

January 4th, 2019

Editor's Note: Welcome to 2019! The Watchdog begins publication on this, our 14th year of the newsletter. We ring 2019 with a retrospective on 2018 and the year that was. It was, of course, an interesting year in politics here in Minnesota. There was the governor's race, two state Senate special elections, a lawsuit to throw another senator out of office, and big changes in many offices at the state and local level.

Any one of those issues could have served as our "issue of the year" for 2018 as we choose which update best reflects 2018.

All of those issues, however, best point to what might come in 2019.

2018 in Minnesota politics is best reflected by our May 24th issue, which was written just after the legislative session concluded.

That update included an analysis of the news that a Minnesota business, Mosaic, was leaving the state in favor of Florida.

The update also included an analysis of Governor Dayton's leadership during the session.

High taxes are perhaps Dayton's biggest legacy item as governor, as Minnesota now has the highest tax burden of any state on the union.

This tax burden is sure to harm the state's economic health in the long run if something isn't done.

And while this publication has certainly spent time reviewing Mark Dayton's tenure as governor, there's no doubt that his final year in office had a big impact in the state's politics.

We've never seen a governor with Dayton's style, and one that Tim Walz will likely not imitate.

Here's what we said about those issues back on May 25th:

May 25th, 2018

Editor's Note: We pause this week to remember those courageous Americans who gave all in the defense of this Great Nation. We are free because of their sacrifice.

Quote of the Week: "I can't answer why Governor Dayton wasn't engaged during session. He'll have to answer those questions. His parking spot sits empty almost every day – he doesn't even come to the Capitol. He hasn't been engaged at all in

his job here.”

- House Speaker Kurt Daudt

Quote of the month: “This session wasn’t a failure. Our governor was a failure.”

- House Speaker Kurt Daudt

Quote of the Year: “The governor is behaving like a toddler – emotional, impulsive, and unreasonable. It is just another part of his legacy of chaos and failure.”

- Sen. Roger Chamberlain (R – Lino Lakes)

In This Issue:

1. An Expensive Smugness;
2. A Legacy of Failure and Perfidy.

AN EXPENSIVE SMUGNESS

Liberals have always displayed a not-so-subtle disdain for capitalism and business. It’s similar to the smug disdain they show for working people like electricians and pipefitters.

Here in Minnesota, that smugness is amplified by a certain elitism that holds our brand of liberalism over that of other jurisdictions and other people of all ideological stripes.

“We don’t want to become a cold _____ (fill in the blank)” goes the mantra, usually chanted in the context of jacking up taxes to fund some government program that apparently underpins Minnesota’s entire quality of life and the absence of which makes the comparative jurisdiction an inferior loser.

That smarmy, condescending attitude was on display again this week when Mosaic, a large corporation, announced it was leaving the Minnesota tundra for sunnier, more tax friendly climes.

“Good riddance” was the reply from the North Star Elite. The attitude of those folks was that if Mosaic can’t smell Minnesota’s qualifications, it’s no big deal. Some

other corporation will come along to gladly pay the high taxes that make Minnesota a magical, fantastical utopia.

Unlike many business leaders who are frequently cowed by liberal politicians and the threat of further political harassment and persecution, CEO Fritz Corrigan penned a passionate and brilliant indictment of the arrogance plaguing our hometown liberals.

Just a couple of excerpts well illustrate what Corrigan is talking about, which every taxpayer should be thinking about:

“Minnesota’s high state and local taxes, now not deductible on federal tax returns, make it more difficult to hire and retain top-quality executives to manage Mosaic. By comparison, Florida has no state income tax.”

“Minnesota’s vaunted quality of life isn’t that great, particularly in the winter. Don’t forget that most days of the year, Florida has friendlier weather. That is a factor in many snowbirds’ decisions to head south. Don’t delude yourselves.”

“Minnesota is losing 150 well-paid executives. If the average salary of Mosaic’s headquarters office is \$175,000 and state income taxes are 9.85 percent, that is \$2.6 million. Property taxes these people pay probably average \$20,000 per person. That is another \$3 million lost until 150 other well-paid executives move to Minnesota.”

“Surely Amazon didn’t give Minnesota a second look. Not even a follow-up phone call. And nobody at the Star Tribune and in government seemed to care. How many jobs has Minnesota failed to attract and because of its smugness doesn’t even know or care?”

“I wish Mosaic would stay in Minnesota, but the company is making the right choice. To be competitive in a very competitive global industry, it can’t afford this wintry place when it can choose a lower-tax, warmer climate.”

Well-said. Very well-said.

A LEGACY OF FAILURE AND PERFIDY

As readers well know by now, Governor Dayton has vetoed the two biggest bills of the legislative session, the omnibus tax conformity bill and the omnibus supplemental finance bill.

Other publications have well explained what was in those bills and why they were important pieces of legislation for Minnesota taxpayers.

What they really represent is the final chapter in the failed tenure of Governor Dayton.

Once again, Dayton demonstrated that he really isn't up to the job of being chief executive of the state.

Thus, he leaves a legacy of failure, a legacy of failing to lead and unite a divided state.

Beyond that, he has no legacy. He has no signature achievements he or his liberal brethren can brag up.

MnSURE failed. His desire for universal Pre-K didn't happen.

He is really left with only the dubious claim that presided over a massive increase in the state income tax, a sort of Holy Grail for liberals that visits upon the successful the misery of bearing their "fair share" of income taxes, which really means somewhere around 70 of the total burden.

It will be interesting to see how an artist will construct the governor's portrait.

If it's at all accurate, it will show Dayton bug-eyed, waving a finger as he attacks legislators both Republican and Democrat in vicious terms, slurring his words the entire way.

The background, if honest, would surely show his empty parking space at the Capitol, evidence of disengagement and a bunker mentality.

It would include football goal posts, emblematic of an erratic governor who could never clearly articulate his priorities and communicate them to the legislature.

It would surely show the school children he used as props in his veto theater over the 2018 tax bill.

Such propaganda is usually reserved for totalitarian strong men.

The background would also show long lines and people waiting anxiously on hold, as they beg the bureaucracy for a measure of mercy in their quest for health insurance information or license tabs.

A final touch would show his political appointees flashing wads of cash, the result of obscene pay raises and bonuses not earned but handed out nonetheless.

That Dayton failed as a governor should come as no surprise.

There was nothing in his privileged background that prepared him to lead strong political personalities and manage the Leviathan-like state budget.

When that lack of leadership acumen and managerial experience is combined with the angry embarrassment of a man who knows he has enjoyed privilege far beyond what he's earned, it's a recipe for failure.

All good leaders share certain personality traits.

They are poised. They are patient. They are focused. They are mature. They are skilled at finding solutions to difficult problems. They know how to find common ground.

Mark Dayton is none of this.

The utter lack of talent is best illustrated by Dayton's regular and frequent name calling of both the legislature in general and certain legislators in particular.

Dayton frequently labeled those with whom he disagreed as "vile" or "untrustworthy" or "unfit to govern."

He labeled the efforts of others as "the worst he's ever seen" or "totally mismanaged."

He said of the Senate Minority Leader, a fellow Democrat, that he could never trust him again and would never meet with him alone.

He lashed out at those around him in a vicious and juvenile way that hasn't been seen in Minnesota politics, ever.

Even Jesse Ventura, the eternal man-child, treated those around him in better fashion.

It was clear that Mark Dayton failed to lead the state precisely because he didn't know how to lead the state.

Instead, he covered for his lack of talent and experience by seeking to tear down those around him. If one can't rise up by building up, rise up by tearing down those around you.

The image any thinking Minnesotan will have of Mark Dayton's tenure is that of this week's press conference after he vetoed the big bills.

When asked to name the reasons for his veto, he fumbled over his words, made a weak attempt to name a reason or two, then stared off into space for an uncomfortable period of silence.

He finally said simply, "It's on a sheet I left in my office."

<https://twitter.com/mnsrc/status/999397025014865920>

A failed governor.

January 11th, 2019

Quote of the Week: “We’re gonna go in there and we’re gonna impeach the motherfu**er.”

- Rashida Tlaib (D, MI-13), referring to President Trump

In This Issue:

1. Mini-Swamp;
2. Line 3 Reckoning;
3. Crony Capitalism.

MINI-SWAMP

The Walz administration is off to rather unremarkable, status-quo ante start.

Whenever a new governor assumes office, he signals the strategic direction of the new administration by the selection of high-ranking cabinet officials and other staffers who will assist in crafting and executing policy.

Unfortunately, many of those picks are current or former registered lobbyists, current politicians, and recycled politicians, a DFL favorite. Some are both.

