

December 16, 2014

Chris Cillizza awards the president with "The Worst Year in Washington." Last year the same deserving recipient also received the award and Pickerhead thinks he'll win again in 2015 after the Supremes toss out the immigration power grab along with the Affordable Care Act.

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His sixth year in office was, inarguably, his worst, when the problems that had been building throughout his second term all came crashing down around him.

The year began with Obama proposing a set of reforms to the National Security Agency, a result of ongoing national security leaks, and ended with midterm elections that saw his party lose its Senate majority largely because of the president's unpopularity.

In between were continued challenges to the Affordable Care Act, America's reentry into Iraq — a war the president had long vowed to exit — and memoirs from former Cabinet officials questioning Obama's decision-making and judgment.

Twelve months ago, we also awarded Obama the worst year in 2013, calling 2013 his "lost year" because he spent it salvaging old accomplishments rather than building his legacy. But even then, we saw a possible path back to relevance. Now, all that appears left for the Obama presidency is a narrowing of both vision and accomplishment.

What tied together all of 2014's failures, stumbles and necessary evils was a growing sense among the public that Obama simply isn't up to the job to which he has been twice elected. ...

Speaking of pathetic people, Jonathan Gruber's congressional testimony is covered by **John Fund**.

An old Soviet joke had men carrying briefcases marching alongside tanks and soldiers in a Kremlin parade. "Why are those men in a military parade?" a boy innocently asks his father. He replies, "Those are the economists. They are the most dangerous of all."

MIT economist Jonathan Gruber's factually impoverished testimony on Obamacare didn't get nearly the attention it should have, as congressional Democrats cleverly decided to release a report on CIA torture abuses on the same day. Gruber's stonewalling about videos in which he boasted that the "stupidity" of the American people and their "lack of transparency" had been the key to passing Obamacare was buried deep inside major papers and ignored by the next morning's network-TV shows. John Harwood of CNBC dismissed his testimony: "I'm sorry, Gruber is a nothingburger and always has been." Mark Halperin of Bloomberg News chimed in: "This has been a sideshow. . . . It has no impact whatsoever."

Halperin will be right if journalists continue to look the other way and fail to probe more deeply into the issues Gruber has raised. The lack of curiosity many of them display about a witness who used variations of "I don't recall" 20 times during his testimony is remarkable. One journalist explained to me that many of his colleagues have bought into the liberal argument that Gruber was just a bit player in the Obamacare spectacle, even though many journalists played up his role just a few years ago. "He's not a legislator. He's not a staff guy. He's like 300 million other Americans who

can have their opinion,” now sniffs Jay Angoff, a Department of Health and Human Services official who worked on implementing the health-care legislation.

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Kevin Williamson writes on Sen. Warren.

... No doubt aware that 99 percent of those who look to her for guidance on financial regulation could not explain what a derivative is, Senator Warren did her usual dishonest shtick, engaging in her habitual demagoguery without ever making an attempt to actually explain the issue, which is a slightly complicated and technical one, to the rubes who make up the Democrats’ base. Angrily insisting that the reform is about nothing more than ensuring that “the biggest financial institutions in this country can make more money” is cheap, and it’s easier than trying to explain why many midsized banks believe that the rule puts them at a competitive disadvantage vis-à-vis the big Wall Street firms, to say nothing of exploring the convoluted question of why agricultural swaps are covered by the rule while interest-rate and foreign-exchange swaps are not. This led Maggie Haberman of Politico to admire Senator Warren’s “authenticity,” the choice of precisely that word being the cherry on this sundae of asininity. Senator Warren is as much an authentic champion of ordinary working people as she is an authentic Cherokee princess — and Mel Brooks and those Yiddish-speaking Indians from Blazing Saddles were more convincing in that role.

Bailout politics is still very much with us: People resent — rightly — what was done and how it was done. Many on the Tea Party right and the Occupy left intuit that there exists a dysfunctional relationship between Wall Street and Washington, though Senator Warren et al. maddeningly believe that the way to ameliorate this is to invest Washington with even greater powers, enabling even worse misbehavior and even more remorseless rent-seeking. And those who bother to keep up with such things know that neither Dodd-Frank nor anything else that has happened in Washington since the financial crisis has in fact eliminated, or even reduced, the phenomenon of financial institutions’ being considered — inevitable phrase — “too big to fail.” ...

Since she is a genuine idiot, David Harsanyi thinks Liz should run. There’s no good reason for her not to run.

