

January 27, 2015

Thomas Sowell looks over the GOP's 2016 prospects. He thinks a governor should get the nod and gives a lift to our favorite. You know, the one without a college degree. *... We can certainly hope that the country has learned that lesson — and that Republican rookie Senators get eliminated early in the 2016 primaries, so that we can concentrate on people who have had some serious experience running things — and taking responsibility for the consequences — rather than people whose only accomplishments have been in rhetoric and posturing.*

The more optimistic among us may hope that the Republicans will nominate somebody who stands for something, rather than the bland leading the bland — the kind of candidates the Republican establishment seems to prefer, even if the voters don't.

If the Republicans do finally decide to nominate somebody who stands for something, and who has a track record of succeeding in achieving what he set out to do, then no one fits that bill better than Governor Scott Walker of Wisconsin, who has put an end to government employee unions' racket of draining the taxpayers dry with inflated salaries and extravagant pensions.

That Governor Walker succeeded in reining in the unions, in a state long known for its left-leaning and pro-union politics, shows that he knows how to get the job done. It also shows that he has the guts to fight for what he believes, and the smarts to articulate his case and win the public over to his side, rather than pandering to whatever the polls show current opinion to be. ...

John Fund profiles our hero - Scott Walker.

National polls show Jeb Bush, Mitt Romney, and Chris Christie as the best-known Republicans preparing to run for president. Their high name ID puts them in front of other challengers for now. But the road to the GOP nomination runs through Iowa, New Hampshire, South Carolina, and Nevada — all states that vote early and can give an upstart candidate valuable momentum. Iowa will kick off campaigning for its caucuses this coming weekend, when Citizens United and Iowa congressman Steve King host the day-long Iowa Freedom Summit in Des Moines.

While Bush and Romney won't be there, at least eight potential GOP candidates will show up, along with 150 journalists. Lots of attention will be paid to Wisconsin governor Scott Walker, who many observers say has a chance to break out of the pack in Iowa. He comes from a neighboring state and understands Midwestern sensibilities. His dramatic confrontation with public-sector unions in 2011 and his ability since then to survive both a recall and a reelection battle against those unions have earned him the equivalent of a Medal of Honor with many conservative activists. He has built up a national network of donors who can finance an intense grassroots operation in a state where organizing supporters is key.

But as he prepares to take his record to the nation, Walker is getting blowback from back home. Republicans won clear control of both houses of the state legislature last November, and many are eager to press an aggressive conservative agenda this year. Topping their priority list is a right-to-work bill under which private-sector workers can't be forced to join a union or pay union dues. A total of 24 states — including Iowa — are right-to-work. The latest additions to the list were heavily unionized Michigan and Indiana.

Yet Governor Walker has made it clear that he views the push for right-to-work as a distraction from his buttoned-down agenda of business, tax, and education reforms. ...

According to a report in [The Hill](#), Scott Walker had a good debut in Iowa this past weekend.

Wisconsin Gov. Scott Walker (R) delivered a fiery speech in Iowa on Saturday, wowing the conservative crowd with a passionate argument for small government and his own lengthy resume.

The Wisconsin governor, in rolled-up shirtsleeves, paced the stage as he blasted big government and touted a long list of conservative reforms he's pushed through in blue Wisconsin.

The governor also showed a rhetorical flourish that's largely been absent from his previous campaigns, drawing the crowd to its feet multiple times.

"There's a reason we take a day off to celebrate the 4th of July and not the 15th of April," he said, almost yelling as his voice grew hoarse. "Because in America we value our independence from the government, not our dependence on it." ...

More on Walker from [Jennifer Rubin](#).

... He also displayed his telltale pugnaciousness with a sense of humor previously not seen by many. He cheered his winning Packers while teasing New Jersey Gov. and Dallas fan Chris Christie. ("I had plenty of fun hugging owners in the stands at Lambeau.") He knocked Common Core, perhaps a shot at Jeb Bush. ("My sons graduated from outstanding public schools in Wauwatosa and my nieces are in public schools as well, so I have a vested interest, like parents all across the state, in high standards. But those standards should be set by people from within Wisconsin—and preferably at the local level.") He was upbeat and determined.

And most interesting, at the end of the speech he signaled how he looks at the world: "Last week, innocent people were targeted in France by terrorists. These cowards are not symbols of confidence. They are overwhelmed by fear. They are afraid of freedom. They are afraid of those who have the freedom of the press. They are afraid of freedom of speech. They are afraid of freedom of religion. Tonight, we must stand together—Democrat and Republican—and denounce those who wish to threaten freedom anywhere in this world. We need to proclaim that an attack against freedom-loving people anywhere is an attack against us all. And we will not allow it." It wasn't a lot, but it was enough to confirm that he, unlike President Obama and isolationists on the right and left, understands the stakes in the war against global jihad and recognizes this is a fight for our way of life.

