

February 15, 2015

Mark Steyn updates us on the news.

I'm coming out of a week-and-a-half of sub-par health, and playing catch-up on the last few days' news. Much of it is just new trees in the same old forest: the remorseless retreat of American power in the world - ie, "Yemen Rebels Seize U.S. Embassy Vehicles As Diplomats Flee".

But some of it is almost too cute. In Paris, the street artist Combo has been beaten up by four "young people" who objected to his "Co-Exist" poster:

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John Fund writes on the economic miracle that is Texas.

While the recent 50 percent drop in oil prices has taken some of the bluster out of Texas's bragging, the state's stats are still beyond impressive. Last month, it created 45,700 new jobs. Most of them were in parts of the diversified economy that aren't related to energy. Texas continues to see solid job growth in trade and professional services as well as in the hospitality industry.

Indeed, between 2007 and 2014 — the period covering the recession and the slow recovery that followed — Texas created 1.4 million net new jobs. During the same period, the rest of the nation wound up losing 400,000 jobs. The falling nationwide unemployment rate is largely the function of people's exiting the work force entirely.

Small wonder that in December, Canada's Fraser Institute ranked Texas first of all the states in its level of economic freedom, as measured by the size of government, taxation, regulation, and the rule of law. Texas Public Policy Foundation Director of Policy Chuck DeVore says the study's findings show that "Texas's having America's highest level of economic freedom is a strong confirmation that prosperity and freedom go hand-in-hand."

Devore notes that critics of Texas often cite the fact that the jobs Texas creates often are entry-level — about 6 percent of the state's hourly wage earners earned minimum wage in 2013. But

that figure has been consistently dropping and obscures the fact that Texas is much more affordable than many states for those on the bottom of the income ladder.

“California has the third-highest cost of living, while Texas has the second-lowest,” says DeVore, a former California GOP state legislator who relocated to the Lone Star State. “A low-wage worker sees his money go a third further in Texas.”

One could even say that the high-tax, high-cost model of California and other states is a form of class warfare against their poorest residents.

Joel Kotkin adds fuel to the Texas fire.

In the last decade, Texas emerged as America’s new land of opportunity — if you will, America’s America. Since the start of the recession, the Lone Star State has been responsible for the majority of employment growth in the country. Between November 2007 and November 2014, the United States gained a net 2.1 million jobs, with 1.2 million alone in Texas.

Yet with the recent steep drop in oil prices, the Texas economy faces extreme headwinds that could even spark something of a downturn. A repeat of the 1980s oil bust isn’t likely, says Comerica Bank economist Robert Dye, but he expects much slower growth, particularly for formerly red-hot Houston, an easing of home prices and, likely, a slowdown of in-migration.

Some blue state commentators might view Texas’ prospective decline as good news. Some, like Paul Krugman, have spent years arguing that the state’s success has little to do with its much-touted business-friendly climate of light regulation and low taxes, but rather, simply mass in-migration by people seeking cheaper housing. Schadenfreude is palpable in the writings of progressive journalists like the Los Angeles Times’ Michael Hiltzik, who recently crowed that falling energy prices may finally “snuff out” the detested “Texas miracle.”

Such attitudes are short-sighted. It is unlikely that the American economy can sustain a healthy rate of growth without the kind of production-based strength that has powered Texas, as well as Ohio, North Dakota and Louisiana. ...

Kevin Williamson posts what small business can do to fight the costs of Obamacare.
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That’s basically what’s happening with San Francisco’s beloved Borderlands Books, a pilgrimage site of old-school nerdery specializing in science-fiction and fantasy literature. San Francisco is raising its minimum wage from \$11.05/hour to \$15/hour, and the owners of Borderlands, who already were barely able to make the shop a going concern, announced that they would have to close. The minimum-wage hike meant that the store was going to go from making a princely \$3,000 a year to losing \$25,000 a year. Of course, you’ll still be able to get your sci-fi and fantasy novels – from Amazon, or from another similar operation without the labor costs involved with running a conventional bookstore. Which is great if you’re Jeff Bezos, but kind of stinks if you’re the sort of sad character (ahem) who likes to lurk around in bookstores. I’m perfectly happy to see every Staples clerk replaced by something sold to Staples CEO Ronald Sargent by Jawas offering a deep corporate discount. But, damn it all, I like bookstores. (And if San Francisco continues raising its minimum wage, the robots are ready.)