When Elizabeth Warren rallied beleaguered House liberals to push back against a bank-coddling omnibus bill and the spineless White House that enabled it, she showed us some of her dynamic appeal. Her only leverage? An implicit threat to shut down the government. Hypocrisy? Sure. Consider the agitated criticism Warren and her allies threw at Republicans not very long ago. And yes, St. Warren’s righteousness was aimed at some inconsequential riders. Still, passing trillion-dollar pieces of legislation should never be easy, and disrupting the current cozy, bipartisan environment surely can’t be a bad thing.

At the same time, it’s not difficult to imagine Hillary Clinton ensconced in her penthouse suite in whatever city she’s about to give a six-figure lecture in, contemplating every conceivable political

angle of this debate, tabulating every potential big-money donor's interests, and asking obsequious staffers how polling looks before composing her own opinion on the matter. That's because Hillary is the Democrats' Mitt Romney. And Democrats would be engaging in a historic act of negligence if they allowed her to run unopposed for presidency. ...

Seth Mandel thinks the biggest budget battle losers were Barry and Hillary.

... The big losers from last night are Obama and Hillary. The president, to borrow Bill Clinton's quote, may still be relevant here, but not very. Obama had to use his office and his influence and his spokesmen and his advisors just to beat back a freshman senator from his own party, and just barely. Democrats, as Dave Weigel notes in an excellent tick-tock on last night's mess, "proudly told reporters that calls from the White House — especially calls from Citigroup's Jamie Dimon — did nothing to move them."

Obama has dragged his party down enough. The midterms were the end of Obama as the leader of the Democratic Party, because even Democrats now understand they can win by separating themselves from Obama's toxic legacy. And what about Obama's chosen successor, Hillary Clinton? The Cromnibus chaos was a nightmare for her.

What the Democrats proved last night was that there exists a significant and restive segment of the base. Being Democrats, they still need someone to fall in line behind; unlike the Tea Party, these restive Democrats prefer to take orders from someone. They just would like to take orders from a different brand of statist. Elizabeth Warren is the one they've been waiting for.

Warren's populism is very different from that of the Tea Party. Conservative grassroots value liberty; Warren argues for increasing state power over its citizens and is not above abusing that authority when she has the opportunity. What Warren wants is power concentrated in her hands. What Hillary's supporters should fear is the possibility that Warren will pursue her quest for power to its logical conclusion and run for president. ...

Howie Carr says you can always tell a Harvard man.

... Then there are those Harvard Law School students asking to postpone taking their final exams because of the "trauma" of Ferguson and Staten Island. Does this include the Harvard Law student who was arrested last week after he allegedly assaulted some Harvard cops in a law school dorm while intoxicated?

The biggest embarrassments, though, are Jonathan Gruber and his younger separated-at-birth brother, Ben Edelman. A couple of "doctors" from Harvard. One is the scourge of American health care, the other of local Chinese restaurants.

As a former condo owner on Harvard Street in the square, diagonally across from Pennypacker Hall, I feel eminently qualified to diagnose the causes of the Goober boys' despicable behavior — post traumatic stress disorder.

You'd be a braggart and a bully too, if you'd spent your junior-high years getting stuffed into lockers, or enduring the indignity of daily atomic wedgies, as these two greedy geeks so obviously did.

There's only one cure for PTSD — and that's a Harvard Ph.D. Piled Higher and Deeper. ...

Washington Post

Worst Year in Washington

President Obama, for losses at home and crises abroad

by Chris Cillizza

Every week, I award someone the least desirable prize in town: the [worst week in Washington](#). If you're caught in a scandal, fired from a big job or embarrassed by a gaffe, you'll be sure to read me offering you a hearty "congrats, or something." But every December comes the biggest recognition of all: the worst year in Washington. For this award, you really had to blow it, and 2014 offered lots of contenders. Here's who took the honor – along with the people who had a [really bad year](#), a [bad year](#), a [not-so-good year](#), a [good year](#) and the [best year](#) in Washington.

In 2014, President Obama's past caught up with him.

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The year began with Obama proposing [a set of reforms](#) to the National Security Agency, a result of ongoing national security leaks, and ended with midterm elections that saw his party lose its Senate majority largely because of the president's unpopularity.

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What tied together all of 2014's failures, stumbles and necessary evils was a growing sense among the public that Obama simply isn't up to the job to which he has been twice elected.

Consider this: In CNN-Opinion Research Corp. polling in December 2008, more than three-quarters of Americans said that the phrase "can manage the government effectively" applied to Obama; by March 2014, just 43 percent said the same. (And that was before [problems](#) at the Department of Veterans Affairs were revealed later that month.) A late 2013 Washington Post-ABC News poll found a similar result, with just 41 percent of respondents saying Obama "is a good manager." A Pew Research Center survey in July showed that 44 percent of respondents believed that Obama was "able to get things done," a number not far from the 42 percent of people who said the same of George W. Bush at a similar point in his presidency.