The irony here is that while most attention has focused on a potential Bush-Romney duel and a potential Christie run, Walker has been making steady progress in staffing up and preparing for a run (for one thing, making certain he would not face off against friend and Wisconsin congressman Paul Ryan). What we learned yesterday is that Walker has a record, some personal style and a mature view of the world. He is someone who can be seen fighting against liberal interests in the age of Obama, but not someone burdened either by foreign policy miscues or past defeats. ...

And [Rubin](#) turns her ire towards the Huckster.

... In his recent [interview](#) with Hugh Hewitt, Huckabee tried to argue:

"I may be lonely, I may be the only one, but I'm going to stand absolutely faithful to the issue of marriage not because it's a politically expedient thing to do, because it isn't. I'm going to do it because I believe it is the right position, it's the Biblical position, it's the historical position. I believe like Barack Obama said he believed back in 2008, that it's an issue that has been settled by the Bible, and God is in the mix. Now one of three things – either Barack Obama was lying in 2008,

he's been lying now since he's changed his view, or the Bible got rewritten, and he was the only one who got the new version. So I'm just going to have to say that I haven't been given the role of editor. And I'm not angry about it. One thing I am angry about, though, Hugh, is this notion of judicial supremacy, where if the courts make a decision, I hear governors and even some aspirants to the presidency say well, that's settled, and it's the law of the land. No, it isn't the law of the land. Constitutionally, the courts cannot make a law. They can interpret one. And then the legislature has to create enabling legislation, and the executive has to sign it, and has to enforce it."

This is frankly nonsense. ...

... Huckabee exemplifies the triumph of crank right-wing rationalizations over common sense and mainstream thinking. You think the average American would support a candidate who doesn't abide by the courts' rulings? He can disapprove of gay marriage. He can call for broad conscience exemptions. He can refuse to officiate or attend gay nuptials. But he cannot in good faith tell court clerks not to follow the law. Huckabee's comments are a recipe for constitutional chaos and political oblivion. Enough already. Just stop it.

Yesterday in Pickings we spent lots of electrons with an overview of the president's disastrous policies. You are left wondering why the administration continues with what is obvious failure. Part of the cause for that is the comfort they get from the fools in the left media. One of the most execrable of them is Paul Krugman who spins nonsense and lies from his column at the NY Times. [Robert Samuelson](#) decided to spend a few columns on Krugman calumny directed towards Ronald Reagan.

It's important to get history right — and economist and New York Times columnist Paul Krugman has gotten it maddeningly wrong.

Krugman recently wrote a column arguing that the decline of double-digit inflation in the 1980s was the decade's big economic event, not the cuts in tax rates usually touted by conservatives. Actually, I agree with Krugman on this. But then he asserted that Ronald Reagan had almost nothing to do with it. That's historically incorrect. Reagan was crucial.

In nearly four decades of column-writing, I can't recall ever devoting an entire column to rebutting someone else's. If there were instances, they're long forgotten. But Krugman's error is so glaring that it justifies an exception. ...

... What Volcker and Reagan accomplished was an economic and political triumph. Economically, ending double-digit inflation set the stage for a quarter-century of near-automatic expansion (indeed, so automatic that it bred the complacency that led to the 2008-2009 financial crisis — but that's another story). Politically, Reagan and Volcker showed that leaders can take actions that, though initially painful and unpopular, served the country's long-term interests.

But their achievement was a joint venture: If either hadn't been there, the outcome would have been much different.

There was no explicit bargain between them. They had what I've called a "compact of conviction." Volcker later said of Reagan: "Unlike some of his predecessors, he had a strong visceral aversion to inflation." So did Volcker. Both believed the country could not flourish with high inflation. Both acted on that faith.

Volcker needed presidential support, because the Fed's formal "independence" is highly qualified by political realities. The Fed, Volcker has said, "has got to operate ... within the range of understanding of the public and the political system." Reagan widened that range.

To exclude him from this narrative is not history. It's fiction.

You can always count on snarky replies from the crude Krugman. They led Samuelson to a second column.

Last week, I wrote a column taking issue with Paul Krugman's contention that President Ronald Reagan had little to do with the decisive crushing of double-digit inflation of the early 1980s. In Krugman's telling, all the credit belongs to Paul Volcker, then chairman of the Federal Reserve Board. In my telling, both Volcker and Reagan counted. Volcker imposed tight money; Reagan's support enabled him to maintain the painful and unpopular policy (the monthly unemployment rate peaked at 10.8 percent) long enough to purge inflationary psychology.

The column predictably provoked a backlash; economist and New York Times columnist Krugman responded on his blog. So I return to the subject. My aim here, as with the original column, is to ground history in facts. In that spirit, let me address some common criticisms of the column. ...

'The 1980s were a triumph of Keynesian economics, because "events played out exactly the way Keynesian-leaning textbooks said they would." '

The claim and the quote are Krugman's. They distort history. As preached and practiced since the 1960s, Keynesian economics promised to stabilize the economy at levels of low inflation and high employment. By the early 1980s, this vision was in tatters, and many economists were fatalistic about controlling high inflation. Maybe it could be contained. It couldn't be eliminated, because the social costs (high unemployment, lost output) would be too great. Inflation persists, wrote Yale economist James Tobin, because "major economic groups [claim] pieces of the pie that together exceed the whole pie."