Let’s review who has been selected so far, with the designation of “lobbyist” or “politician” meaning current or former:

Transportation Commissioner: Margaret Anderson-Kelliher (politician, lobbyist);
Health and Human Services Commissioner: Tony Lourey (politician);
Met Council Chair: Nora Slawik (politician);
Agriculture Commissioner: Thom Peterson (lobbyist);
Pollution Control Commissioner: Laura Bishop (lobbyist);
Natural Resources Commissioner: Sarah Strommen (lobbyist);
Human Rights Commissioner: Rebecca Lucero (lobbyist);
Public Safety Commissioner: John Harrington (politician);
Commerce Commissioner: Steve Kelly (politician);
Housing Finance Commissioner: Jennifer Ho (lobbyist);
Education Commissioner: Mary Cathryn Ricker (teacher union leader, which is worse than lobbyist or politician. The teachers’ union owns the Walz administration);

To be fair, other Walz picks were people who aren't politicians or lobbyists.

Having said that, nearly half of his picks (11 of 23) are of this ilk.

It didn't have to be this way, since his transition team announced that they received over 500 applicants for the 23 cabinet-level appointments.

Picking a bunch of political insiders to run the administration isn't the way to go.

The status quo means nothing more than more government, less efficiency, more spending, and less freedom.

LINE 3 RECKONING

Just days into the Walz administration, the pipeline chickens have come home to roost.

This publication has noted throughout the gubernatorial campaign the difficulty Walz was inviting by playing both sides of a very intense, passionate fight between pipeline proponents and opponents.

On the one hand, Walz assiduously courted construction trade unions, rural counties and cities that want pipeline tax revenue, and companies that stand to gain from building and maintaining them.

On the other hand, Walz selected a running mate who is a vocal, active opponent of pipelines. He also assiduously courted tribal nations who passionately oppose pipelines.

The strategy of being both things to all parties worked great in the campaign.

Now he sits hoisted on that same petard as a sitting governor.

This cynical, hypocritical ploy has been forced to decision by one last incompetent move by Mark Dayton, who left a steaming Line 3 turd in Walz's lap.

That turd comes in the form of a legal appeal filed late last year by Dayton's own Department of Commerce.

The legal appeal essentially asks the Minnesota Court of Appeals to review permits granted the Line 3 pipeline project by the state's Public Utilities Commission.

Both sides are now pushing Walz to either withdraw the appeal or to sustain it.

For example, pipeline advocates this week delivered a petition with 2,500 signatures asking him to withdraw the appeal.

There is nowhere for Walz to run on this issue and he will now have to choose, leaving one side more than ticked off at the governor they thought was on their side.

That's too bad.

Both sides knew the game Walz was playing and took the gamble they would win.

This publication has spoken with sources who opine that Walz will side with pipeline opponents.

Regardless of the outcome of this particular issue, the pipeline controversy will remain front and center at the legislature.

Governor Walz's choices for cabinet positions are subject to Senate confirmation.

The Watchdog has spoken with a number of Republican senators who are preparing to ask important, pointed questions of commissioner-designees for public safety, the National Guard, and the PCA about pipelines, and Line 3 in particular.

Among the questions, those designees will be asked about what they are doing to maintain order and guarantee public safety once Line 3 construction begins.

Pipeline opponents have already vowed to visit the same violence, intimidation, and property destruction on Line 3 that they did at Standing Rock in North Dakota, where the Dakota Access Pipeline was disrupted time and again.

For reference, the Standing Rock debacle resulted in nearly 700 arrests and over 300 injuries.

Nearly \$40 million was spent in law enforcement costs attempting to maintain order.

Millions more was lost to equipment destruction and vandalism.

It cost another \$250,000 to clean up the environmental mess left at the protest

camp, where over 1,000 tons of waste was removed.

How ironic that the “Earth Protectors” trashed the very place where they lived while terrorizing those working on the pipeline.

Rest assured, Republican senators will demand answers from Walz and his commissioners about their plans to guarantee law and order once Line 3 has the required permits and begins construction.

In addition, Republicans in the Senate (the House won’t do anything) should hold hearings to take testimony from state and local law enforcement regarding what resources and appropriations they will need to address the anticipated unrest.

The legislature should also proactively consider legislation to increase penalties for pipeline violence to deter anyone who is contemplating violence.

Now is the time for choosing regarding Line 3.

Republicans need to make their choice clear.

CRONY CAPITALISM

Will we never learn. Government intervention on behalf of favored industries and actors is never as efficient and just as letting the free market decide how to best allocate scarce resources.

Minnesota got another harsh lesson in this regard this week as the state learned that a beneficiary of crony capitalism decided to seek rent in another jurisdiction.

The rent seeking actor in this case is a company called Tru Shrimp, which engages in the practice of factory farming shrimp in indoor “harbors” where the shrimp are bred and raised.

Strangely enough, South Dakota and far Southwestern Minnesota were the jurisdictions competing for privilege to host a “harbor.”

In Minnesota, the state spent over \$2 million on ancillary infrastructure for the anticipated “harbor,” to be located in Luverne.

Moreover, the City of Luverne spent an additional \$600,000 of taxpayer money.

Apparently Tru Shrimp was also shaking down South Dakota for taxpayer monies to locate in that state.

In the end, South Dakota won and Minnesota has been left holding the bag, with roads and utilities built to serve – nothing.

Tru Shrimp has blamed Minnesota's environmental permitting process, which may or may not be true.

The real story here is that the state and Luverne had no business spending over \$2.6 million to lure the business in the first place.

This sort of market-distorting activity, often dressed up as “public-private partnership,” is really nothing more than business extorting taxpayer subsidies from government.

There is much empirical data to demonstrate that even when the deal happens, the net effect is negative for taxpayers.

In other words, the benefit of having a business come to a particular jurisdiction is outweighed by the cost to taxpayers.

In this case, it's nothing short of an outright embarrassment, as there was apparently no contract to compel Tru Shrimp to perform their end of the deal.

Watch for the next chapter in this sordid tale to be yet more taxpayer monies offered up to either get Tru Shrimp to build another “harbor” in Luverne or some scheme to get another business at the Luverne site.

Maybe a chopstick factory?

January 18th, 2019

Quote of the Week: "They got to him, he is compromised!"

- Rep. Ilhan Omar (D-MN5)

Quote of the Week: "White nationalist, white supremacist, Western civilization — how did that language become offensive?"

- Rep. Steve King (R-IA4)

In This Issue:

1. DC Madness

Washington is an easy target these days, but the insanity has reached a new a new over the past week, which is perhaps a reflection of what we've become as a nation.

Citizens love to heap condemnation on DC, but we get the government we deserve.

We elected these folks, after all.

Where to start.

Let's start with Speaker Pelosi's not so veiled threat to cancel the House of Representatives as the traditional venue for the president's State of Union Address.

Even the biased legacy media had to admit it was political theater and a harsh escalation of the war of words over the partial government shutdown.

A shutdown precipitated by Democrat's refusal to agree to roughly \$5 billion in funding for a border wall many of them supported in the past.

For the wall before being against it, it appears.

For reference, the entire federal budget is over \$4 TRILLION dollars.

Since the president only has a constitutional duty to describe the state of the Union, he is free to do so in virtually any manner he wishes, thus making this stunt little more than just that.

It's little more than another tawdry sop to Pelosi's base.

The president, never one to take the high road, responded by cancelling the use of military aircraft for the speaker's planned trip to Belgium and Afghanistan.

At the outset, perhaps the president did Pelosi a favor. The optics of skipping town during a shutdown aren't very good.

On the other hand, Democrats were recently down in Puerto Rico partying with lobbyists, so what's the difference?

After all, the trip to Afghanistan is little more than junketeering and photo op anyway.

How about staying in town and negotiating, Madam Speaker?

It appears that Rep. Dean Phillips (D-MN3) is one of the few freshman Democrats who understands that many voters aren't real interested in partisan bomb throwing and are very willing to vote the other way.

On the other hand, Rep. Angie Craig (D-MN2) hasn't gotten the memo. She's been on social media bragging about her confrontational stunts such as marching on Sen. Mitch McConnell's office.

Unproductive and juvenile tactics from her aren't really a surprise and won't go over very well in the swing district she represents.

We hope Jason Lewis hasn't hung up his congressional cleats just yet.

Washington has also been afflicted by all sorts of hateful and offensive speech.

What to do about it?

After Rep. Steve King wondered aloud why the phrase "white supremacist" was no longer in fashion (was it ever, in Iowa?), fellow Republicans stripped him of his committee assignments and Democrats moved a resolution condemning his words.

Over the Democrat side, Rep. Ilhan Omar of Minnesota continues to spout inane and hateful ramblings.

Readers will recall her infamous 2012 tweet in which she observed, “Israel has hypnotized the world, may Allah awaken the people and help them see the evil doings of Israel.”

Now, she’s propagating baseless, unproven homophobic rumors against a sitting U.S. Senator.

For some time, Left Wing groups have been doubling down on rumors regarding Sen. Lindsey Graham’s (R-SC) sexual orientation by intimating that his rumored orientation has caused him to be blackmailed by the president into supporting administration policies.