The Bush comparison matters enormously. Remember that Obama was elected in large part on his promise to restore basic competence to governing in the wake of Bush's missteps on issues from Iraq to Hurricane Katrina. (This was the president who made "Heckuva job, Brownie" a slogan for federal ineptitude.)

Every early move Obama made — from his campaign promise of "change" to [the "team of rivals" idea](#) for his Cabinet — was driven by the notion that this president, unlike the man he replaced, was all about turning the government into a pure meritocracy that would run things right.

But that idea began to unravel with a rapid-fire series of scandals: the revelation that the IRS was targeting tea party groups for special scrutiny, the [Edward Snowden leaks](#) about NSA surveillance and the botched rollout of HealthCare.gov, to name three that happened in 2013.

That unraveling sped up over the past 12 months — fueled, interestingly enough, by foreign policy stumbles by the president and his team.

Obama's longtime pledge [to "reset" relations with Russia](#) was exposed as frighteningly naive when President Vladimir Putin moved into eastern Ukraine with impunity. Obama's response to Putin's aggression — sanctions — was derided as using a spray bottle to put out a five-alarm fire.

Then there was Iraq, the "dumb war" that Obama was elected in no small measure to end. He seemed to do that once, removing the last combat troops from the country in 2011. But then came the rise of the Islamic State, the militant group that now controls much of Iraq and Syria, made particularly infamous by its heinous tactic of beheading captives.

By June, Obama had approved the deployment of almost [300 new U.S. troops](#) to Iraq. In early September, after the beheading of American journalist Steven Sotloff, Obama approved sending more troops to the region. In November, he authorized the deployment of 1,500 additional troops, bringing the total to roughly 3,000. The cost for this redeployment in Iraq? About \$5.6 billion.

As if that weren't enough past-haunting-the-present for Obama, two memoirs released this year by former Cabinet officials cast him as something short of a decisive commander in chief.

Losing records

It's normal for a president's party to lose seats in Congress over the course of his term. But Democrats' losses during President Obama's time in office have been especially large. Among presidents elected to two terms in the past 50 years, no other saw as much erosion of his party in the House through his second midterm election, and only one, Bill Clinton, suffered as many setbacks in the Senate.

Barack Obama

-69 -11
HOUSE SENATE

George W. Bush

-17 -1
HOUSE SENATE

Bill Clinton

-47 -12
HOUSE SENATE

Ronald Reagan

-16 -8
HOUSE SENATE

Richard Nixon

-49 -6
HOUSE SENATE

Sources: Office of the Historian, House of Representatives; Senate Historical Office

Former secretary of state Hillary Clinton [struck first](#), not only deriding Obama's "don't do stupid s---" foreign policy vision as less than visionary, but also blasting her onetime boss for not intervening earlier in the Syrian civil war and thereby potentially reducing the Islamic State threat. Yet even that critique was nothing compared with what former CIA chief and defense secretary Leon Panetta leveled at Obama in his memoir "[Worthy Fights.](#)" Panetta said the president had "[lost his way](#)" in matters ranging from the fight against the Islamic State to the budgetary process. He condemned Obama's "frustrating reticence to engage his opponents and rally support for his cause" and said the president too often "relies on the logic of a law professor rather than the passion of a leader." (Former defense secretary Robert Gates's memoir was also tough — but it [went after Vice President Biden](#) more than Obama.)

Then there was the matter of the midterm elections. Republicans badly wanted to nationalize the campaign around the unpopular Obama, even as Democrats, trying desperately to hold their Senate majority, were doing everything they could to make voters forget about the guy sitting in the White House.

Enter Obama at Northwestern University in early October, delivering what was billed as a major speech on the country's economic progress under his leadership. About halfway through that address, he uttered [these four sentences](#): "I am not on the ballot this fall. Michelle's pretty happy about that. But make no mistake: These policies are on the ballot. Every single one of them."

By the next morning, Republicans were using those lines in TV ads bashing Democrats as Obama clones. Already-apoplectic Democratic strategists went bananas, insisting that the president, whom they felt had ignored and underappreciated them for years, was now sabotaging any chance they had of avoiding a horrendous election.

That frustration boiled over the day after the vote — news flash: the Democrats lost the Senate, badly — when David Krone, chief of staff for Senate Majority Leader Harry Reid's chief of staff, blasted Obama in a Washington Post story. "We were never going to get on the same page,"

[Krone said](#) of the White House and Senate Democrats. "We were beating our heads against the wall."

Way back in March 2008, then-presidential candidate Obama delivered one of his most memorable speeches, addressing the controversial statements of his former pastor, the Rev. Jeremiah Wright, and reflecting on race in America. In [his remarks](#), Obama drew on William Faulkner's famous line from "Requiem for a Nun": "The past is never dead. It's not even past."