This was a clever rationale for tolerating high inflation, and the Volcker-Reagan monetary onslaught demolished it. High inflation was not an intrinsic condition of wealthy democracies. It was the product of bad economic policies. This was the 1980s' true lesson, not the contrived triumph of Keynesianism.

As my original column said, I don't dispute Krugman on the importance of the 1980s' disinflation. Indeed, the premise of my book ("[The Great Inflation and Its Aftermath](#)") is that inflation's rise and fall are underrated events in post-World War II history. But it matters how high inflation was overcome. Krugman seems so determined to discredit Reagan that he makes a mockery of the history.

Jewish World Review
Early Presidential Prospects

by Thomas Sowell

With 2015 just getting under way, the buzz of political activity makes it seem almost as if we are already in the midst of the 2016 presidential campaign.

Among the Democrats, Hillary Clinton is honing her message to appeal to the mindset of the left wing of her party, whose support she will need in her second attempt to get the nomination as the Democrats' presidential candidate in 2016.

The left wing's true believers would of course prefer Senator Elizabeth Warren, who gives them the dogmas of the left pure and straight, uncontaminated by reality. But she says she is not running.

Maybe she thinks the country is not ready to put another rookie Senator in the White House. After the multiple disasters of Barack Obama, at home and abroad, that self-indulgence should not be habit-forming.

We can certainly hope that the country has learned that lesson — and that Republican rookie Senators get eliminated early in the 2016 primaries, so that we can concentrate on people who have had some serious experience running things — and taking responsibility for the consequences — rather than people whose only accomplishments have been in rhetoric and posturing.

The more optimistic among us may hope that the Republicans will nominate somebody who stands for something, rather than the bland leading the bland — the kind of candidates the Republican establishment seems to prefer, even if the voters don't.

If the Republicans do finally decide to nominate somebody who stands for something, and who has a track record of succeeding in achieving what he set out to do, then no one fits that bill better than Governor Scott Walker of Wisconsin, who has put an end to government employee unions' racket of draining the taxpayers dry with inflated salaries and extravagant pensions.

That Governor Walker succeeded in reining in the unions, in a state long known for its left-leaning and pro-union politics, shows that he knows how to get the job done. It also shows that he has the guts to fight for what he believes, and the smarts to articulate his case and win the public over to his side, rather than pandering to whatever the polls show current opinion to be.

It is hard to explain how a country in which conservatives outnumber liberals could have elected a far-left Congress and a far-left President of the United States, without taking into account how rare are Republicans able and willing to develop the skills of articulation.

As a result, everyone knows what the Democrats stand for, but even some Republicans in Congress seem to have only a hazy idea of what principles Republicans stand for.

The country does not need glib or bombastic talkers. But it does need people with clarity of thought and clarity of words, along with a clear sense of purpose and an ability to achieve those purposes.

Republicans with these qualities seem far rarer in Washington than in state governments. Governors like Scott Walker in Wisconsin and Bobby Jindal in Louisiana can both talk the talk and walk the walk. In Congress, not so much.

If you think back to the most politically successful Republican presidents of the 20th century — Ronald Reagan, Theodore Roosevelt, Calvin Coolidge and Dwight D. Eisenhower — they were all men who already had the experience of being responsible for results, whether as governors or as a military commander in the case of General Eisenhower.

Those Republican presidents who self-destructed politically — Hoover and Nixon, for example — lacked that kind of background, however much they might have had other assets.

Yet there are a few Republicans in Congress today with both sharply focused minds and sharply focused words. Senator Jeff Sessions and Congressman Trey Gowdy come to mind immediately. If Republicans choose a governor as their presidential candidate in 2016, someone like canny Senator Sessions could make a very valuable contribution as vice-president, able to pass on to a new president the fruits of his experience in the Washington environment, along with his ability to resist the pitfalls of that environment.

In a sense, it is much too early to try to figure out what is going to happen politically in 2016. But, since some campaigns have already begun de facto, it is not too early for the rest of us to start scrutinizing those on the political horizon.

National Review

Wisconsin Stubborn

Scott Walker has Iowa advantages, if he can keep his base.

by John Fund

National polls show Jeb Bush, Mitt Romney, and Chris Christie as the best-known Republicans preparing to run for president. Their high name ID puts them in front of other challengers for now. But the road to the GOP nomination runs through Iowa, New Hampshire, South Carolina, and Nevada — all states that vote early and can give an upstart candidate valuable momentum. Iowa will kick off campaigning for its caucuses this coming weekend, when Citizens United and Iowa congressman Steve King host the day-long Iowa Freedom Summit in Des Moines.