In San Francisco, the people who were bemoaning the impending closure of Borderlands admitted sheepishly that they'd voted for the minimum-wage hike. "It's not something that I thought would affect certain specific small businesses," one customer said. "I feel sad."

Yeah, Adam Smith feels sad, too, you dope.

Thick though they may be, you know what those economically illiterate San Francisco book-lovers aren't? President of the United States of America. But President Obama does precisely the same thing: With Obamacare, he created powerful economic incentives for companies such as Staples to keep part-timers under 25 hours – and to hire part-timers rather than full-time employees – and now he complains when companies respond to those incentives. Naturally, he cites executive pay: "I haven't looked at Staples stock lately or what the compensation of the CEO is," he says, but affirms that he is confident that they can afford to run their business the way he wants them to run it.

Let's apply some English-major math to that question. Ronald Sargent made just under \$11 million a year at last report. Staples has about 83,000 employees. That means that if it cut its CEO's pay to \$0.00/annum, Staples would be able to fund about \$2.61/week in additional wages or health-care benefits for each of its employees, or schedule them for an additional 22 minutes of work at the federal minimum wage. Which is to say, CEO pay represents a trivial sum — but the expenses imposed by Obamacare are not trivial. ...

Michael Barone writes about the front page treatment given by the Washington Post to Scott Walker's college years. Barone also notes the Post had no curiosity about obama's college career.

Conservative and other commentators are having fun ridiculing the Washington Post for running a story about how Scott Walker dropped out of Marquette University ("questions linger"!) and so never graduated from college — something that has been widely known for many years and which Walker has never sought to conceal. The Post story did add some modestly interesting details, about how Walker was not endorsed by the student paper when he ran for student office, how he was habitually late and unprepared for French class — which, as Bloomberg View's Megan McArdle points out, tell us something about Walker at age 20 or far less than what we can easily learn about his career in public life today. (Confession: I was not a faithful attender of French classes in college, which I currently regret.)

Democrats like Howard Dean are suggesting that Walker's non-graduate status raises questions as to whether he's fit for the presidency. ...

... In any case, I guess it's useful for voters to have access to information about how presidential candidates were educated and what they did at school in their younger years. Which leads to a question for the Washington Post, which has told us a bit about how Scott Walker behaved at college before he dropped out: Why weren't you — why aren't you — curious about how Obama behaved in college?

Steyn On Line

[For Whom the Minaret Tolls...](#)

by Mark Steyn



I'm coming out of a week-and-a-half of sub-par health, and playing catch-up on the last few days' news. Much of it is just new trees in the same old forest: the remorseless retreat of American power in the world - ie, "[Yemen Rebels Seize U.S. Embassy Vehicles As Diplomats Flee](#)".

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~Still, it could have been worse. Yesterday it was confirmed that yet another Islamic State hostage is dead: Kayla Mueller, a 26-year-old "aid worker" from Arizona. *Time* magazine hails Miss Mueller as "[a role model for her generation](#)":

She's the role model we really need... Mueller represented the best qualities of the millennial generation—our idealism, our optimism, and our love of our families—without the troublesome ones.

Sure. But what does youthful "idealism" mean in this context? Well, she volunteered for the International Solidarity Movement - as in solidarity with the "oppressed" Palestinians. From Kayla Mueller's [blog](#):

Oppression greets us from all angles. Oppression wails from the soldiers' radio and floats through tear gas clouds in the air. Oppression explodes with every sound bomb and sinks deeper into the heart of the mother who has lost her son. But resistance is nestled in the cracks in the wall, resistance flows from the minaret five times a day and resistance sits quietly in jail knowing its time will come again.