Apparently, homophobic rhetoric is cool if the target is Republican.

Just like sexual harassment is okay if the perp is a Democrat (e.g. Clinton, Franken, Weiner).

This is the basis of Omar’s tweet, “They got to him, he is compromised!” This tweet propagated this rumor.

And what is Omar’s punishment from her fellow Democrats?

A seat on the Foreign Relations Committee, where she has a platform for her anti-Israel platform.

This on top of Speaker’s Pelosi’s refusal to act upon another Democrat’s reference to the president as a “motherfu**er.”

Thus, for Democrats, the rules regarding speech are clear.

“White supremacy” bad, anti-Semitism in any form okay.

Homophobic speech is okay, so long as directed at a Republican.

“Motherfu**er” also okay.

Finally, the Left went bananas on social media this week when some posters questioned why federal workers, who missed a pay check this week, didn’t have any money in savings.

This was in response to flood of comments regarding how many federal workers were now visiting food shelves after missing one pay check (which is solely President Trump's fault).

And while being asked to work without pay is unfortunate and troubling, it's more than fair for taxpayers to wonder why so many federal workers can't feed themselves after missing one paycheck.

After all, the average federal employee makes more than \$80,000 per year, with excellent fringe benefits.

By contrast, the median household income in America is \$59,000.

Moreover, all federal employees see their pay boosted by locality pay increases that run anywhere from 15% - 40%.

On top of that, bonuses are also available.

Thus, it's not cruel or unfeeling to suggest that poor financial planning or lifestyle choices may be behind an inability to pay bills or handle basic expenses after one missed pay day.

Personal responsibility is most certainly out of favor in today's society. It is seen as impolitic to ever suggest that a person is to blame in any fashion for their circumstances.

Whether poor, addicted, un-educated, criminal, or simply uncouth, it's somebody else's fault.

This isn't to say that important issues like poverty and addiction have many causes or that people sometimes are victimized by circumstances beyond their control.

It is simply to note that the element of personal responsibility and the role of behavioral choice has been virtually eliminated as one of those causes.

And when that element is raised, the one who raises it is shouted down and castigated as cruel.

What is forgotten is that personal responsibility is an essential element of self-governance and a free society.

January 25th, 2019

Quote of the Week: “Rep. Omar is an embarrassment to Minnesota, and it’s time for the rest of the Minnesota delegation to denounce her anti-Semitic views and support of hate groups.”

- National Republican Congressional Committee

Quote of the Week: “In New York, you are not allowed to give a lethal injection to convicted serial killers, pedophiles, rapists, school shooters, or any other species of monster. But you can give a lethal injection to an infant. Indeed, you can only give lethal injections to infants in New York. The crime of child rape will not earn you the needle. The crime of being conceived in the wrong womb might. It is a capital offense, and you may well be made to suffer dearly for it.”

- Matt Walsh

In This Issue:

1. Pop Quiz;
2. Another Week.

POP QUIZ

Alright, it’s a pop quiz. Pick the Democrat candidate, based on the biographical information of each.

Candidate #1: Union electrician. Started his own electrical contracting company, which is also union. Never went to college; educated in the electrician’s apprenticeship training program. Likes to snowmobile, ice fish, and hunt deer. Lives in a rural area of the district and drives a pick-up.

Candidate #2: Lists a work history in politics. No private sector experience. Graduate of Carleton College. Has been living in Washington, DC (AKA The Swamp) for the past year. Comes from a political dynasty that has been in political office for decades.

If you guessed that the Democrat was candidate #1, you would be WRONG.

Candidate #1 is Jason Rarick, who is the Republican candidate for Senate District 11.

This district will elect a new state Senator on February 5th to replace the incumbent, who was appointed to a political patronage job by Governor Tim Walz.

Jason Rarick doesn't come from a background of any prominence or privilege. His daddy was no one of any note.

He didn't go to an elite private college, where the tuition is \$55,000 per year, which is more than the median annual household income in Senate District 11 by a long shot.

Instead, Rarick graduated high school and enrolled in the electrician's apprenticeship program, where he learned to become a skilled tradesman and work with his hands.

After mastering the craft of the electrician, he took the risk of starting his own company, Rarick Electric.

He started out like every entrepreneur, with one truck, one employee, and big dreams.

He knows what it means to worry about feeding a family.

He knows what it's like to worry about work and where the next job will come from.

He knows what it's like to work with your hands.

He knows how to assemble, disassemble, and perform a functions check on a deer rifle.

He knows how to change the oil in truck and a snowmobile.

The Democrat, Stu Lourey, couldn't be more different.

After graduating from Carleton College, he immediately went to work in politics, working for both Senator Al "happy hands" Franken and Senator Tina Smith.

Beyond that, Lourey has no work history.

His only real credentials for serving the people the Senate District 11 is that he has the correct last name.

You see, Stu's dad has been the state Senator for some years.

And before that, Stu's grand mama was the senator.

In short, he comes from a political dynasty. And dynasties always believe that DNA is really the only qualification to propagate dynasties.

Put another way, if Stu's last name was "Jones" or "Lundquist" or "O'Leary", he wouldn't have had a shot at this office.

How ironic that the party of the "working man" is backing a privileged kid who has a powerful daddy for office over a true working man who boasts of nothing more than a belief that an honest day's work will get you an honest day's pay.

If the parties were reversed, if Rarick had the Carleton degree and the Lourey pedigree, there would be no end to howls of "rich kid, entitled kid" protestations emanating from DFL headquarters.

Kind of like the selective concern over wealth (Dayton unearned wealth OK, Romney earned wealth not OK) they hypocritically trot out when it suits them.

To get a great visual presentation of what we're describing, head on over to Stu's web site.

Take a look at the photos.

You see him all dressed up in Carhart work gear and Gamehide hunting gear.

There's just one minor problem.

None of the gear has a single rip or stain.

No coffee stains. No blood stains. No mud. No dust.

It looks like Stu borrowed the gear from John Kerry.

<https://www.stulourey.com/meet/>

This race is a microcosm of the problem the DFL has with rural voters.

The Republican is authentic and a true representation of the district.

The Democrat is not. The Democrat has rolled in from Washington, DC by way of Carleton, to lay claim to the senate seat like it's some sort of family heirloom.

We will see if the good people of Senate District 11 think that any man is entitled to inherit political office.

Pine City is a world away from Hyannis Port.

ANOTHER WEEK

It just wouldn't be a normal week if we didn't spill some ink describing DFL lunacy and hypocrisy.

And we will do so without even mentioning the anti-Semitic bigotry of Ilhan Omar, the shocking economic illiteracy of AOC, or the foul-mouthed mendacity of Rashida Tlaib.

Let's start in Saint Paul, where DFLers on the House Taxes Committee fretted aloud this week over possible tax increases for Minnesotans should the state tax code "conform" to recent federal changes.

We will remember that selective concern regarding tax increases when those same Dems call for gas tax increases, tobacco tax increases, and a repeal of the scheduled sunset of the \$600 million tax on healthcare services, which is to expire this year.

Out in Washington, could it be any more obvious that the Dems are playing politics with the shutdown?

They think they are "winning" the shutdown, so they show no compunction about extending the pain.

Hell, they don't even pretend to care.

They run out of town to party in Puerto Rico with lobbyists.

They leave town, to fundraise, run for president, or just hang out at home.

They vote against no-strings-attached bills to pay federal workers.

They brazenly state that the only path to a solution is to give them what they want, in exchange for beginning negotiations on what the president wants.

The only problem for Chuck and Nancy is that this president has shown, in spades, that he is willing to bear a heavy price to vindicate his position.

This isn't the GOP of old, the party that shrank from every fight and showed a political glass jaw.

This president can take a punch.

Good luck with that, Dems.

February 1st, 2019

Quote of the Week: “Today, thanks to Roe, getting an abortion is safer than getting your tonsils out.”

- Elizabeth Warren (D – MA)

Editor’s Note: Unless, of course, you are the aborted child. Then, a tonsillectomy looks quite appealing.

Quote of the Week: “We can increase the taxes that people are paying who are the extremely wealthy in our communities. So, 70 percent, 80 percent, we’ve had it as high as 90 percent. So, that’s a place we can start.”

- Rep. Ilhan Omar (MN -5)

In This Issue:

1. Switching Teams;
2. Special Election – the Money Chase;
3. AFL-CIO vs. Construction Trades.

SWITCHING TEAMS

There has been a great deal of media fanfare (of course) over the past month, as the always-objective Fourth Estate covered the party switching of a number of politicians from the GOP to the Democrats.

The icing on the cake is that these politicians happen to be women (bonus!).

The icing on the icing of the cake is that these women also happen to represent suburban legislative districts.