While Bush and Romney won't be there, at least eight potential GOP candidates will show up, along with 150 journalists. Lots of attention will be paid to Wisconsin governor Scott Walker, who many observers say has a chance to break out of the pack in Iowa. He comes from a neighboring state and understands Midwestern sensibilities. His dramatic confrontation with public-sector unions in 2011 and his ability since then to survive both a recall and a reelection battle against those unions have earned him the equivalent of a Medal of Honor with many conservative activists. He has built up a national network of donors who can finance an intense grassroots operation in a state where organizing supporters is key.

But as he prepares to take his record to the nation, Walker is getting blowback from back home. Republicans won clear control of both houses of the state legislature last November, and many are eager to press an aggressive conservative agenda this year. Topping their priority list is a right-to-work bill under which private-sector workers can't be forced to join a union or pay union dues. A total of 24 states — including Iowa — are right-to-work. The latest additions to the list were heavily unionized Michigan and Indiana.

Yet Governor Walker has made it clear that he views the push for right-to-work as a distraction from his buttoned-down agenda of business, tax, and education reforms. Wisconsin state-senate

majority leader Scott Fitzgerald told WISN-TV last Sunday that “not much will happen” on the issue in the next few months. Fitzgerald said he understood Walker’s desire to avoid large protests like those seen in 2011, when Act 10, a law restricting public-sector unions, passed. “He’s concerned that if right-to-work would turn into Act 10, and that the Capitol is suddenly swarmed with protesters and everything we went through during Act 10, that it sends a strange message to people outside of Wisconsin that maybe Wisconsin isn’t the place to expand your business or, to certainly locate to,” Fitzgerald said.

Still, he has also warned Walker that “we can’t tiptoe through this session without addressing this.”

Indeed, he’s right. Right-to-work makes sense for Wisconsin. Studies show that it can attract jobs and enhance business formation — especially if it’s combined with the kinds of reforms Walker has already implemented. It’s also popular — a new survey by a University of Chicago professor found Wisconsin residents favoring the idea by 62 percent to 32 percent. AFL-CIO head Richard Trumka boasts that politicians who oppose Big Labor will “pay a steep political price,” but it turns out that labor-law reform is popular. In Indiana, Republicans picked up legislative seats after right-to-work passed there in 2012. Ditto for Michigan after its law passed in 2012. Wisconsin Republicans now dominate the legislature in part because Act 10’s reforms are seen as helping to restrain property taxes and making government workplaces more flexible. Government-union membership fell by almost 30 percent in the state between 2011 and 2013.

Another issue where Governor Walker will have to tread carefully in Iowa is the expansion of state-approved gambling. Walker will have to decide by February 19 whether to approve a proposed \$800 million Menominee Indian tribal casino in Kenosha. “Influential social conservatives in Iowa are warning Wisconsin Gov. Scott Walker that approving a proposed Kenosha casino next month could hurt his presidential bid” was the lead paragraph of a [Milwaukee Journal Sentinel article](#) this month. Newly elected Iowa U.S. senator Joni Ernst joined 600 other Republicans in sending Walker a petition urging him adopt a “No Expanding Gaming” policy. Bob Vander Plaats, a prominent social conservative in Iowa who led the successful defeat in 2010 of three Supreme Court justices who had approved same-sex marriage, has also written a letter to Walker highlighting the “increased societal problems of divorce, bankruptcy, debt, depression, and suicide” that gambling can produce. In 2012, Vander Plaats’s last-minute endorsement of Rick Santorum helped propel the former Pennsylvania senator to a photo-finish victory over Mitt Romney in Iowa.

As the son of a Baptist minister and someone with a strong pro-life record, Walker will appeal to social conservatives, just as his Act 10 success will attract libertarian-minded voters. But Iowa political activists tell me that Walker is taking real risks of leaks in his Iowa coalition if he either approves expanded gambling or chokes on approving right-to-work — especially in a state such as Iowa that has had such a law on its books for more than 60 years.

Success in politics often goes to those who are bold and can convince people of their consistency. As Governor Walker prepares for his Iowa political debut this Saturday, he should remember that it was those qualities that propelled him into the national spotlight. Now is not the time for him to adopt a new approach that would signal drift and inconsistency.

The Hill

[Scott Walker shows fire in Iowa](#)

by Cameron Joseph

DES MOINES, Iowa — Wisconsin Gov. Scott Walker (R) delivered a fiery speech in Iowa on Saturday, wowing the conservative crowd with a passionate argument for small government and his own lengthy resume.

The Wisconsin governor, in rolled-up shirtsleeves, paced the stage as he blasted big government and touted a long list of conservative reforms he's pushed through in blue Wisconsin.

The governor also showed a rhetorical flourish that's largely been absent from his previous campaigns, drawing the crowd to its feet multiple times.

"There's a reason we take a day off to celebrate the 4th of July and not the 15th of April," he said, almost yelling as his voice grew hoarse. "Because in America we value our independence from the government, not our dependence on it."