Resistance lives in the grieving mother's wails and resistance lives in the anger at the lies broadcasted across the globe. Though it is sometimes hard to see and even harder sometimes to harbour, resistance lives. Do not be fooled, resistance lives.

If "idealism" is defined as taking the side of the Palestinians against the Israelis, Kayla Mueller was super-idealistic. That's her right, of course - the right to choose which side she was on. And then she took her "idealism" and "optimism" off to Syria. And, even though she was on their side and believed as they do that "resistance flows from the minaret five times a day", to ISIS she was just another high-value infidel. So they kidnapped her and killed her.

Kayla Mueller didn't deserve to die, anymore than her fellow victims in the vast mound of corpses piled up by the Islamic State deserved to die. But an "idealist" is just a rosy-hued evasion for a dupe.

That "Co-Exist" sticker? If it weren't for the Islamic crescent in the "C" you wouldn't need a sticker at all. Maybe in Paris the street artist Combo, recovering from his wounds, is beginning to figure that out.

But Miss Mueller was way beyond "Co-Exist". "Resistance flows from the minaret," she enthused. And a fat lot of good it did. In the end, she was no less an infidel than Rumsfeld or Cheney. And she is dead because her "idealism" prevented her from understanding that.

Combo has a busted arm, Kayla Mueller is dead, yet another US embassy has been abandoned, and its Marines' weaponry is in the hands of the Houthi... For "Co-Exist", try "Submit" - or die.

But don't worry: as the President says, it's all very "random"...

~Meanwhile, back in "[Christendom](#)":

Number Of Muslim Children In Britain Doubles In A Decade

As I wrote in [America Alone](#) almost a decade back: The future belongs to those who show up for it.

National Review

Is Texas 'Crazy' or Is It the Real America?

Its undeniable economic success will be an issue in 2016.

By John Fund

Last week, everywhere I went in Washington it seemed as if the country's cultural and ideological divisions came down to a debate over the state of Texas and whether or not it was "a crazy state" or the "place that is still most like America."

Congressman Alcee Hastings, a Florida Democrat, started the rumble during a House committee meeting by saying that Texas's refusal to join Obamacare's exchanges made it "a crazy state." He then refused to apologize to Representative Michael Burgess, a Texas Republican who challenged him.

Those became fighting words. Former governor Rick Perry, a likely 2016 presidential candidate, responded during a speech at the American Principles Project: "He is right! We are crazy!" he enthused. "We're crazy about jobs, we're crazy about opportunity, we're crazy about liberty, we're crazy about the Constitution!" Charles Murray, the libertarian American Enterprise Institute scholar who hails from Iowa, weighed in by saying, "I've always thought of Texas as the place that is still most like America," pointing to the self-reliant, can-do spirit the state still represents. Florida governor Rick Scott also joined in, noting that he has often cited Texas as a tax-cutting role model; then he joked about out-dueling Perry as a jobs generator.

While the recent 50 percent drop in oil prices has taken some of the bluster out of Texas's bragging, the state's stats are still beyond impressive. Last month, it created 45,700 new jobs. Most of them were in parts of the diversified economy that aren't related to energy. Texas continues to see solid job growth in trade and professional services as well as in the hospitality industry.

Indeed, between 2007 and 2014 — the period covering the recession and the slow recovery that followed — Texas created 1.4 million net new jobs. During the same period, the rest of the nation wound up *losing* 400,000 jobs. The falling nationwide unemployment rate is largely the function of people's exiting the work force entirely.

Small wonder that in December, Canada's Fraser Institute ranked Texas first of all the states in its level of economic freedom, as measured by the size of government, taxation, regulation, and the rule of law. Texas Public Policy Foundation Director of Policy Chuck DeVore says the study's findings show that "Texas's having America's highest level of economic freedom is a strong confirmation that prosperity and freedom go hand-in-hand."