All of this fits neatly into the media’s narrative that the Republican Party is doomed because of troubles in the suburbs and from women (where have we heard that before? 1992, 2000, 2008, 2012 to name a few).

Four members of the Kansas legislature and one from New Jersey switched because (are you sitting?) the Democrats are more “moderate.”

According to Kansas State Senator Barbara Bollier, the GOP rewarded purity and punished independence.

Colleague Dinah Sykes thought the GOP too divisive.

So, what of the party they are joining?

Perhaps some enterprising journalist might continue to cover the story by asking the five if they agree with their party on the following:

Late-term abortion, up the point the child graduates high school, apparently;

Marginal tax rates hitting Venezuela-type rates;

Total firearm confiscation;

No private health insurance;

Anti-Semitism;

Radical group identity politics.

How moderate. Good luck with all that, ladies.

SPECIAL ELECTION – THE MONEY CHASE

Next Tuesday, there will be a special election in Northeast Minnesota to determine who will fill a state Senate seat left vacant when the DFL incumbent was appointed to a position in the Walz administration.

The race already has many interesting angles that make the outcome a true tossup.

The seat has been in the hands of the DFL for many decades.

On the other hand, Donald Trump won the district handily.

Pete Stauber also won the district in his successful run for Congress.

The “A” side of the district leans DFL and has a DFL state Representative.

On the other hand, the “B” side of the district has a Republican state Representative.

The DFL candidate is the scion of a DFL political dynasty, the Loureys, that have held the seat for decades.

The GOP candidate is a union electrician who proudly wears his union and blue-collar credentials.

Handicapping the race is difficult because it's just really hard to predict who is going to leave the house on a cold February night to cast a single vote for one office.

Having said that, fundraising is one proxy we can use for candidate strength.

This week, the "pre-general election" fundraising totals were released.

Stu Lourey (DFL)

Cash Raised: \$60,000

Spent: \$44,000

Cash on Hand: \$16,000

Jason Rarick (GOP)

Cash Raised: \$50,000

Spent: \$29,000

Cash on Hand: \$21,000

The money race tells what most observers have divined: the race is likely to be close, just like the cash report.

The district is one of those rural seats that safe DFL just a few years ago but has been trending towards the GOP in recent times, thanks to the DFL's leftward drift at the behest of the liberal urban donors who call the shots.

Stay tuned Tuesday night!

AFL-CIO VS. CONSTRUCTION TRADES

And while we're on this race, let's address the scam some liberals are pulling by claiming Jason Rarick isn't a true union brother because he has a poor AFL-CIO scorecard.

Let's be clear: The AFL-CIO isn't the construction trades union.

The AFL is dominated by public sector unions like the teachers, government office

workers, and bus drivers.

These aren't the hard-working private sector hard hats who earn a living with their hands, building Minnesota and America.

Rarick received a 28% score from the AFL-CIO for the 2018, indicating he voted "wrong" and "against working people" 72% of the time.

So, what were some of those "Wrong" votes?

Nearly all of them were his support of funding bills for state government, which the AFL-CIO deemed inadequate.

In other words, all the public union people who run the AFL-CIO dinged him because he didn't spend enough money to grow government for them and their jobs.

Never mind that most of these bills had bi-partisan support and were signed into law by Governor Dayton.

Here's another alleged vote against working people: Rarick voted in favor of a bill increasing penalties for the jokers who have been shutting down freeways and the airport.

The AFL-CIO considered voting against the bill important because "Working people have used disruptive protest as a necessary tool to achieve positive social change."

Right.

When was the last time you saw a group of electricians or pipe fitters blocking I-94?

Most likely you did see them on I-94, working on the roadways to make them safer and more efficient.

Odds are, if you walked into any watering hole and asked the blue-collar guys at the bar if taxes are too high and government too large, they would agree with Rarick.

Ask those same guys if they want tougher penalties on the people shutting down the freeways with their protests, the guys would be with Rarick.

We seriously doubt they would opine that “disruptive protest” is a tool for social change.

For too long, the AFL-CIO has pretended to be a hard hat union because they know most people long ago got sick of public unions and their schtick.

In fact, many construction trade unions don't even belong to the AFL-CIO.

The simple fact is that Rarick is very representative of his fellow trades members.

They pay too much in taxes.

They think government is out of control.

They drive fossil-fuel burning things.

They own guns.

They go to church on Sunday.

They are the reason the DFL is a dying species in rural Minnesota.

The DFL left them long ago to suckle at the teet of the monied liberal elites who populate one or two zip codes in Minneapolis and look down their noses at people who earn a living with their hands and have “unenlightened” views of guns, abortion, climate change, and homosexuality.

Put Jason Rarick at any trade union meeting and the whole room would shake their heads in approval of his voting record and views of the world.

February 8th, 2019

Quote of the Week: "No issue better illustrates the divide between America's WORKING CLASS and America's POLITICAL CLASS than illegal immigration. Wealthy politicians and donors push for open borders while living their lives behind walls and gates and guards."

- President Donald J. Trump

Quote of the Week: "A great deal of America's economic progress has resulted from people's aspiration to make more and live better. Take that away and what do we have? The people at the bottom won't have as many at the top to resent."

- Howard Marks

Quote of the Week: "Does the left understand the long-term consequences of the majority imposing confiscatory taxes on the rich, and do they really want them? Will reducing the incentive to earn more (or incentivizing successful Americans to transfer their citizenship to other nations) really result in the betterment of most people? Americans generally accept the concept of progressive tax rates. But they must not be punitive and de-motivating."

- Howard Marks

In This Issue:

1. Rarick!
2. Big Money;
3. New York Blues.

RARICK!

A political earthquake rocked Minnesota Tuesday night when state Rep. Jason Rarick (R – Pine City) decisively topped DFLer Stu Lourey to win the state Senate seat vacated by DFLer Tony Lourey, Stu's daddy.

Despite massive DFL spending, Rarick won by six points, and flipped a blue seat to red.

One cannot overestimate the value of this victory, both in the near and long term.

In the near term, the win gives the Senate GOP a critical 35-32 majority, which is important because the Senate will need to act as a check and balance against the

DFL governor and the crazy DFL rabble now running the House (think DC. Same style).

The win also gives the GOP a morale boost after a tough 2018 election.

Moreover, it gives the Red Team some momentum moving forward, especially as the House now prepares for a special election to fill Rarick's soon-to-be-vacant House seat.

In the longer term, the win provides further confirmation of a political re-alignment that flipping rural Minnesota into the GOP camp, and isn't simply a temporary phenomenon.

The Senate seat had been in DFL hands for many decades before Rarick's win.

This win continues a GOP win streak in long-held DFL seats in rural Minnesota.

While Donald Trump and Pete Stauber won the district, Tina Smith and Tim Walz also won it.

Obama won it twice as well.

The loss of this clearly represents a long-term trend on rural Minnesotans not only voting GOP, but identifying with the GOP platform.

The victory was also an unmitigated disaster for the DFL and frankly, uncharacteristic of their normally squared away campaign operation.

First, why did the governor create an open seat (and special election) in a swing district that has been trending Republican? It was an unnecessary risk, especially given that the Senate was so closely divided at 34-33.

Second, candidate quality matters and the GOP won that battle big time. Stu Lourey is a twenty-something kid with no work history other than working out in DC for politicians. No worldly experience, not married, no kids, no understanding of life issues like paying the mortgage, worrying about sick kids, or retirement. In fact, if he would have had any other last name, he wouldn't have had a second look by the DFL. Instead, he flew home from DC to run like a prince would come home to claim a vacant crown.

On the other hand, the GOP ran a card-carrying union electrician who owned his own business, loves to hunt, ride snowmobiles, and knows what it's like to work with your hands.

In fact, sources tell the Watchdog that senior DFLers didn't even know Rarick was a union electrician, when any B-grade operative could have told you Rarick was going

to be the GOP candidate if the seat became vacant. Some of these same people then lost their minds when many trade unions do what they often do, they endorsed a union brother, party affiliation being irrelevant to the brotherhood.

Third, Rarick was attacked by Lourey supporters for supporting a gas tax increase, which was a total misrepresentation of his position on the issue.

In the end, it didn't matter to the election but will have big ramifications at the Capitol.

The DFL has been touting a gas tax increase as an essential part of the transportation plan.

By attacking a Republican for supporting a gas tax increase (while untrue), every single moderate Republican who may have been open to a gas tax has now been put on notice that the Left may attack them for it.

The gas tax is now dead as a door nail, which is just fine.

It was truly a horrible, nasty, really bad week for the DFL.

BIG MONEY

This is your regular reminder that despite all their claims of "getting money out of politics," the Democrats are the biggest practitioners of election buying in the history of the universe.

Here are the latest numbers regarding the influence of money in politics.

Third party groups spent nearly \$12 million to support Tim Walz or oppose Jeff Johnson for governor.

Johnson was the beneficiary of only \$2.6 million of similar spending.