That has never proved truer for Obama's political fortunes than in 2014. The past kept complicating his present — and clouding his future.

President Obama, for becoming a victim of history rather than a writer of it, you had the worst year in Washington. Congrats, or something.

National Review

[Gruber's Pathetic Congressional Testimony](#)

Despite his memory lapses, the ethical problems related to his work on Obamacare are plain.

by John Fund

An old Soviet joke had men carrying briefcases marching alongside tanks and soldiers in a Kremlin parade. "Why are those men in a military parade?" a boy innocently asks his father. He replies, "Those are the economists. They are the most dangerous of all."

MIT economist Jonathan Gruber's factually impoverished testimony on Obamacare didn't get nearly the attention it should have, as congressional Democrats cleverly decided to release a report on CIA torture abuses on the same day. Gruber's stonewalling about videos in which he boasted that the "stupidity" of the American people and their "lack of transparency" had been the key to passing Obamacare was buried deep inside major papers and ignored by the next morning's network-TV shows. John Harwood of CNBC dismissed his testimony: "I'm sorry, Gruber is a nothingburger and always has been." Mark Halperin of Bloomberg News [chimed in](#): "This has been a sideshow. . . . It has no impact whatsoever."

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In fact, Gruber was the most influential economist advising Congress and the Congressional Budget Office on how to score the budget impact of Obamacare. Back in 1994, CBO helped sink HillaryCare when it prudently pointed out that an individual health-insurance mandate imposed

costs on the American people that should be reflected in the federal budget as a tax. But Peter Orszag, the director of the CBO from 2007 to 2009 until he became President Obama's budget chief, engineered a policy reversal that decided not to count the individual mandate's costs as part of the federal budget. That explains Gruber's famous confession at the University of Pennsylvania last year that Obamacare "was written in a tortured way to make sure that the CBO did not score the mandate as taxes. If CBO scored the mandate as taxes, the bill dies."

Gruber has direct knowledge of this subterfuge because through 2010 he served on the Panel of Health Advisers to the CBO, even though in his testimony this week he couldn't remember exactly when he was on the panel. He was also at the same time working under contract for the Obama administration, although he often concealed his role when promoting Obamacare with reporters, describing himself as "an independent expert." As a *Wall Street Journal* editorial points out, "Gruber appears to have been sitting on both sides of the table as the CBO made this crucial decision. It isn't clear how much interaction he had with the staff at CBO, but did this association afford him insights that helped Democrats draft a deceptive bill that avoided acknowledging that it included a tax?"

It's no wonder that Gruber decided to play stupid when asked about his confessions on the CBO scoring issue. Representative Michael Turner of Ohio put it to him point-blank in this exchange during Gruber's testimony:

Turner: "Mr. Gruber, you made these statements, did you not?"

Gruber: "I don't recall exactly."

Turner: "You don't recall? Now, one of them we actually saw on video. Do you recall that one?"

Gruber: "Yes."

Turner: "Right, I can't imagine how you don't recall your own statements, because the American voter has seen them over and over again, as you've called them stupid. Do you deny making these statements, Mr. Gruber, even though you don't recall them? Do you deny calling Obamacare a tax?"

Gruber: "If you're reading my actual quotes, then I don't deny it."

Turner: "I'm reading your actual quotes."

Gruber: "Then I don't deny it."

Gruber has gone to great effort to avoid calling Obamacare's mandate a tax, but in his own economic textbook he wrote that people subject to a mandate "could view themselves as essentially being taxed in order to support this [health-care] market." Professor Gruber is clearly at odds with Forrest Gump Gruber.

Later in the hearing, Gruber also claimed to Representative Trey Gowdy of South Carolina that he "honestly didn't remember" making his comment that the American people were "too stupid" to figure out Obamacare's sleights of hand.

But perhaps the most bizarre exchange came as Gruber was asked repeatedly to provide details of his Obamacare contracts with the federal government and various states. Some estimates have

placed his income from those contracts at over \$6 million. Gruber was asked by the House Committee on Government Reform and Oversight to detail his income on a standard disclosure form. But Gruber chose not to use that form and provided a pitifully inadequate accounting of his own. When he was pressed for more details, he repeatedly dodged the issue and said the committee could contact his lawyer.

Gruber may have lawyered up on the issue to avoid questions about his unusual “sole source” contract with the Department of Health and Human Services. In February 2009, HHS announced that it “intends to negotiate with Jonathan Gruber, Ph.D. on a sole sources basis for technical assistance in evaluating options for national healthcare reform. The basis for restricting competition is the authority 13.106-1(b) because only one source is reasonably available to satisfy agency requirements.” But that was clearly not the case, as entities with expertise in health care ranging from PricewaterhouseCoopers to Anthem Inc. have demonstrated. Was Gruber uniquely qualified to provide the “garbage in, garbage out” analysis that Obamacare needed to pass because he himself may have helped develop the revised economic model that hid its true costs?