Devore notes that critics of Texas often cite the fact that the jobs Texas creates often are entry-level — about 6 percent of the state's hourly wage earners earned minimum wage in 2013. But that figure has been consistently dropping and obscures the fact that Texas is much more affordable than many states for those on the bottom of the income ladder.

"California has the third-highest cost of living, while Texas has the second-lowest," says DeVore, a former California GOP state legislator who relocated to the Lone Star State. "A low-wage worker sees his money go a third further in Texas."

One could even say that the high-tax, high-cost model of California and other states is a form of class warfare against their poorest residents.

Those at the top of the corporate ladder clearly recognize Texas's strengths. For each of the past ten years, CEOs polled by *Chief Executive* magazine have rated Texas first in the nation for economic-development climate and job growth. What is the secret of Texas's success? Rick Perry isn't shy about sharing his thoughts. "It's all about four points," he told me. "First, don't spend all the money. Second, keep the taxes low and under control. Then have regulations that are fair and predictable so business owners know what to expect from one quarter to the next. Finally, reform the legal system so that frivolous lawsuits don't paralyze employers who are trying to create real wealth."

Richard Fisher, the president of the Dallas Federal Reserve Board, told me that Texas has really benefited from the reform of its once-corrupt legal system. Texas has put curbs on frivolous lawsuits, implemented the first-in-the-nation system under which the loser pays all court costs in many lawsuits, reformed medical-malpractice law, and elected judges who are much more respectful of the rule of law.

Richard Weekley — the co-founder of Texans for Lawsuit Reform— credits former governor Perry for resisting calls for watered-down reforms that wouldn't have addressed the core problem. "Perry sent a signal that he wanted real reform and would stand his ground," Weekley told me. "Soon the medical lobbyists playing footsie with the trial lawyers were gone, and the obstacles to real reform started falling."

That said, Perry has shown less success in areas where he hasn't focused his attention or priorities. Far from reducing subsidies to business, he has embraced them as a form of development aid to entice firms to move to Texas or expand if they are already in the state. He's had mixed results with the subsidies. Greg Abbott, who succeeded him as governor, has reined in Perry's Texas Enterprise Fund after reports that some of its deal-closing money to relocating firms went to entities that hadn't applied for the funding or that were not required to directly create jobs.

You don't have to spend much time in Texas to conclude that its residents think its story should be known nationally and that the country would benefit from having Texans at the top of the federal government. Three of the last nine presidents — Johnson, the elder Bush, and George W. Bush — have come from Texas, and it's no surprise that the 2016 GOP primary field will have two Texas entrants, Perry and U.S. senator Ted Cruz.

Expect to hear a lot of bragging about Texas over the next few months, along with a lot of trash-talking from liberals that the "Texas miracle" is a mirage. "Well, it's true you can't explain miracles," Perry told me last week in Washington. "But that's not what we have in Texas. We have economic recovery, and the lessons from ours should be picked up by every other state." Indeed, the fact that states such as Illinois, Massachusetts, and Maryland all defied their blue-state habits and elected Republican governors last fall shows that voters are concerned about how far they're falling behind states like Texas.

Forbes

[America Needs The Texas Economy To Keep On Rolling](#)

by Joel Kotkin

In the last decade, Texas emerged as America's new land of opportunity — if you will, America's America. Since the start of the recession, the Lone Star State has been responsible for the majority of employment growth in the country. Between November 2007 and November 2014, the United States gained a net 2.1 million jobs, with 1.2 million alone in Texas.

Yet with the recent steep drop in oil prices, the Texas economy faces extreme headwinds that could even spark something of a downturn. A repeat of the 1980s oil bust isn't likely, says Comerica Bank economist Robert Dye, but he expects much slower growth, particularly for formerly red-hot Houston, an easing of home prices and, likely, a slowdown of in-migration.

