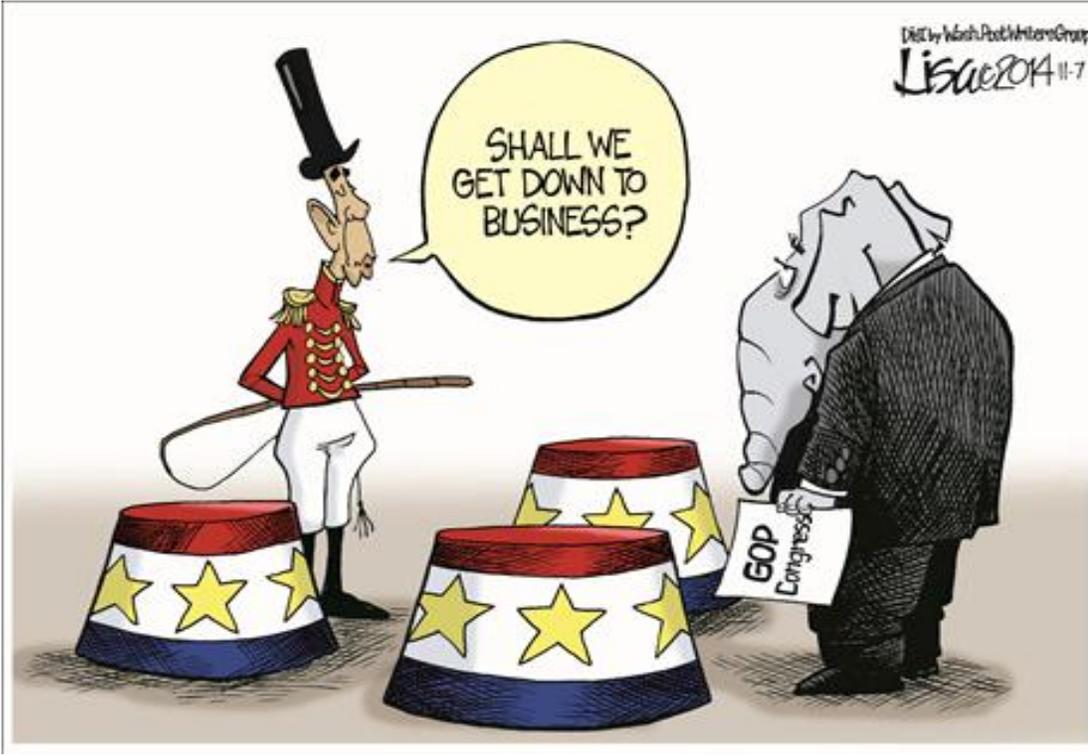
That would be President Obama. Expect to see Obama shoulder a lot of the blame for a lot of Democratic woes, thanks to his abysmal job approval ratings and back-to-back scandals, from Obamacare's stumbling launch, to the renewal of combat operations in Iraq and now Syria, to Ebola ... the list goes on.