All told, over \$33 million in independent expenditures on behalf of candidates happened in 2018.

Of the amount, \$17.4 million was spent by three groups, the Alliance for a Better Minnesota, the Minnesota DFL, and the Minnesota Victory PAC.

Guess the political affiliation of all three groups.

And despite holding a sizable majority, the House GOP was outraised by the House DFL by a 2 to 1 margin.

In the attorney general's race, outside groups favored Keith Ellison in spending by a whopping 12 to 1 margin.

The only bright spot last year?

In the sole state Senate race, a special election, Republican Jeff Howe won despite outside groups helping his opponent by a 2 to 1 margin.

Outside groups spent a remarkable \$1.6 million trying to elect Howe's opponent. For a state Senate seat!

NEW YORK BLUES

In the same way that Venezuela has served as a canary in the coal mine regarding socialism, Ne York is now acting as that canary regarding high taxes.

In short, hard evidence is mounting that wealthy people are fleeing New York to lower tax jurisdictions.

Of course, New York democrats are stunned by the idea that capital would flee high tax jurisdictions to lower.

The first wake up call came when the state realized income tax collections would fall short by \$2.8 billion, scotching plans to jack up spending on a host of programs demanded mostly by those who don't pay income taxes.

The next wake up came in the form of greatly increased home purchases in Florida by people from Illinois, New Jersey and New York.

Real estate data show that Florida buying has spiked, with many buyers coming from New York and the other two states mentioned above.

New York governor Andrew Cuomo correctly "blamed" changes in the federal tax code for the spoiling of his schemes.

The new federal tax code, in a stroke of genius, limited the deductibility of state and local taxes to a maximum of \$10,000.

Since states like New York impose taxes in an amount much higher than this, taxpayers are now feeling the pain of these taxes now that other federal payers aren't there to subsidize New York's tax policies.

Under the tax changes, a wealth taxpayer in New York City would pay a combined tax rate of 50.4% of income.

No wonder the productive are fleeing to states like Florida, with no income tax.

We guess the rich aren't happy to pay for a better New York.

The New York situation should serve as a reminder for Tim Walz and the DFL here in Minnesota.

Capital is highly mobile and will move when taxes become punitive and confiscatory.

Moreover, Minnesota isn't New York. We don't have Wall Street, Broadway, and the cosmopolitan draw of Gotham.

Tim Walz has made all sorts of expensive promises to make it to the governor's mansion.

He would be well served to look to New York as he fashions his proposed budget.

February 15, 2019

Quote of the Week: “Heaven has walls, a gate, and a strict immigration policy. Hell has open borders.”

- Attributed to an ad for a grocery store in Arkansas

Quote of the Week: “While polls show that 70% of New Yorkers support our plans and investment, a number of state and local politicians have made it clear that they oppose our presence and will not work with us to build the type of relationships that are required to go forward with the project we and many others envisioned in Long Island City.”

- Amazon Statement

Quote of the Week: “Ultimately, we concluded that the Department of Public Safety (DPS) and the Office of Minnesota Information Technology Services (MNIT) must share responsibility for the system’s (MNLARS, the state driver licensing system) unsatisfactory release. Leaders of these agencies and the project did not provide the oversight and direction necessary to ensure, in the end, that the system would meet user needs.”

- MN Office of the Legislative Auditor

In This Issue:

1. Atlas Shrugged;
2. Not Ready for Prime Time;
3. Semi-Free Saunas!

ATLAS SHRUGGED

In a week filled with big news, perhaps the biggest news came from corporate behemoth Amazon.

The company summarily withdrew plans for a second headquarters in New York City, thanks to persistent and vocal criticism of the company, which didn’t bode well for a positive relationship with the host jurisdiction.

The move left the city a jilted bride, standing at the altar as the groom drove off with billions in economic development and 25,000 jobs in the back seat.

This publication salutes Amazon founder and CEO Jeff Bezos, who demonstrated

the courage to walk away from ignorant, tyrannical left-wing politicians who have grown quite accustomed to holding up job creators as a rhetorical pinata and a piggy bank to fund their utopian social policies.

In short, Bezos refused to allow looters and moochers like Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez (D – NY 14) own him, proving that capital is highly mobile and will not tolerate heavy-handed tactics, if the owner of that capital is willing to show some courage – and fiduciary duty.

Having said that, who in the heck is advising Bezos? Apparently, Amazon was surprised that New York politicians gave Amazon a hostile reception and immediately fashioned plans to put the company under the yoke of high taxes and heavy regulation.

Any dude off the street could have predicted this outcome. Talk about walking around blind without a cane. In this case, a \$2.5 billion cane.

On the other hand, the Watchdog will concede that these liberals do make one good point.

Amazon was lured to NYC with a massive government subsidy in the neighborhood of \$3 billion.

Critics make a very fair point regarding the propriety of offering massive tax breaks to corporate interests, which is nothing short of crony capitalism.

The public policy of government bidding against government to offer sweetheart deals to lure jobs is a very debatable subject.

Too often, these subsidies are nothing more than market – distorting giveaways that in the final analysis are a net negative for the taxpayer.

The bottom line here is that Jeff Bezos is to be congratulated for telling the looters and moochers to take a hike.

NOT READY FOR PRIME TIME

Some readers will recall the early days of the comedy show “Saturday Night Live” and its cast, which called themselves the “Not Ready for Prime-Time Players.”

That title has been unwittingly revived by the cast of Democrats in the new Congress.

Some of these antics are simply funny and entertaining. Some are dangerous and troubling. Many are both.

We start with Rep. Ilhan Omar (D – MN5), who has continued to display her anti-

Semitic world view in a brazen and public way.

Multiple instances of this behavior demonstrate that this isn't a case of a rookie politician making rhetorical mistakes or displaying an ignorance of the tragic history of the Jewish people.

It's clear to any reasonable observer that there is animus here.

It's too bad that Jewish DFL leaders like Sen. Ron Latz (DFL – St. Louis Park) seem surprised that their efforts to educate her have failed.

Regardless of political affiliation, anti-Semitism in all its forms should be roundly condemned always and forever.

That Speaker Pelosi would put Omar on the House Foreign Affairs Committee is a slap in the face.

Then there is Amy Klobuchar, who has been outed by multiple former staffer for multiple instances of abuse.

Despite the spin of liberal allies who want to dismiss the abuse as nothing more than a strong female being a strong and demanding leader, this is abuse – period.

Throwing binders at staff or making them arrange her underwear at home is abuse, regardless of the gender of the abuser.

Moreover, let's all get off this fantasy that she's presidential material.

Klobuchar has done nothing in the Senate other than successfully lay low and crow about small successes like helping a constituent find their car keys or get a travel voucher for a late flight.

She has no accomplishments.

She also is the wrong candidate at the wrong time. The Democrat base wants crazy and socialist. Her narrative is just the opposite.

She is neither, only abusive and boring.

But the piece de resistance has to be the so-called Green New Deal (GND).

This may one the craziest ideas every floated by someone who wasn't wasted at the time it was said.

To start, the cost of is so astronomical that it would cost more than the moon landing, the Interstate Highway System, the new Deal, and the cost to fight World

War II – combined!

And then there is the matter of the content of the GND, which is little more than a compendium of profoundly stupid ideas.

Of the many profoundly stupid ideas, these are the 5 worst, as voted upon by the Watchdog staff and tabulated by Pricewaterhousecoopers.

One: “Economic security” for those “unwilling” to work. You read that right. Not “unable” but “unwilling” to work. How distinctly un-American yet so distinctly Democrat.

Two: Building a high-speed rail network so that “air travel becomes unnecessary.” No word on how this utopian ideal will overcome the geographical reality of reaching Hawaii or Japan, for example. Well, that would be one hell of a tunnel to Tokyo.

Three: A “government-guaranteed” job for every American that includes a sweet wage, family and medical leave, vacations, and a pension. It’s a mystery regarding who would be left in the private sector to pay the taxes to pay for this Postal-Service-on-steroids proposal.

Four: Ban meat. The document actually blames “farting cows” for the problem, at least in part. How prosaic. Sure, cows fart out their backsides and contribute greenhouse gasses to the equation. On the other hand, many politicians fart out of their mouths, polluting both the atmosphere and our political discourse simultaneously.

Five: All the “free” stuff. These provisions could have come straight from the wishes of any first grader who has become aware of life’s inequities. And it’s just as naïve. Free education, free food, free house, and free money. Again, we want to meet the people who would be stuck with the tab for providing everybody else with this free stuff. Suckers.

But the real suckers are the voters who put these people in power.

SEMI-FREE SAUNAS!

And in case you were thinking Democrats in Minnesota were actually working on serious issues, we present for your consideration [House File 1192](#), authored by Rep. Rick Hansen (DFL – Sough Saint Paul).

This bill would provide a tax credit to install a sauna in your house.