Some blue state commentators might view Texas' prospective decline as good news. Some, like Paul Krugman, have spent years arguing that the state's success has little to do with its much-touted business-friendly climate of light regulation and low taxes, but rather, [simply mass in-migration by people seeking cheaper housing](#). *Schadenfreude* is palpable in the writings of progressive journalists like the *Los Angeles Times*' Michael Hiltzik, who [recently crowed](#) that falling energy prices may finally "snuff out" the detested "Texas miracle."

Such attitudes are short-sighted. It is unlikely that the American economy can sustain a healthy rate of growth without the kind of production-based strength that has powered Texas, as well as Ohio, North Dakota and Louisiana. De-industrializing states like California or New York may enjoy asset bubbles that benefit the wealthy and generate "knowledge workers" jobs for the well-educated (nationwide, professional and business services employment rose by 196,000 from October 2007 through October 2014), but they cannot do much to provide opportunities for the majority of the population.

By their nature, industries like manufacturing, energy, and housing have been primary creators of opportunities for the middle and working classes. Up until now, energy has been a consistent job-gainer since the recession, adding 199,000 positions from October 2007 through October 2014, says Dan Hamilton, an economist at California Lutheran University. Manufacturing has not recovered all the jobs lost in the recession, but last year it added 170,000 new positions through October. Construction, another sector that was hard-hit in the recession, grew by 213,000 jobs last year through October. The recovery of these industries has been critical to reducing unemployment and bringing the first glimmer of hope to many, particularly in the long suffering Great Lakes.

Reducing the price of gas will not change the structure of the long-stagnant economies of the coastal states; job growth rates in these places have been meager for decades. Lower oil prices may help many families pay their bills in the short run. But there's also pain in low prices for a country that was rapidly becoming an energy superpower, largely due to the efforts of Texans.

Already the decline in the energy economy, which supports almost 1.3 million manufacturing jobs, is hurting manufacturers of steel, construction materials and [drilling equipment](#), such as Caterpillar. Separately, the strengthening of the dollar [promises harder times ahead](#) for exporters in the industrial sector, and greater price competition from abroad, amid weakening overseas demand. Factory activity is slowing, though key indicators like the ISM PMI are still signaling that output is expanding.

Right now in Texas, of course, the pain is mounting in the energy sector. Growth seems certain to slow in places such as Houston, which Comerica's Dye says is "ground zero in the down-draft." Also vulnerable will be San Antonio, the major beneficiary of the nearby Eagle Ford shale. The impacts may be worst in [West Texas oil patch towns](#) like Midland, where energy is essentially the economy.

Yet there remain reasons for optimism. Cheaper energy prices will be a boon for the petrochemical and refining industries, which are thick on the ground around Houston and other parts of the Gulf Coast. The Houston area is not seeing anything like the madcap office and housing construction that occurred during the oil boom of the 1980s. Between 1982 and 1986 the metro area added 71

million square feet of office space; including what is now being built, the area has added just 28 million square feet since 2010. Compared to the 1980s, the residential market is also relatively tight, with relatively little speculative building.

The local and state economies have also become far more diversified. Houston is now the nation's [largest export hub](#). The city also is home to the Texas Medical Center, often described as the world's largest. Dallas has become a major corporate hub and Austin is developing into a serious rival to Northern California's tech sector.

Texas needs to increase this diversification given that oil prices could [remain low for quite a while](#), and even drop further after their recent recovery.

This is not to deny that the state is facing hard times. Energy accounts for 411,372 jobs in Texas, about 3.2% of the statewide total, according to figures from Austin economist Brian Kelsey quoted in the [Austin American-Statesman](#). If oil and gas industry earnings in Texas fall 20%, Kelsey estimates the state could lose half of those jobs and \$13.5 billion in total earnings.