Despite his constant memory lapses, what can we fairly deduce from the role of Jonathan Gruber in Obamacare? A person who advised the Congressional Budget Office in a formal capacity and admits to communicating with it on scoring issues (he hasn’t revealed details) is hired at the same time by the Obama administration via a mysterious non-competitive contract.

During that contract, which is in effect at the same time he is helping CBO with its health-care effort, he helps “torture” (Gruber’s word) the Obamacare bill so it will be scored in the most favorable light by CBO. This all sounds like a conflict of interest and a scandal of the highest order. After the new Congress is sworn in, Jonathan Gruber needs to be called to testify again. And perhaps some of his former colleagues at CBO should be at the witness table with him.

The questions I’ve raised are only part of the mystery of Jonathan Gruber, a mystery that has only deepened with his astonishingly opaque testimony. Rarely has a congressional witness left more clues that a scandal has been underreported. All this makes the lack of curiosity by so many reporters all the more disturbing. Nancy Pelosi’s infamous statement that “we have to pass the bill so that you can find out what is in it” was certainly true when she made it in 2010. It’s even truer now as Americans begin to experience the law’s imperfections and distortions. Will the news media force us to wait until Obamacare is fully locked in before we finally learn how this was foisted on the American public?

National Review

It’s (Still) a TARP!

Elizabeth Warren, corporate-welfare queen

by Kevin D. Williamson

The so-called cromnibus bill funding the federal government through this fiscal year was passed over the objections of (some) House conservatives and (some) self-proclaimed progressives, for familiar reasons: Conservatives, eager that the Republicans should begin governing like they have a majority in Congress before they actually have a majority in Congress, argued that the bill locked in long-term support for too many of Barack Obama’s priorities — to hell with an amnesty fight in February or gutting Obamacare after the new majority is seated, they cannot wait to start scrapping. The Democrats’ left flank, led by Nancy Pelosi right up until the White House did Republicans the favor of steamrolling her for them, complained of many things, as is the

Democratic habit: In this case, the litany of woe included abominable measures that would allow larger individual donations to political parties and repeal part of the destructive Dodd-Frank financial-“reform” law, the “swaps push-out” rule that requires banks to exile some derivatives trading to separate corporate entities not insured by the FDIC.

Senator Elizabeth Warren, the millionaire Massachusetts class warrior who has made the vilification of Wall Street bankers her second-favorite pastime (right behind prospering on the largesse of Wall Street lawyers, the gentlemen and scholars who funded her very generously compensated position at Harvard and fill her campaign coffers) did not exactly make the issue her hill to die on, but the fight did provide her an excellent opportunity for grandstanding.

No doubt aware that 99 percent of those who look to her for guidance on financial regulation could not explain what a derivative is, Senator Warren did her usual dishonest shtick, engaging in her habitual demagoguery without ever making an attempt to actually explain the issue, which is a slightly complicated and technical one, to the rubes who make up the Democrats’ base. Angrily insisting that the reform is about nothing more than ensuring that “the biggest financial institutions in this country can make more money” is cheap, and it’s easier than trying to explain why many midsized banks believe that the rule puts them at a competitive disadvantage vis-à-vis the big Wall Street firms, to say nothing of exploring the convoluted question of why agricultural swaps are covered by the rule while interest-rate and foreign-exchange swaps are not. This led Maggie Haberman of *Politico* to admire Senator Warren’s “authenticity,” the choice of precisely that word being the cherry on this sundae of asininity. Senator Warren is as much an authentic champion of ordinary working people as she is an authentic Cherokee princess — and Mel Brooks and those Yiddish-speaking Indians from *Blazing Saddles* were more convincing in that role.

Bailout politics is still very much with us: People resent — rightly — what was done and how it was done. Many on the Tea Party right and the Occupy left intuit that there exists a dysfunctional relationship between Wall Street and Washington, though Senator Warren et al. maddeningly believe that the way to ameliorate this is to invest Washington with even greater powers, enabling even worse misbehavior and even more remorseless rent-seeking. And those who bother to keep up with such things know that neither Dodd-Frank nor anything else that has happened in Washington since the financial crisis has in fact eliminated, or even reduced, the phenomenon of financial institutions’ being considered — inevitable phrase — “too big to fail.”