You heard that right. A tax credit for a sauna.

No word on any bills forthcoming for a tax credit to install a hot tub, wet bar, bowling

lane, or skeeball ramp in the ol' man cave.

Come to think of it, you could enjoy the sauna in your free government-provided house where you will spend a lot of time because you are unwilling to work.

It's all good.

February 22, 2019

Quote of the Week: “The North Star State’s top tax rate of 9.85% is one of the highest in the U.S. But what makes Minnesota really stand out—and not in a good way—is its income tax rate of 5.35% even for the state’s lowest earners.”

- Kiplinger’s Newsletter, designating Minnesota as the #1 “Least Tax Friendly State” for 2018

Quote of the Week:

With your head down in the pig bin
Saying 'Keep on digging'
Pig stain on your fat chin
What do you hope to find
Down in the pig mine?
You're nearly a laugh
You're nearly a laugh
But you're really a cry

- Roger Waters

In This Issue:

1. Shocking and Ridiculous.

SHOCKING AND RIDICULOUS

Pursuant to state law, Governor Walz released his proposed state budget for the upcoming two-year budget cycle, which will start on July 1st.

We wish he hadn't. Clearly, the man who campaigned in buffalo plaid as the avuncular, paunchy, white, middle-aged, harmless public servant next door has revealed himself to be little more than yet another incarnation of Mark Dayton.

Simply put, the Walz budget is a shocking and ridiculous orgy of taxing and spending, throwing taxpayer slop at every constituency in the DFL universe.

As a political document, Walz hit another home run with ultra-leftists who are clearly his overlords, they of Line 3, infanticide, and Green New Deal infamy.

Main street taxpayers are likely to see the budget in a different light.

As a public policy document, the proposal is a disaster that shows this governor is out of his depth as a leader and chief executive.

In short, this isn't a serious proposal. Hell, even the Star Tribune editorial board thinks it's too much.

Did Nicolas Maduro write this budget?

Here are the three most ridiculous items from the Walz budget.

#1: THE GAS TAX

Despite a \$1.5 billion surplus, Walz has proposed a 70% increase in the gas tax, which would vault Minnesota into the top 5 with respect to this tax.

That's a \$1.3 billion rake from taxpayer pockets.

We guess it's not acceptable that there be at least one tax where this state isn't in the top 5.

This publication has many, many times over the years pointed out the problems with the gas tax (regressive, geographically inequitable, a declining source of revenue) from a public policy perspective.

The fatal conceit with this particular proposal is that it's political theater plain and simple. It's merely a political gimmick designed to position the DFL to blame the GOP for a lack of progress on transportation issues at the next election.

Here's why we know that.

The DFL could have passed a gas tax recently and declined to do so.

Let's go back to 2013. After the 2012 elections, the DFL controlled the levers of state government, with Dayton in the governor's chair and majorities in both the House and Senate.

Predictably, this gang raided taxpayer pockets, jacking up taxes and fees, including a multi-billion increase in the income tax, moving Minnesota into the top 5 in that taxation category.

A gas tax increase that year? Conspicuous by its absence.

The DFL is interested in talking about a gas tax increase only when the GOP is in a position to block it. Politics at its worst.

Need more evidence? Go all the way back to earlier this month, during the special election campaign in Senate District 11.

The Left attempted to smear Republican Jason Rarick for – you guessed it – supporting a gas tax.

They did this by distorting and misrepresenting his position on the issue.

The Left has tipped its hand by showing that they intend to attack any Republican who supports a gas tax increase, especially in rural Minnesota.

Moreover, Governor Walz should be ashamed (and called out) for his use of the 35W bridge collapse to hawk his transportation tax increases.

On his one-page “fact sheet” on transportation, his administration states, “The governor’s budget proposes a common-sense increase in the gas tax to make Minnesotans safer, help businesses and farmers get goods to market, and **ensure nothing like the I-35 bridge collapse happens again.**” (Emphasis original).

Even with today’s biased media, it’s troubling that Walz hasn’t been called to account for his shameless politicization of this tragedy, much less calling him to account for perpetuating the long-debunked agitprop that the bridge collapse occurred because of a lack of funding (the investigation laid blame for the collapse solely on a faulty engineering design of the bridge’s gusset plates).

#2: THE SICK TAX

Governor Walz proposes repealing the expiration of the immoral, hated “sick tax,” which would result in a \$992 million tax on sick people in the next biennium alone.

Since 2003, the state has levied a tax on revenue from patient services at hospitals, surgical centers and health care providers.

In other words, when you visit the doctor, surgeon, or other provider to be made well (or have your life saved), the state taxes the visit.

Thanks to Republicans, the tax is scheduled to expire this year, which Walz wants to stop.

Taxing sick people is bad public policy. It’s also immoral.

It should also be noted that the proposed repeal of this tax contains some budget chicanery as well.

Because of tax and budget interactions, the repeal would trigger a transfer of \$122 million of this amount to the state’s general fund, where it would no doubt serve as yet another trough from which DFL constituent groups can feed.

A billion-dollar sick tax. Have at it, Governor Walz.

This has to be a non-starter with the GOP.

#3: GROWING THE GOVERNOR'S OFFICE

The governor is seeking \$700,000 to create a new "Office of Public Engagement" within the governor's office.

This office would be staffed with 7 full-time employees, who would "help open the two-way dialogue, ensuring that the issues impacting our state's proud and diverse communities have a receptive team dedicated to making their voices heard within state government and helping their concerns be translated into action by the appropriate state agencies." Furthermore, "The Office of Public Engagement will actively work to remove obstacles and barriers for engagement and to improve public awareness and involvement in the work of the Walz- Flanagan Administration."

In short, Walz proposes to use taxpayer dollars to open a taxpayer funded campaign operation to support engagement with Walz's overlord constituencies and pave the way for the 2022 re-election campaign.

The GOP would be well served to simply dig up the legislation, and accompanying rhetoric, of DFL House Majority Leader Tony Sertich.

When the DFL controlled the House and Senate during 2009-2010, Sertich took the lead in blasting all the "political appointees" in both Governor Pawlenty's office and the state agencies.

He introduced legislation to reduce these numbers and took delight in publicly denouncing the "fat" in the governor's office.

The GOP need only to find the Sertich files, dust them off, and go to town.

In many ways, the Walz budget is a political gift, much like the Green New Deal, AOC, Bernie Sanders, Maxine Waters, and Anthony Weiner (now a registered sex offender).

If you haven't, take a moment to offer a prayer of thanks that the GOP has control of the Senate.

March 1, 2019

Quote of the Week: “I believe that impeachment is inevitable. It also is a terrifying notion. Pence is an ideologue, and the ideology he holds is more terrifying to me and my constituents. And we have not had a full impeachment that removes the president from office. Nations struggle any time [they] overthrow a dictator, and Trump really has the markings of a dictator.”

- Rep. Ilhan Omar (D-MN5)

Quote of the Week: “This is the same Michael Cohen who has admitted he lied to Congress previously. Why did the Democrats even bother to swear him in?”

- Kayleigh McEnany, Trump Press Secretary

In This Issue:

1. Circus Maximus;
2. Budget Blues;
3. Klobuchar.

CIRCUS MAXIMUS

Republicans, freedom-loving peoples, and the sane should all rejoice this week.

They should rejoice because Democrats continue to walk down a path that will surely lead to defeat in 2020 at both the congressional and presidential level.

To start, let’s recall that while Republicans lost 40 seats, the average margin of victory in those seats was a measly 1%.

Moreover, history proves that a sitting president is tough to beat.

Finally, American political history shows that voters want to vote “for” something, as opposed to “against” something.

While protest votes are certainly present in some elections, like 2018, the appeal and power are ephemeral.

As many predicted, the gang of liberals in Washington isn’t about a pro-jobs, pro-prosperity agenda.

Instead, Pelosi and company are on a maniacal quest to destroy Donald Trump.

Indeed, Pelosi has become the Ahab to Trump's White Whale.

It's hard to believe, but the latest edition of Captain Pelosi has only been in power for about a month.

In that time, the vast majority of their time has been spent pursuing and harassing the president.

We witnessed the outrageous spectacle this week of a disbarred, convicted perjurer testifying before Congress.

Think about it. A man convicted of lying to Congress being sworn to tell the truth in front of the very Congress he lied to in the first place.

And lest anyone think that the Swamp Gang has given up on investigating their target's childhood, think again.

Much like Judge Kavanaugh, Trump's college transcripts and high school grades are an object of obsession.

Never mind that President Obama steadfastly refused to release his grades and transcripts, perhaps to hide affirmative action favoritism or damage the narrative of Obama as intellectual giant.

This in addition to the obsession with tax returns.

And don't forget Congressman Adam Schiff declaring that even if the never-ending Mueller probe one day wraps up and concludes there was no conclusion, the Swamp Gang will continue the hunt aboard the USS Pequod.