Low prices also could also devastate the state budget, which is heavily reliant on energy industry revenues. A reduction in state spending could have [damaging consequences](#) in a place that has tended to prefer low taxes to investing in critical infrastructure, and is [already struggling](#) to accommodate break-neck growth. The only good news here is that slower population growth might mitigate some of the turndown in spending, if it indeed occurs.

But in my mind, the biggest asset of Texas is Texans. Having spent a great deal a time there, the contrasts with my adopted home state of California are remarkable. No businessperson I spoke to in Houston or Dallas is even remotely contemplating a move elsewhere; Houstonians often brag about how they survived the '80s bust, wearing those hard times as a badge of honor.

To be sure, Texans can be obnoxiously arrogant about their state, and have a peculiar talent for a kind of braggadocio that drives other Americans a bit crazy. But they are also our greatest regional asset, the one big state where America remains America, if only more so.

National Review

[Don't Blame Staples](#)

In the matter of perverse economic incentives, the perverts are in Washington.

by Kevin D. Williamson

I, for one, welcome our new robot overlords. But they have taken some getting used to.

For me, it started with the self-checkout aisles at the CVS at Fulton and Nassau in New York, the Hotel California of Manhattan convenience stores. They never seemed to work quite right, and when I was in CVS I was generally buying something that required age verification or a trip behind the secure counter (you go through a lot of high-dollar razor blades with this hairdo). But CVS and I both eventually figured out how to make the process work, and it turns out that the dumb self-checkout terminals are about as smart as the human checkers and twice as efficient. Now, whether I'm at the bank or the grocery store, human interactions feel atavistic, as though I or the business has failed in some way. Filling up the car in New Jersey — where self-service is verboten — feels

as retro as gasoline with lead in it, like the guy should be wearing a peaked Sinclair cap and rinsing off my whitewalls.

Japan opened its first fully automated convenience store way back in the 1990s, though in reality it was mostly a high-tech version of the old automats that were popular in New York and Philadelphia back in the 1950s. (In New York, most of the Horn & Hardarts became Burger Kings, surely an instance of techno-social regression — just think about the sort of people who work at Burger King.) While the automats lost market share to proliferating fast-food franchises, they endured until the 1970s, when inflation wiped out their coin-operated business model. (A few survived as nostalgic curiosities.) The number of nickels it took to pay for a patty-melt made automats inconvenient, and the Clown, who never misses an opportunity, made his move. Such is life in the (mostly) free market.

If I were the brass at Staples, I'd be looking into some serious Buck Rogers–style robot development.

Staples, which is in the process of acquiring former rival Office Depot, became a topic of national conversation this week when Barack Obama, speaking to BuzzFeed, denounced the company for allegedly chopping part-timers' hours in response to the Affordable Care Act, a.k.a. Obamacare, which requires that firms pay for health insurance for employees putting in more than 30 hours a week. At the end of 2013, Staples put out a policy informing managers that no part-timer should be scheduled for more than 25 hours a week; BuzzFeed, which is big on the Dickensian-state-of-Staples-employees beat, claims that "Staples Threatens to Fire Staff for Working More than 25 Hours a Week," but that isn't exactly right, either: One store manager did post a notice making that threat, but that's not the same thing as a corporate policy. Staples claims — unpersuasively — that this is a decade-old, pre-ACA rule, even though Staples "talking points" distributed to managers in 2014 identify it as a new policy. Staples is pretty clearly drawing a line in the managerial sand here, and part-timers are going to be on the less-than-25-hours side of it.

I can't blame Staples. For one thing, Staples employees are awful. If you doubt me, read this Reddit thread written by Staples employees on the subject of — note well — self-checkout stations. On the one hand, you have the confident Staples man: "I can only imagine that our customers — who are barely capable, by and large, of tying their shoes in the morning without choking on their own drool — would never get the hang of it." On the other hand, you have the Staples employee who is just about smart enough to get it: "You do realize if that was ever implemented, they would cut store hours even more?"