Walker's speech had something for every element of the activist crowd. The governor touted his three victories over Democrats and recall win as well as his state-level education reforms. Each new policy he helped pass drew cheers: Voter ID laws, education reforms, tax cuts and defunding Planned Parenthood.

The biggest question for Walker as he ramps up for a race is whether he has the fire in the belly and political skills to stand onstage against the other candidates. And in his first major Iowa address, he may have done a lot to dispel notions that he lacks charisma.

When he said he won reelection as Milwaukee County Executive in an area where President Obama won by a two-to-one margin, some in the audience gasped.

"If you get the job done the voters will actually stand up with you," he said before contrasting his record with Washington's deadlock.

The preacher's son also showed a personal side — and spoke in religious terms to thank Iowans who prayed for him as he faced death threats during his fight against the public sector unions, including one that promised to gut his wife "like a deer."

Walker made sure to establish his Iowa roots — saying he'd lived there until third grade until his father got a job as a minister in Wisconsin — before promising to return "many more times in the future."

Right Turn

[Feisty Scott Walker strides into the top tier](#)

by Jennifer Rubin

In a new Iowa poll, Wisconsin Gov. Scott Walker has surged into third place, ahead of even past caucus winners and all three freshman senators, recognition that the once dark horse is now seen as a viable presidential contender. In his state of the state speech, we got a look at Walker's pitch, his style and his worldview.

Walker could boast about his record of accomplishment: "If you remember nothing else, remember this: more people are working, while fewer are unemployed. State government is more effective, more efficient, and more accountable, and the state's financial condition has improved. Budgets

are set based on the public's ability to pay, instead of the government's hunger to spend. School scores are up and more students are graduating, and we are helping more of our fellow citizens to transition from government dependence to work. The Wisconsin Comeback is working." He stressed, in particular, his record on education reform: "We reduced income and employer taxes, too. And we started taking less out of paychecks for withholding last April, so you could keep more of your hard-earned money. On top of our economic success, we empowered local school boards to hire and fire based on merit and pay based on performance, so they can keep the best and the brightest in the classroom. And it's working. Over the past four years, graduation rates are up. Third grade reading scores are up. ACT scores are up—and Wisconsin now ranks 2nd in the country."

And he pledged to continue on his reform path. ("We will build off of our successes in worker training through the Blueprint for Prosperity we announced last year. So far, we helped put nearly 5,000 more students into classes at our 16 technical colleges throughout the state. . . . Tonight, I call on the members of the state Legislature to pass legislation ensuring objective information is available for each and every school receiving public funds in this state. Provide the information and allow parents to make the choice. No need for bureaucrats or politicians to make that choice—I trust parents. Give them access to objective information and they will make the choice that is best for their children.") He pledged to clarify that Common Core is not mandatory and to combine government agencies to eliminate redundancy and waste.

He is carving a niche between anti-government radicals on the right and statist on the left: "I believe that government has grown too big and too intrusive in our lives and must be reined in, but the government that is left must work. As taxpayers, we should demand that the functions that government must reasonably do, it should do well. We should demand a government that is more effective, more efficient, and more accountable to the public." And he is confirming his support for federalism and a limited role for the federal government. ("Top-down regulations and mandates from the federal government get in the way of innovation and growth in Wisconsin and states like ours. Therefore, I am working with our new Attorney General to prepare a lawsuit challenging the newly proposed federal energy regulations. These proposals could have a devastating impact on Wisconsin because we are so heavily dependent on manufacturing.") He chided the Obama administration: "Instead of fighting with states like Wisconsin, the federal government should work with us to find reasonable alternatives. We can be both environmentally and economically sustainable."

He also displayed his telltale pugnaciousness with a sense of humor previously not seen by many. He cheered his winning Packers while teasing New Jersey Gov. and Dallas fan Chris Christie. ("I had plenty of fun hugging owners in the stands at Lambeau.") He knocked Common Core, perhaps a shot at Jeb Bush. ("My sons graduated from outstanding public schools in Wauwatosa and my nieces are in public schools as well, so I have a vested interest, like parents all across the state, in high standards. But those standards should be set by people from within Wisconsin—and preferably at the local level.") He was upbeat and determined.

And most interesting, at the end of the speech he signaled how he looks at the world: "Last week, innocent people were targeted in France by terrorists. These cowards are not symbols of confidence. They are overwhelmed by fear. They are afraid of freedom. They are afraid of those who have the freedom of the press. They are afraid of freedom of speech. They are afraid of freedom of religion. Tonight, we must stand together—Democrat and Republican—and denounce those who wish to threaten freedom anywhere in this world. We need to proclaim that an attack against freedom-loving people anywhere is an attack against us all. And we will not allow it." It wasn't a lot, but it was enough to confirm that he, unlike President Obama and isolationists on the

right and left, understands the stakes in the war against global jihad and recognizes this is a fight for our way of life.