Thus far, the Democrats even pretended to offer public policy solutions increase opportunity and prosperity, even for favored constituencies.

There's the "Green New Deal", which promises to do nothing more than force us all to live the way radical socialists want us to live. That is, meat-free, airplane-free, fossil fuel-free, liberty-free, prosperity-free and free of farting cows.

Beyond that, the Dems have offered nothing beyond the tired bromides about punishing successful people.

The old class-envy chestnuts that one rich man equals one poor man.

That prosperity is a fixed pie that when sliced, means one man gets a big one and

the other guy a small one.

It's interesting that the Republicans have never identified this theory as the corollary of the liberal screed against "trickle down" tax cuts.

The Dems have long brayed that tax cuts for job creators are "trickle down" economics that mean big benefits for those at the top and crumbs for those at the bottom.

And why not the same for radically progressive tax increases?

How does government confiscation of the resources of the wealthy result in widespread prosperity for the poor?

Isn't this "trickle down" taxation?

Why doesn't this theory mean nothing more than tax revenue for the bureaucrats and politicians to support their jobs and crumbs for the people their programs purport to serve?

We've been 50 plus years into large scale government welfare programs.

By any metric, those programs have not met their stated goals.

BUDGET BLUES

Big spenders at the Capitol got a taste of harsh reality today when the state's latest budget forecast came in \$500 million below previous estimates.

The state's projected budget surplus, which had been projected at \$1.5 billion in the last forecast, came in at about \$1 billion even, plummeting by 1/3rd.

The news must have been a blow to freshman governor Tim Walz, who has been on a spending spree as big as any kid in a candy store.

After seeing the new governor in action, it's easier to understand how Washington, DC blows through so much money.

The news was a sobering reminder that what goes up must come down.

It's time for the governor to rethink his budget plans.

The news certainly lends credence to GOP calls for spending restraint.

We can start with agreeing that there should be no "bonding" bill in 2019, especially one weighing in at \$1.2 billion.

To be clear, that's \$1.2 billion in debt.

To be clear, Walz's own budget office forecast bonding this year in the amount of \$265 million, about \$1 billion under their governor's own proposal.

Know your history, folks. Up until the early 1970s, the legislature only met every other year.

Even-year sessions were added specifically to consider bonding bills.

If bonding is going to be done in odd-number years, the trade-off should be an agreement to have no session in 2020.

And, by the way, not a penny for the failed MNLARS driver license system.

It's a black hole by any objective measure, and there should be no additional appropriation without more stringent oversight.

KLOBUCHAR

Let's get a couple of things straight about Sen. Klobuchar.

One, she's an abusive boss, plain and simple.

She's not "demanding" or "assertive" or "tough."

She's abusive and her behavior is unacceptable by any reasonable standards of human decency.

Second, she's not presidential material.

She's had no meaningful accomplishments in the Senate.

She has nothing in her background that stands out in the field.

Her narrative is little more than that she's not nuts and she knows how to sit in the middle, or at least pretend to be in the middle.

This isn't what the crazies on the Left want.

She'll flame out in Iowa, at the latest, and that will be that.

March 8, 2019

Quote of the Week: “Lawmakers must be able to debate w/o prejudice or bigotry. I am saddened that Rep. Omar continues to mischaracterize support for Israel. I urge her to retract this statement and engage in further dialogue with the Jewish community on why these comments are so hurtful.”

- Rep. Nita Lowey (D – NY 17)

Quote of the Week: “The Republicans just won a special election in Kentucky State Senate district 31. District is 60% Democrat. This year, in 2019, Republicans have won four such take overs of a long-time democrat held state legislative seat.”
- Grover Norquist

In This Issue:

1. Accountability for Thee, Not for Me;
2. Capitol Capers;
3. Manafort vs. Mueller.

ACCOUNTABILITY FOR THEE, NOT FOR ME

If you needed any proof that our politics has gone completely tribal, take a look at the recent incidents involving two of Minnesota’s liberal darlings, Senator Amy Klobuchar and Rep. Ilhan Omar.

Numerous and well-publicized tropes prove that Ilhan Omar is an anti-Semite, plain and simple.

The tribal politics gripping our nation, and the DFL, won’t let them properly hold her accountable.

It was nothing short of embarrassing to watch the House Democrats collectively wring their hands and vacillate over the easy to decision to hold her accountable for her words.

They failed.

Instead, Nancy Pelosi and company ducked the issue while pretending to do something.

They passed a mealy-mouthed, feel-good resolution that simply condemned “hate” in general.

(No word on how a similar resolution is coming along to condemn puppy kicking. Word has it Democrats who own cats, parakeets and chia pet goats are uncomfortable voting for it.)

The resolution failed in the central purpose of condemning Ilhan's specific words and thus holding her directly accountable.

We won't even get into the issue of Rep. Omar continuing to hold her seat on the House Foreign Affairs Committee.

Moreover, the excuses coming from the Left are laughable.

It's a constant stream of "what about anti-muslim rhetoric?" and "Donald Trump says mean things, too."

Didn't we all learn in grade school that other kids running in the hall doesn't make it okay for you?

Same with chewing gum in class.

Same with throwing snow balls on the playground.

Same with vile, anti-Semitic commentary.

To be clear, unacceptable speech should be called to account regardless of the stature of the one who utters the words.

But the unacceptable speech of one does not excuse the unacceptable speech of another.

In this case, we were all once again exposed to one person's anti-Semitism.

The U.S. House had an opportunity, and an obligation, to condemn.

Group identity politics, gutless leadership, and a total disregard for the concept of personal accountability (long absent from the Left) led to a fiasco that will further harm the thread-bare moral authority of one of our bedrock political institutions.

And then there's Amy Klobuchar, the presidential contender whose lane appears to be vote-for-me-because-I'm-mild-and-unaccomplished.

She's avoiding accountability for her boorish and abusive behavior by playing the gender card.

Instead of contrition and accountability, the insinuation is that any questioning of her

abuse is a sign of sexism on the part of the questioner and not a sign of a bad person on her part.

Klobuchar would have you believe that throwing objects at staff and publicly calling into question their intelligence is really a sign of leadership.

Only Leona Helmsley and Marge Schott would have agreed.

If Marge Schott were only a Democrat in Congress. She could have avoided any accountability for her behavior.

And there's more.

For many years, Klobuchar has been rightly and derisively known as the "Senator of Small Things" for her almost obsessive desire to avoid difficult issues.

As you would guess, those who point out that the empress has no accomplishment clothes are labeled as sexist.

She and her apologists can play this card all they want, but it doesn't change the fact that she's really a shallow, petty, and essentially semi-talented person.

In addition to all that, she's also going to soon face a bigger question: If she can't maintain self-control in the face of typographical errors and missing forks, how can she possibly maintain self-control when facing national security crises and negotiating with foreign leaders?

This publication somehow doesn't think JFK threw binders during the Cuban Missile Crisis or that Abe Lincoln screamed at staff during the Civil War or that FDR had staff arrange his sock drawer at Yalta.

CAPITOL CAPERS

It was another week of taxpayer abuse down at the puzzle palace this week.

Let's start with the gas tax, where the media-assisted spin was jacked up this week after a disastrous roll-out of the proposed 70% increase in this regressive tax was properly met with a high dose of skepticism from all but the most fanatical legislators.

The media spun the narrative this week that the gas tax isn't that bad because the 20 cents per gallon won't happen all at once.

Similar to the fact that having your limbs cut off won't be that bad because it will happen one limb at a time.

But here's a very important point that both the GOP and conservative media have

missed!

A full 7 cents of the twenty cents will NOT be new money.

Instead, that money will backfill current road and bridge money that will go back to the general fund, to support all manner of reckless spending.

Let us say that once again. Over 1/3rd of the proposed gas tax increase will NOT be new money into the road and bridge fund.

That's \$450 million diverted from roads and bridges into the general fund (AKA "play money" for the DFL).

In other news, the Governor Walz responded to the drop in projected revenues by announcing that the only thing he was willing to drop from his bloated budget proposal was \$700,000 to boost his office staff. Wow, thanks.

Finally, the DFL, despite record low unemployment, is seeking to increase welfare payments, thereby keeping welfare "pay" competitive with real work.

MANAFORT VS. MUELLER

Finally, let's acknowledge that special counsel Robert Mueller has again struck out in his quixotic quest to hammer the president.

This week, a federal judge sentenced Paul Manafort to a mere 47 months in prison, far less than the 19-24 years sought by the prosecution.

Judge T.S. Ellis called the proposed sentence "unwarranted" and "excessive."

And still no proof of collusion with the Russians.

March 15, 2019

Quote of the Week: “If they do not put it (gun control) up for a vote, there are seven senators sitting in seats where Tim Walz won — and we are coming.”

- First Lady Gwen Walz

Quote of the Week: “Bring it on.”