Here’s how the *New York Times* relates the cromnibus skirmish to bailout politics: “The liberal base of the Democratic Party, led by Ms. Warren, also found itself in an unlikely alliance with the Tea Party wing of the Republican Party. Both opposed the Wall Street bailout of 2008 and feared that the spending measure would not only provide a bounty for big banks but would also help cause another economic crisis.”

Both opposed the Wall Street bailout of 2008?

One wonders which of these famous progressives the *New York Times* has in mind when it states — as uncontested fact — that “the liberal base of the Democratic party” “opposed the Wall Street bailout of 2008.” Elizabeth Warren did not oppose the bailout per se, though she was critical of the way the Treasury Department implemented it. The bailouts were enabled by the Emergency Economic Stabilization Act of 2008, which enjoyed the support and votes of Senator Barack Obama of Illinois, Senator Joe Biden of Delaware, Senator Hillary Rodham Clinton of New York, Speaker of the House Nancy Pelosi, Senator Charles Schumer of New York, Representative Barney Frank of Massachusetts, Senator Patrick Leahy of Vermont, Representative Jesse Jackson of Illinois, Representative Sheila Jackson Lee of Texas, etc. The people who actually opposed bailouts by *voting against bailouts* were not in the main progressives, but were disproportionately

conservative Republicans: Representative Michele Bachmann of Minnesota, Representative Michael Burgess of Texas, Representative Jeff Flake of Arizona, Senator Sam Brownback of Kansas, Senator Jim DeMint of South Carolina, etc.

The Left, predictably, is captive to the hipster impulse: “I opposed bailouts before it was cool” is the Democrats’ version of “I saw Hüsker Dü at Jay’s Longhorn Bar.” Show me the ticket stubs.

The Tea Party came into being as a reaction to Republican complicity in bailouts of all sorts: of Wall Street firms, and of irresponsible mortgage borrowers. Occupy, and the potty-trained version of that movement led by Elizabeth Warren, demands more bailouts: of people who borrowed money for college or to buy a home, of fashionable corporations that do not want to pay market rates for financing, etc. Senator Warren is an energetic proponent of corporate welfare for Boeing, General Electric Bechtel, Caterpillar, and other such poor, defenseless little mom-and-pop operations.

If you are looking for actual rather than theoretical opposition to bailouts and corporate welfare, then your choices include Senator Rand Paul and Senator Ted Cruz, but practically nobody who might be called a progressive.

Nobody ever says he’s in favor of more bailouts or more handouts to business interests, but every time you hear a politician trotting out federal loan guarantees for certain businesses or targeted tax breaks for others, that is what he is talking about. Senator Warren may dismiss the revision to Dodd-Frank as a sop to big business, but she does not oppose sops to big business —she only opposes the ones not originating on her side of the aisle.

The Federalist

[Elizabeth Warren Is The Face Of Modern Democrats \(And Hillary Is Their Mitt Romney\)](#)

Run, Liz, Run!

by David Harsanyi

There’s no good reason for her not to run.

When Elizabeth Warren rallied beleaguered House liberals to push back against a bank-coddling omnibus bill and the spineless White House that enabled it, she showed us some of her dynamic appeal. Her only leverage? An implicit threat to shut down the government. Hypocrisy? Sure. Consider the agitated criticism Warren and her allies threw at Republicans not very long ago. And yes, St. Warren’s righteousness was aimed at some inconsequential riders. Still, passing trillion-dollar pieces of legislation should never be easy, and disrupting the current cozy, bipartisan environment surely can’t be a bad thing.

At the same time, it’s not difficult to imagine Hillary Clinton ensconced in her penthouse suite in whatever city she’s about to give a six-figure lecture in, contemplating every conceivable political angle of this debate, tabulating every potential big-money donor’s interests, and asking obsequious staffers how polling looks before composing her own opinion on the matter. That’s because Hillary is the Democrats’ Mitt Romney. And Democrats would be engaging in a historic act of negligence if they allowed her to run unopposed for presidency.

The most obvious reason bolstering my concern trolling is that Warren's positions far more closely reflect the sensibilities of constituents in the modern-day Democratic Party, not only in substance, but in tone.

Her hard-left economics—what the press quixotically refers to as “economic populism”—propels today's liberal argument. It's the default position of nearly every grassroots constituency on the Left. The center of the Democrats' agenda. This isn't just reflected in the embrace of class struggle (“inequality”) but a slow warming to socialistic ideas (and I'm not throwing the word in as invective; I mean it [in the most literal way](#)). Right now, few if any politicians are better than Warren at stoking the anxiety that makes that work.

Moreover, Warren, hopelessly wrong as she is, is liable to offer the country a better class of political debate than the one we've lived through the past eight years. There's no doubt hackneyed wars on women, minorities, and common sense will remain. But it's fair to say that Warren's histrionics are often built atop genuine policy beefs rather than straw men. They often reflect legitimate questions about cronyism. Not only would Warren compel Hillary to avoid any [premature triangulation](#), her presence in the race might impel Republican candidates to engage in a worthwhile conversation about corporatism and free markets.