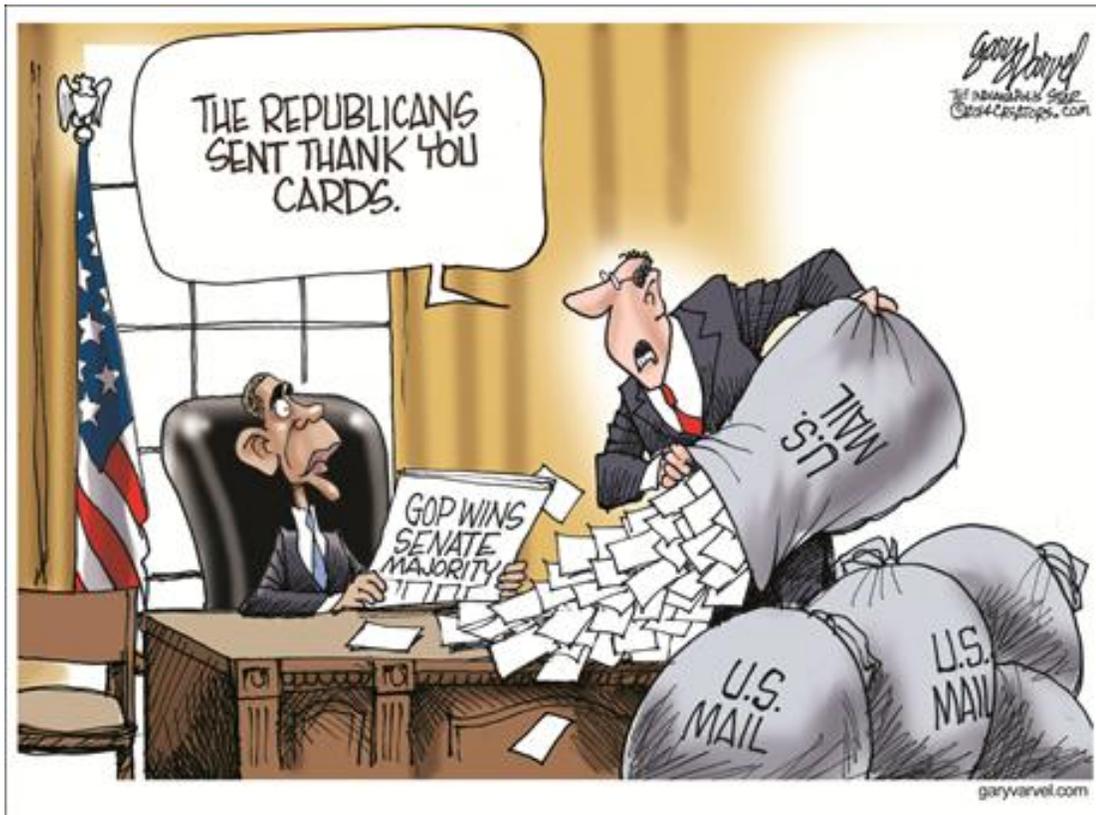
The longer he's in office

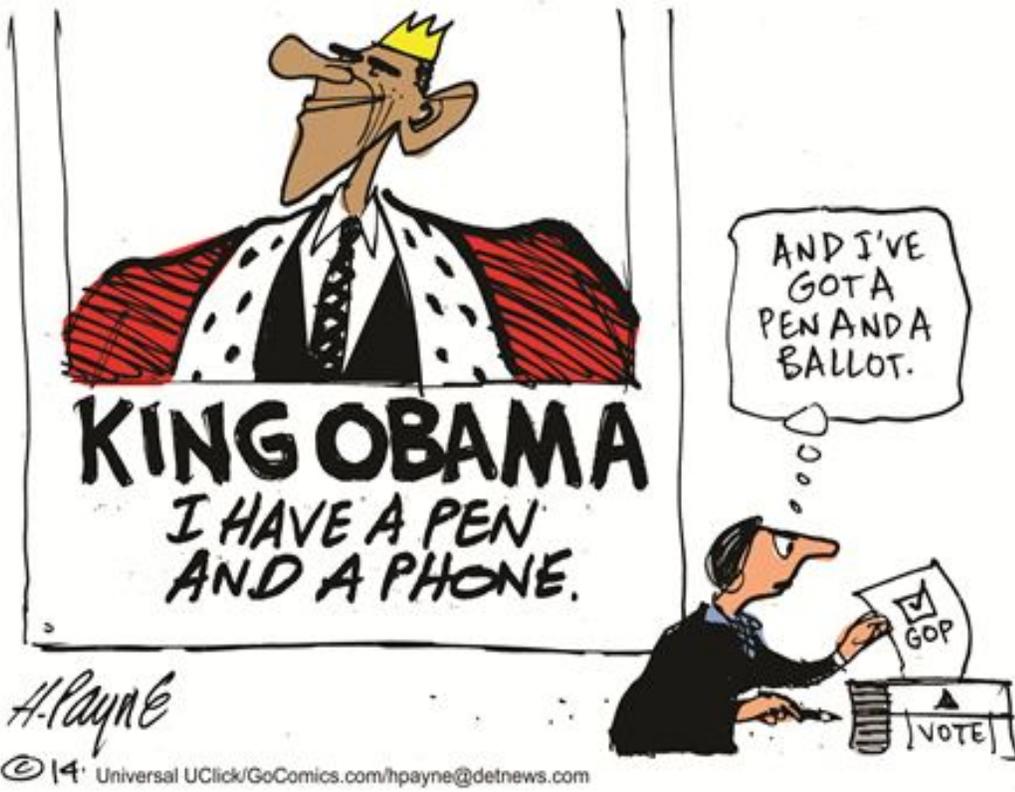


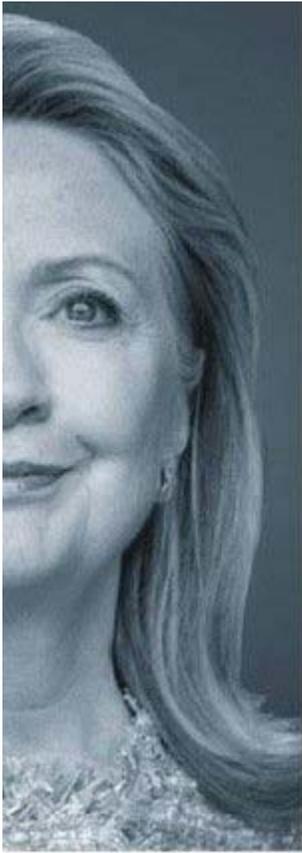
the funnier this poster gets.











Those people who want Hillary Clinton elected president, so that we could have our first woman president, seem to have learned absolutely nothing from the current disaster of choosing a president on the basis of demographics and symbolism.

THOMAS SOWELL