The irony here is that while most attention has focused on a potential Bush-Romney duel and a potential Christie run, Walker has been making steady progress in staffing up and preparing for a run (for one thing, making certain he would not face off against friend and Wisconsin congressman Paul Ryan). What we learned yesterday is that Walker has a record, some personal style and a mature view of the world. He is someone who can be seen fighting against liberal interests in the age of Obama, but not someone burdened either by foreign policy miscues or past defeats.

Could he distill the best of several candidates in an appealing blue-collar persona? Stay tuned. This is a man to watch.

Right Turn

[Huckabee sounds like a crank, again](#)

by Jennifer Rubin

I have previously [criticized](#) Mike Huckabee for [saying he would keep fighting](#) even if the Supreme Court ruled that gay marriage bans are unconstitutional. He has made matters worse by articulating an argument that is eerily similar to the one thrown up by anti-integration forces in the South after *Brown v. Board of Education*. I do not think Huckabee is a bigot, but I do think he misunderstands basic constitutional concepts, invites chaos and communicates in a way that non-evangelicals will interpret as preposterous.

In his recent [interview](#) with Hugh Hewitt, Huckabee tried to argue:

I may be lonely, I may be the only one, but I'm going to stand absolutely faithful to the issue of marriage not because it's a politically expedient thing to do, because it isn't. I'm going to do it because I believe it is the right position, it's the Biblical position, it's the historical position. I believe like Barack Obama said he believed back in 2008, that it's an issue that has been settled by the Bible, and God is in the mix. Now one of three things – either Barack Obama was lying in 2008, he's been lying now since he's changed his view, or the Bible got rewritten, and he was the only one who got the new version. So I'm just going to have to say that I haven't been given the role of editor. And I'm not angry about it. One thing I am angry about, though, Hugh, is this notion of judicial supremacy, where if the courts make a decision, I hear governors and even some aspirants to the presidency say well, that's settled, and it's the law of the land. No, it isn't the law of the land. Constitutionally, the courts cannot make a law. They can interpret one. And then the legislature has to create enabling legislation, and the executive has to sign it, and has to enforce it.

This is frankly nonsense. When the court determines, for example, that interracial marriage is constitutionally protected, you don't need new laws. The ban on interracial marriage is invalid, and the existing marriage law is applied as extending to all couples regardless of race. Huckabee wants to end marriage just as segregationists in some places did away with public schools to avoid having to comply with the court's decision? (Close the swimming pool instead of integrating? Shut down the restaurant rather than serve blacks?) Huckabee can make that case, I suppose, but it will sound ridiculous to the average person, and it is.

The conversation continues with Hewitt gently making essentially my point (state and local officials can't just decide not to follow a Supreme Court ruling):

HH: So Governor, just to put a cap on that, if the Supreme Court rules 5-4 that every state must allow two people of the same sex to get married, what's your position on the campaign trail going to be about what governors ought to do in the aftermath of that ruling, and what presidential candidates in the Republican Party ought to say about it?

MH: Well, if the federal Supreme Court rules that same sex marriage is protected under the 14th Amendment, you still have to have Congress and the President act to agree with it, because one branch of government does not overrule the other two. This idea that a judge makes a ruling on Friday afternoon, and Saturday morning same sex marriage licenses are being given out, that's utter nonsense, because there's not been any agreement with the other two branches of government, so I just want people to go back to their 9th grade civics class, and remember there are three branches equal, and that all three of them have to be in concert in order for something to become law. And the courts can't make a law, and they don't have the power to enforce a law.

HH: Would you counsel civil disobedience to county clerks?

MH: Well, the point is states would be in a position that their legislatures would have to go into session. They would have to create legislation that the governor would sign. If they don't, then there is not same sex marriage in that state. Now if the federal courts say well, you're going to have to do it, well, then you have a confrontation. At that point, somebody has to decide is the Court right? If it is, then the legislation will be passed. It's not unlike we've seen other legislation. In my own state, when we had school funding legislation that had to be passed, the courts ruled, but we didn't start sending out checks the next day. We called a special session, we negotiated through it. The courts didn't tell us what the formula had to look like. They just told us the one we had wasn't Constitutional. In that case, I agree with them. They were right. We fixed it.

HH: There's an echo in that, though, Governor. Last night, because it was Martin Luther King day yesterday, I went and saw Selma. And the great judge, Frank Johnson, issued an order that allowed the marchers to march. And George Wallace had to get out of the way, and it's a dramatic confrontation. There is issue here of the Supremacy Clause. Now I might not like, and I'm praying that Anthony Kennedy decides this the right way, that states have a right to define for themselves marriage. But if it goes the other way, don't we have to follow what the Supreme Court says immediately, or aren't we in contempt of the federal Constitution as we understand the Supremacy Clause?