On a practical level, Warren has simply one thing to think about: Hillary is beatable. Very beatable.

It would be one thing if the establishment candidate had proven her worth as a scary political entity. There is no Rick Lazio on her horizon (okay, [maybe](#)). And there is not a single shred of evidence that demonstrates Hillary is a talented or charismatic candidate or leader.

Much like Romney, who struggled to offer a credible argument against Obamacare because of his own history, Clinton will be similarly constrained to make the Democrats' most powerful cases against big business, big banks, or big anything. The most persuasive reasons Hillary has are her inevitability (again) and name recognition. One of those is ephemeral. The other can work both ways.

Last week a number of pro-Hillary pundits pointed to [a new Bloomberg poll that found more than half of Americans held favorable views of Clinton](#). What they talked about less, though, was that her favorability had significantly dropped from a 70 percent rating at the end of 2012. History tells us that Clinton is best liked when she's least seen. It is clear that most of her popularity is derived from name ID, because another noteworthy aspect from Bloomberg poll is that her most obvious advantages could easily be turned against her.

Here, for example, are the top areas those polled gave as advantages for her candidacy:

1. She has served as Secretary of State for four years – 77 percent believe this is an advantage.
2. She is married to former president Bill Clinton – 67 percent.
3. She has run for president before – 60 percent.
4. She served four years in the Obama administration – 59 percent.
5. She has close ties to Wall Street – 52 percent.
6. She has lived in Washington and worked in the federal government – 78 percent

When was the last time you heard a political ad *boasting* about a candidate's "close ties to Wall Street"? Is that really going to be helpful? When was the last time you heard an ad argue that the right choice was someone who spent most of her life working for the federal government and living in Washington? When was the last time anyone was bragging about his association with the Obama administration? Does anyone really believe the person who was principally concerned with the foreign affairs of the United States for four years left us in a better position?

You might remember that, in 2008, we heard a lot about how Hillary's appeal to white, working-class Democrats. You couldn't win without them. In 2008, much of the establishment lined up behind her inevitability and ability to raise money. Barack Obama spent more than any candidate in both his races. Hillary was beatable then, and she is beatable now. Her complete lack of authenticity remains. The history that made her unappealing to so many in 2008 remains. She is impure. Like all those who put their faith in politics, the flock will, in the end, be disenchanted with Warren. But Messianic figures win elections. And right now, Democrats need a new one.

Do it for America, Liz.

Contentions

Warren's Cromnibus Chaos and Hillary's Nightmare Scenario

by Seth Mandel

It is fitting that "Cromnibus"—the name given to the spending medley passed by the House yesterday to keep the government running—sounds like a Creature from the Bureaucratic Lagoon, because the chaos it unleashed will haunt Hillary Clinton. Populists on both left and right found things to hate in this spending bill, but the most populist energy was unleashed by Democratic-led opposition to a reform of the Dodd-Frank regulatory scheme. That reform has passed Congress overwhelmingly in the past. But that was before Elizabeth Warren brought a level of anti-Wall Street demagoguery to Congress that is not going away.

Ultimately, Cromnibus passed the House, even after Warren whipped up Democratic opposition. But it was close, and it required the intervention of President Obama to prevail upon his party not to shut down the government and make him look like the world's biggest hypocrite in the process. That Warren could sow such discord in the House from her perch in the Senate shows she's been modeling her career on that of Ted Cruz, her conservative counterpart across the aisle. Though she is not nearly the rhetorical talent that Cruz is, she mimicked Cruz's tactics and strategy to such a degree as to leave one with the impression Cruz is her (unwitting) mentor, if not her (unacknowledged) hero.

So Warren was a big winner last night. Republicans were too. The bill passed the GOP-controlled House despite the revolt. But even if it hadn't passed, the GOP still benefited. They would have put up a clean continuing resolution to fund the government for another month, at which point they would take over the Senate and Democrats' influence would be greatly weakened in crafting the next omnibus bill.

The big losers from last night are Obama and Hillary. The president, to borrow Bill Clinton's quote, may still be relevant here, but not very. Obama had to use his office and his influence and his spokesmen and his advisors just to beat back a freshman senator from his own party, and just barely. Democrats, as Dave Weigel [notes](#) in an excellent tick-tock on last night's mess, "proudly told reporters that calls from the White House — especially calls from Citigroup's Jamie Dimon — did nothing to move them."