Demand curves slope downward. Which is to say, if you raise the price of something, people will be inclined to consume less of it. Those with a choice in the matter — say, a large office-supply chain with a mess of low-skilled part-time employees who are basically as interchangeable as toner cartridges in the greater scheme of office-supply things — will in fact consume less. If the thing that is getting more expensive is manpower, it will cut employees' hours, circulate a lot of those dopey "do more with less" memos, and look for labor substitutes, like the banks did with those ATMs that haunt President Obama's imagination.

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That's basically what's happening with San Francisco's beloved Borderlands Books, a pilgrimage site of old-school nerdery specializing in science-fiction and fantasy literature. San Francisco is raising its minimum wage from \$11.05/hour to \$15/hour, and the owners of Borderlands, who already were barely able to make the shop a going concern, announced that they would have to close. The minimum-wage hike meant that the store was going to go from making a princely

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Yeah, Adam Smith feels sad, too, you dope.

Thick though they may be, you know what those economically illiterate San Francisco book-lovers aren't? President of the United States of America. But President Obama does precisely the same thing: With Obamacare, he created powerful economic incentives for companies such as Staples to keep part-timers under 25 hours – and to hire part-timers rather than full-time employees – and now he complains when companies respond to those incentives. Naturally, he cites executive pay: "I haven't looked at Staples stock lately or what the compensation of the CEO is," he says, but affirms that he is confident that they can afford to run their business the way he wants them to run it.

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On this issue, President Obama brings all of the honesty and integrity he applied to the question of gay marriage: He's lying, and he knows he's lying, and his apologists in the media know he's lying, and Democratic time-servers and yes-men across the fruited plains know he's lying. This isn't about CEO pay – it's about the economic incentives created by the health-insurance program that in the vernacular bears the president's name. The president, with the support of congressional Democrats, effectively put a tax on full-time jobs, and on part-time jobs offering 30 hours per week or more. So we're going to have fewer full-time jobs, and fewer part-time jobs offering 30 hours per week or more. This wasn't cooked up in the boardroom at Staples – it was cooked up on Capitol Hill, with the eager blessing of Barack Obama. It's not like they don't know that there are economic tradeoffs necessitated by Obamacare — they know it, and they also know that, politically speaking, their supporters are cheap dates. Obama ran to the right of Dick Cheney on gay marriage, and it didn't hurt him with gay voters, who were happy to be reduced to mere instruments of his ambition. The Democrats are betting that part-time workers are similarly easy – or that they're too dumb to understand the economics at work here, and that they'll be hypnotized by ritual chants about CEO pay.

What's true in San Francisco is true in Washington: You don't get to bitch about the perversion of economic incentives when you're the pervert.

Examiner

[WaPo front pages Walker dropping out of college --- but not curious about Obama](#)

by Michael Barone

Conservative and other commentators are having fun ridiculing the [Washington Post for running a story](#) about how Scott Walker dropped out of Marquette University ("questions linger"!) and so never graduated from college — something that has been widely known for many years and which Walker has never sought to conceal. The Post story did add some modestly interesting details, about how Walker was not endorsed by the student paper when he ran for student office, how he was habitually late and unprepared for French class — which, as Bloomberg View's [Megan McArdle](#) points out, tell us something about Walker at age 20 or far less than what we can easily learn about his career in public life today. (Confession: I was not a faithful attender of French classes in college, which I currently regret.)

Democrats like Howard Dean are suggesting that Walker's non-graduate status raises questions as to whether he's fit for the presidency. Voters may want to take that into consideration, but I suspect few will. Many Americans know that Bill Gates, the late Steve Jobs and Mark Zuckerberg are also college dropouts; quite possibly they scored higher than Walker on IQ or SAT tests, but Republican primary and caucus voters and, if Walker is nominated, general election voters will have plenty of chance to evaluate Walker and determine whether he has the intelligence to be president.