MH: But if the legislation in that state, if the law in that state does not already have a mechanism to support same sex marriage, the legislation and only the legislature can create the law that says a marriage license can be given to two men or to two women. And I think there's going to be immediate cases filed where a person will say well, I'd like to marry two women, or I'd like to marry two men for a woman. And who's to stop that? It's going to be a tricky thing, but you know, when people say the law is now the law of the land and it's settled, well, 1973, the Court ruled on Roe V. Wade, and I think it's anything but settled. And it's anything but something that has ended because the courts made the ruling. I think it was a terrible ruling they made in 1973. And I hope this Court realizes that this is not a decision that should be made by the judicial branch. It should be made by the legislative branch, the representatives of the people.

I'm not sure Huckabee means what he says or understands how constitutional law operates. But for 200-plus years we have operated with the understanding that once the courts have spoken, other branches **don't** continue doing exactly what they want even if they disagree with the result. What would he say if the courts found Obama's unilateral decree on immigration illegal and yet Obama continued to implement it? If the Supreme Court finds the federal Obamacare exchanges

can't provide subsidies and the administration keeps handing them out? I suspect the "i" word (impeachment) would be back.

The day after the 1964 Civil Rights Act, the vast majority of store owners, hotels and other places of accommodation that would not serve blacks the day before provided services to them just as they did to white customers. Some of these people argued that the law was unconstitutional. Many of them harbored personal prejudices. Others thought this was the ruin of America. But the law was on the books, and the vast majority complied out of respect for the "rule of law." History did not treat well the exceptions, such as the Southern segregationists who tried every maneuver in the book to avoid implementing *Brown*.

Huckabee exemplifies the triumph of crank right-wing rationalizations over common sense and mainstream thinking. You think the average American would support a candidate who doesn't abide by the courts' rulings? He can disapprove of gay marriage. He can call for broad conscience exemptions. He can refuse to officiate or attend gay nuptials. But he cannot in good faith tell court clerks not to follow the law. Huckabee's comments are a recipe for constitutional chaos and political oblivion. Enough already. Just stop it.

Washington Post

[Volcker, Reagan and history](#)

by Robert J. Samuelson

It's important to get history right — and economist and New York Times columnist Paul Krugman has gotten it maddeningly wrong.

Krugman recently wrote a [column](#) arguing that the decline of double-digit inflation in the 1980s was the decade's big economic event, not the cuts in tax rates usually touted by conservatives. Actually, I agree with Krugman on this. But then he asserted that Ronald Reagan had almost nothing to do with it. That's historically incorrect. Reagan was crucial.

In nearly four decades of column-writing, I can't recall ever devoting an entire column to rebutting someone else's. If there were instances, they're long forgotten. But Krugman's error is so glaring that it justifies an exception. It's also a subject about which I know something, having written a book on it: "[The Great Inflation and Its Aftermath: The Past and Future of American Affluence](#)." This column draws from that book.

For those too young to remember, here's background.

From 1960 to 1980, inflation — the general rise of retail prices — [marched relentlessly upward](#). It went from 1.4 percent in 1960 to 5.9 percent in 1969 to 13.3 percent in 1979. The higher it rose, the more unpopular it became. People feared that their pay and savings wouldn't keep pace with prices.

Worse, government seemed powerless to defeat it. Presidents deployed complex wage and price controls and guidelines. They didn't work. The Federal Reserve — custodian of credit policies — veered between easy money and tight money, striving both to subdue inflation and to maintain "full employment" (taken as a 4 percent to 5 percent unemployment rate). It achieved neither. From the late 1960s to the early 1980s, there were [four recessions](#).

Inflation became a monster, destabilizing the economy and destroying trust in national leadership. The Gallup Poll routinely asks respondents to select “the most important problem facing the country.” From 1973 to 1981, the “high cost of living” ranked No. 1. People lost faith in the future, as they have now.

Krugman’s story is simple. The Fed is “largely independent of the political process” and, under chairman Paul Volcker, “was determined to bring inflation down,” he [wrote](#). “[I]t tightened policy, sending interest rates sky high, with mortgage rates going above 18 percent.” The result was “a severe recession that drove unemployment to double digits but also broke the wage-price spiral.”

Indeed. By 1982, the gain in consumer prices [had dropped](#) to 3.8 percent. Volcker crushed inflation.

Story over? Not really.

What Reagan provided was political protection. The Fed’s previous failures to stifle inflation reflected its unwillingness to maintain tight-money policies long enough to purge inflationary psychology. Successive presidents preferred a different approach: the wage-price policies built on the pleasing (but unrealistic) premise that these could quell inflation without jeopardizing full employment.

Reagan rejected this futile path. As the gruesome social costs of Volcker’s policies mounted — the monthly unemployment rate would ultimately rise to a post-World War II high of [10.8 percent](#) — Reagan’s approval ratings plunged. In May 1981, they were at 68 percent; by January 1983, 35 percent.

Still, he supported the Fed. “I have met with Chairman Volcker several times during the past year,” he said in early 1982. “I have confidence in the announced policies of the Federal Reserve.”