Obama has dragged his party down enough. The midterms were the end of Obama as the leader of the Democratic Party, because even Democrats now understand they can win by separating themselves from Obama's toxic legacy. And what about Obama's chosen successor, Hillary Clinton? The Cronibus chaos was a nightmare for her.

What the Democrats proved last night was that there exists a significant and restive segment of the base. Being Democrats, they still need someone to fall in line behind; unlike the Tea Party, these restive Democrats prefer to take orders from someone. They just would like to take orders from a different brand of statist. Elizabeth Warren is the one they've been waiting for.

Warren's populism is very different from that of the Tea Party. Conservative grassroots value liberty; Warren argues for increasing state power over its citizens and is not above abusing that authority when she has the opportunity. What Warren wants is power concentrated in her hands. What Hillary's supporters should fear is the possibility that Warren will pursue her quest for power to its logical conclusion and run for president.

She still seems far from making that leap. But ironically what works against Hillary here is not her own age but Warren's. If Warren passes on running for president in 2016, she is most likely passing on ever running. If Hillary wins two terms, Warren would be 75 for the 2024 election. She's not running for president at 75. It's a stretch even to think she'd challenge a sitting Republican president, if that's who wins in 2016, after that Republican's first term, though that's at least a more realistic scenario.

Additionally, the Clintons are infamous for their lust for political revenge. They hold grudges, and that fact is going to help clear the field of prospective candidates who can bide their time. If Warren chooses to challenge Hillary and loses, the Clintons will retaliate. But Warren is not at the beginning of her career (even though she's a freshman senator); how much does she really have to lose?

There is also another factor: if Warren runs, she is unlikely to lose. Hillary is a terrible candidate who believes in nothing. What Warren proved yesterday is that she can mobilize and inspire support on a large scale, and that there are far more Democrats who prefer Warren's statism to the creepy there's-no-such-thing-as-other-people's-children statism of Hillary.

American leftists are an angry bunch. Elizabeth Warren matches their anger. And they don't know the issues well enough to know that Warren isn't telling them the truth—a fact that the Democratic establishment has tried to point out. Hillary doesn't exemplify anger; she exemplifies entrenched privilege. In 2008, Democratic primary voters chose anger over privilege. The nightmare scenario for Hillary would come to pass if they have the chance to do so again in 2016.

Boston Herald

[You can always tell a Harvard man](#)

by Howie Carr

These have been a tough couple of weeks for all us Harvard men.

What? You didn't know I'm a Harvard man. It's the veritas. Back in the '80s, I went to Harvard Law School. Every morning I'd drop my kids off — at the Harvard Law School day care center.

Years later, I became a professor at the JFK School of Government. Well, OK, so I wasn't exactly a professor, I just conducted a single five-week seminar about, well, I can't quite remember what now. The first day of class, I had to cross a picket line to get into Camelot High. The pampered pukers were protesting my hiring.

So you can see my Ivy League bona fides are totally in order. Hell, I could even be a trustee at Middlesex Community College — just like Royall M. Mack Sr., who claimed to have an “Executive MBA” from the Harvard Business School when he just went to an eight-week program for which the only requirement was that your \$75,000 “tuition” check didn't bounce.

By the way, to those of you who would doubt my Harvard credentials, I say to you, it's not like I went to the Harvard University Extension School. That would be Mr. Cameron Shenk, who was recently arrested by MSP's F Troop after he allegedly fell naked and bloody out of a drop ceiling in a ladies' room at Logan airport, then fled and tried to bite off an 84-year-old man's ear.

You know what they say. You can always tell a Harvard University Extension School man. But you can't tell him much.

Then there are those Harvard Law School students asking to postpone taking their final exams because of the “trauma” of Ferguson and Staten Island. Does this include the Harvard Law student who was arrested last week after he allegedly assaulted some Harvard cops in a law school dorm while intoxicated?

The biggest embarrassments, though, are Jonathan Gruber and his younger separated-at-birth brother, Ben Edelman. A couple of “doctors” from Harvard. One is the scourge of American health care, the other of local Chinese restaurants.

As a former condo owner on Harvard Street in the square, diagonally across from Pennypacker Hall, I feel eminently qualified to diagnose the causes of the Goober boys' despicable behavior — post traumatic stress disorder.

You'd be a braggart and a bully too, if you'd spent your junior-high years getting stuffed into lockers, or enduring the indignity of daily atomic wedgies, as these two greedy geeks so obviously did.

There's only one cure for PTSD — and that's a Harvard Ph.D. Piled Higher and Deeper.

Yeah, I went to Harvard all right, but it was on the Red Line. I hopped on at Porter Square, went through Harvard and I didn't get off until I got to Park Street. Best move I ever made, and that's the veritas.



BARACK OBAMA JONATHAN GRUBER
STUPID AND STUPIDER