History tells us that there is no high correlation between graduating from college and being a good president. The Wikipedia page "[Lists of United States Presidents by education](#)" tells us that 11 of our 43 presidents (Grover Cleveland, who served non-consecutive terms, is counted as the 22nd and 24th, which is why President Obama is counted as the 44th though only 43 have served) did not graduate from college and that 32 did. Of those 32, 11 graduated from Ivy League colleges, three from military academies, two from state flagship universities and 18 from other colleges.

The presidents usually recognized as our two greatest, George Washington and Abraham Lincoln, didn't graduate from college; Lincoln had scarcely any formal education. Other non-graduating presidents include Andrew Jackson, a smarter man than his stereotype; Martin Van Buren, who more than anyone else created the American party system; Grover Cleveland and William McKinley, men of considerable ability who also served as governors of New York and Ohio. Also without college degrees were the William Henry Harrison (who died a month into his term), Zachary Taylor (who earned his fame in the battlefields of northern Mexico), Millard Fillmore and Andrew Johnson. The most recent president without a college degree was Harry Truman, who nonetheless had a considerable knowledge of history and was a skilled classical pianist (he took lessons from a teacher who had taken lessons from Paderewski; Middle America wasn't the cultural desert many people assume).

The colleges that graduated multiple presidents are Harvard (the two Adamses, the two Roosevelts, Kennedy), William and Mary (Jefferson, Monroe, Tyler), Yale (Taft and the two Bushes), Princeton (Madison, Wilson) and the U.S. Military Academy at West Point (Grant, Eisenhower). These presidents have been rated variously by the voters (the two Adamses, Tyler, Taft and the first Bush were denied second terms) and the historians (who have long disparaged Grant and Eisenhower only to discover recently that they were actually quite able and successful). The Princetonian Madison did more than anyone else to fashion the Constitution; the Princetonian Wilson did more than any other president to disparage it. Stanford University, currently one of the most selective colleges graduated (in its first four-year class) Herbert Hoover, a man of great

achievements who was denied a second term and founded the Hoover Institution which still thrives (to the dismay of some left-wing university faculty) on its campus. Eureka College in Downstate Illinois graduated the politically successful Ronald Reagan (who performed in twelve plays as an undergraduate and was grateful for his education the rest of his life). Georgetown University graduated Bill Clinton, who has lived in the nation's capital only as an undergraduate and an incumbent president, but is presumably contemplating returning as First Gentleman.

The Universities of North Carolina and Michigan are famed for many things, though perhaps not as much as they should be for graduating James K. Polk and Gerald Ford; ditto for the U.S. Naval Academy at Annapolis for graduating Jimmy Carter. Presidents of varying distinction have been graduated from small colleges of considerable distinction: Bowdoin (Pierce), Dickinson (Buchanan), Kenyon (Hayes), Williams (Garfield), Union (Arthur), Miami of Ohio (the second Harrison), Amherst (Coolidge). Another that might be added to the list is [Ohio Central College](#), founded by abolitionists and open to women and all races, which graduated (at age 17!) Warren G. Harding, a president whose chronic underestimation may be revised upward in Ronald Radosh's forthcoming biography. Alas, Wikipedia tells us, Ohio Central College ended classes "some time in the late 19th century." Also graduates of small institutions were Lyndon Johnson (Southwest Texas State Teachers College, now Texas State University at San Marcos) and Richard Nixon (Whittier College), both men of great intellectual power who nonetheless seem to have resented what they had some reason to regard as the haughtiness of the Ivy Leaguers who served in the administration of the president who served between their terms.

In any case, I guess it's useful for voters to have access to information about how presidential candidates were educated and what they did at school in their younger years. Which leads to a question for the Washington Post, which has told us a bit about how Scott Walker behaved at college before he dropped out: Why weren't you — why aren't you — curious about how Obama behaved in college?



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STARBUCKS, I MAKE MY
COFFEE AT HOME, YELL
MY NAME OUT
INCORRECTLY, THEN
LIGHT A \$5 BILL ON
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