This patience enabled Volcker to succeed, though it took about two years of tight money. It’s doubtful that any other plausible presidential candidate, Republican or Democrat, would have been so forbearing. During Volcker’s monetary onslaught, there were many congressional proposals, backed by members of both parties, to curb the Fed’s power, lower interest rates or fire Volcker. If Reagan had endorsed any of them, the Fed would have had to retreat.

What Volcker and Reagan accomplished was an economic and political triumph. Economically, ending double-digit inflation set the stage for a quarter-century of near-automatic expansion (indeed, so automatic that it bred the complacency that led to the 2008-2009 financial crisis — but that’s another story). Politically, Reagan and Volcker showed that leaders can take actions that, though initially painful and unpopular, served the country’s long-term interests.

But their achievement was a joint venture: If either hadn’t been there, the outcome would have been much different.

There was no explicit bargain between them. They had what I’ve called a “compact of conviction.” Volcker later said of Reagan: “Unlike some of his predecessors, he had a strong visceral aversion to inflation.” So did Volcker. Both believed the country could not flourish with high inflation. Both acted on that faith.

Volcker needed presidential support, because the Fed's formal "independence" is highly qualified by political realities. The Fed, Volcker has said, "has got to operate . . . within the range of understanding of the public and the political system." Reagan widened that range.

To exclude him from this narrative is not history. It's fiction.

Washington Post

[Setting the record straight on Reagan, Volcker and inflation: Part 2](#)

by Robert Samuelson

Last week, [I wrote a column](#) taking issue with [Paul Krugman's contention](#) that President Ronald Reagan had little to do with the decisive crushing of double-digit inflation of the early 1980s. In Krugman's telling, all the credit belongs to Paul Volcker, then chairman of the Federal Reserve Board. In my telling, both Volcker and Reagan counted. Volcker imposed tight money; Reagan's support enabled him to maintain the painful and unpopular policy (the monthly unemployment rate peaked at 10.8 percent) long enough to purge inflationary psychology.

The column predictably provoked a backlash; economist and New York Times columnist Krugman [responded](#) on his [blog](#). So I return to the subject. My aim here, as with the original column, is to ground history in facts. In that spirit, let me address some common criticisms of the column.

- *President Jimmy Carter deserves some credit for reducing inflation, because he appointed Volcker in 1979.*

This misses the context. Volcker was not Carter's first choice. To improve his approval ratings before the 1980 election, Carter had dismissed five Cabinet members, including Treasury Secretary W. Michael Blumenthal. Carter couldn't find a leading business figure to replace Blumenthal and so turned to G. William Miller, an ex-CEO who was chairman of the Fed. When Miller accepted, Carter needed to find another Fed chairman. Private-sector figures again turned him down. Carter didn't have the luxury of waiting, because financial markets were in a tizzy. Volcker, head of the New York Federal Reserve bank, was an obvious default choice, though some Carter officials disliked his tough views on inflation.

- *Volcker's deep recession cost Carter his reelection.*

Not so. True, there was a short, sharp recession in 1980. But this was mostly the unintended consequence of Carter's own anti-inflation program. It unexpectedly reduced consumer spending and increased joblessness. The unemployment rate went from 6.3 percent in March to 7.8 percent in July. In a post-election interview with journalist Theodore White, Carter said uncontrolled inflation was the biggest reason for his defeat. As for Volcker's tight money, its largest effects occurred after the election.

- *The Reagan administration was not united in its support of Volcker; some officials criticized the Volcker Fed.*

True — but largely irrelevant. The criticisms came mostly from unelected mid-level officials and concerned the money supply and other technical issues. The stories were often deep inside newspapers. They didn't affect public opinion or the political climate, which is what counted. Widespread congressional opposition to Volcker came from both Republicans and Democrats.

Reagan was the nation's chief political officer. Five words from him withdrawing support from Volcker would have been worth more than 50,000 from administration technocrats complaining about the money supply.

- *The 1980s were a triumph of Keynesian economics, because “events played out exactly the way Keynesian-leaning textbooks said they would.”*

The claim and the quote are Krugman's. They distort history. As preached and practiced since the 1960s, Keynesian economics promised to stabilize the economy at levels of low inflation and high employment. By the early 1980s, this vision was in tatters, and many economists were fatalistic about controlling high inflation. Maybe it could be contained. It couldn't be eliminated, because the social costs (high unemployment, lost output) would be too great. Inflation persists, wrote Yale economist James Tobin, because “major economic groups [claim] pieces of the pie that together exceed the whole pie.”

This was a clever rationale for tolerating high inflation, and the Volcker-Reagan monetary onslaught demolished it. High inflation was not an intrinsic condition of wealthy democracies. It was the product of bad economic policies. This was the 1980s' true lesson, not the contrived triumph of Keynesianism.

As my original column said, I don't dispute Krugman on the importance of the 1980s' disinflation. Indeed, the premise of my book ([“The Great Inflation and Its Aftermath”](#)) is that inflation's rise and fall are underrated events in post-World War II history. But it matters how high inflation was overcome. Krugman seems so determined to discredit Reagan that he makes a mockery of the history.