- Sen. Warren Limmer (R – Maple Grove)

Factoid of the Week: The Minnesota legislature has introduced over 5,000 bills this session, a record. Legislators may continue to introduce bills until May 21st.

In This Issue:

1. Tax Avoidance: It's Good;
2. Most Ridiculous Item of the Week;
3. All Aboard, Stoners!

TAX AVOIDANCE: IT'S GOOD

While Star Tribune is often a repository of the inane and banal, an opinion column this week was ridiculous enough to earn a spot in the Watchdog's weekly commentary.

The thesis of the opinion piece was that “tax avoidance” is an “unseemly” activity that is “unfair.”

“Unseemly” how and “unfair” to whom were questions left unanswered, perhaps because the answer would have been as ridiculous as the question.

To be clear, “tax avoidance” isn't “tax evasion.” Tax evasion is the intentional underpayment of taxes owed and due by the letter of the law.

“Tax avoidance” is the reduction of one's tax bill through legal means.

To begin, the question is rather foolish because the tax code isn't a moral document, nor should it be.

The tax code, ideally, is nothing more than a device to raise revenue for the

government.

In many respects, it's a math exercise. Punch in the numbers, get the result.

Of course, there are elements of morality underpinning the crafting of tax law.

We have a progressive tax because it is "fair" in the eyes of some policy makers to punish success.

We tax tobacco at a high level because it's part of the family of "sin" taxes.

On the other hand, drug dealers are allowed to write off business expenses.

Gambling losses are tax deductible.

Moreover, many aspects of tax avoidance are arguably a public good and certainly are viewed in the eyes of many as "right" and simply "good."

The tax code offers a tax deduction or credit for the activity, thus reducing the tax obligation, thus making it "tax avoidance."

Donation to a qualified charity.

Purchase of a tax-exempt bond for a school.

The deduction of expenses associated with the adoption of a child.

The deduction of expenses associated with organ donation.

These are all "tax avoidance schemes."

How nefarious.

At another level, it's simply no one's business, including government, what legal and legitimate actions taxpayers undertake to reduce their liability.

Moving from Minnesota to Texas (or pretty much any state in the union) to lower one's tax burden is a private matter.

The same holds true for a business.

In fact, it could be argued that a company moving from Minnesota to Texas to avoid high taxes is not only not unseemly, it's a good thing.

The extra money the firm retains by not paying confiscatory taxes means more retained earnings to increase pay, enhance worker training, buy more equipment

and otherwise put that money to work in the private economy.

Yes, it's sad and tragic that government won't get as much money to squander on public art and failed software architecture, but somehow government will survive.

At core, if government is worried about tax flight, government can certainly do something about it.

Quit taxing people at a level that causes them to alter their behavior.

It's been nothing short of high comedy these days watching liberal states with high taxes whine and complain that people and businesses won't sit still and take a taxation beating from them.

Oh, yeah. If any taxpayer feels that they're paying too little, they can always write an extra check to government.

The problem is that liberals always envision higher taxes being paid by someone else.

Now get out there and avoid those taxes, Watchdogs.

MOST RIDICULOUS ITEM OF THE WEEK

There's no shortage of candidates for this category while the legislature is in session.

This week "winner" is a taxpayer funded painting that depicts law enforcement as Nazis and Klansmen while showing President Trump molesting a woman.

The painting also portrays the eco-terrorists who disrupted the Dakota Access pipeline at Standing Rock as heroes.

Again, this is a taxpayer-funded project.

In addition to the offensive subject matter, the painting utterly lacks artistic merit.

To say it looks like a third grader painted it would be an insult to third graders.

In fact, it looks like something a bored teenager would scribble on a notepad while sitting in detention.

The painter who swindled the taxpayers out of \$10,000 is named Jim Denomie, we think his real name is John Bender.

Of course, the bureaucrats who offered up the money have bleated "free speech" and blathered on about the value of the arts in our culture.

That's true, but not the point.

The simple point is that if anyone wants to produce trash like this, have at it. Just don't do it with taxpayer money.

By the way, just what did this guy spend \$10,000 on regarding the painting?

Your tax dollars at work.

<http://www.fox9.com/news/politics/police-as-nazis-klan-taxpayer-funded-painting-ignites-debate>

This tripe won't be hanging in the Louvre anytime soon.

ALL ABOARD, STONERS!

Taxpayers got bad news this week when Amtrak revealed that it's considering renewing service between Saint Paul and Duluth.

Amtrak, never known for sound fiscal decisions, abandoned that route in 1985 because the route was such a financial loser even Amtrak couldn't hack it.

Here we go again.

How timely it was this week when the Wall Street Journal ran a report that Amtrak, not surprisingly, is having a tough time screening its employees for drugs and alcohol.

If you didn't figure it out, having railroad employees high or drunk at work is kind of a safety hazard.

The article stated that some 322 Amtrak employees in "safety sensitive" positions tested positive for drugs or alcohol or had medical claims indicating such use.

The article further noted that Amtrak has failed to follow through on testing and screening requirements.

Government can't even run a railroad.

But let's have them run healthcare.

March 22nd, 2019

Quote of the Week: “The funds to solve this problem do not require raising the gas tax, the sales tax or car tab fees.”

- Sen. Jim Abeler (R – Anoka)

Legal Factoid: No bill of attainder, ex post facto law, or any law impairing the obligation of contracts shall be passed, and no conviction shall work corruption of blood or forfeiture of estate.

- Article I, Section 7 of the Minnesota State Constitution

Legal Factoid: "The Bill of Attainder Clause was intended not as a narrow, technical (and therefore soon to be outmoded) prohibition, but rather as an implementation of the separation of powers, a general safeguard against legislative exercise of the judicial function or more simply - trial by legislature."

- U.S. v. Brown, 381 U.S. 437, 440 (1965)

In This Issue:

1. Rookie Mistakes;
2. Smells Like Victory;
3. An Ugly Bill

ROOKIE MISTAKES

If you had any doubt that Tim Walz is a rookie governor with no experience at the Capitol in Saint Paul, just check his past couple of weeks.

Obviously, the governor hasn't had an opportunity to read “How to Win Friends and Influence People.”

For a governor who promised “One Minnesota”, including those districts represented by Republicans, he's failing – big time.

First, you had the spectacle of the governor's wife, who doesn't own an election certificate, threatening certain GOP senators over Second Amendment issues.

Specifically, she threatened GOP senators who represent districts won by her husband, conveniently failing to acknowledge that her dude won those districts only once while the senators in question have won them multiple times.

Moreover, threats just don't work that well to influence people, unless you work for the mob.

This is especially true when the threat is issued by a person with miniscule name ID.

Pop quiz, what's the First Lady of Minnesota's first name?

Next, there was the spectacle this week of the governor visiting some of these same districts to "call out" the hometown senator over education or transportation issues.

For example, the governor showed up in Anoka at a congested rail crossing to "pressure" Republican Jim Abeler over his opposition to the governor's proposed 70% increase in the gas tax.

The message from the governor, apparently, is "despite the highest taxes in the nation and a \$1 billion surplus, you better give me a gas tax or basic governmental functions won't be delivered."

All this while he and his party support things like a \$250,000 mural exalting Prince and another taxpayer funded painting depicting law enforcement as Nazis and Klansmen.

The stunt went over like a fart in church.

Even Abeler, who has in the past supported gas taxes, called the event a "stunt" that wouldn't change his position.

Apparently, coming into a legislator's backyard and trying to embarrass them isn't a way to build trust and establish rapport.

In fact, Abeler just this afternoon released a statement worth re-printing:

Gov. Tim Walz traveled to a hazardous railroad crossing 4 blocks from our house in Anoka on Tuesday to push for his transportation package, which includes a 20-cent-a-gallon increase in the gas tax, a 1/8 cent sales tax and increases in car tab fees to fix and improve Minnesota roads, bridges and transit.

It is widely accepted that we are at least \$10 billion short of what it would take to add lanes across the Metro and statewide that most would agree are necessary, and that we still have many bridges that need repair.

FYI: Every penny of a gas tax, which raises about \$33 million a year per one cent of tax, goes to roads and bridges. As part of it's effort to fund roads without raising the gas tax, the Legislature transferred \$230 million a year to the highway fund in 2017, equivalent to 6.8 cents on a gas tax, worth over \$2.3 billion over the upcoming decade. The Walz proposal undoes that transfer, meaning that the first 6.8 cents of his gas tax would not fix a single pothole, but would be used for other purposes, like education, health care, and the like.

The Anoka intersection of Hwy. 47 and Ferry Street carries more than 18,000 vehicles and up to 80 trains per day. In 2003, a young driver at the intersection collided with a train, killing four people.

"I appreciate Gov. Walz's visit to my neighborhood in Anoka and his concern about the most dangerous rail crossing in the state at Ferry Street and Highway 47. The funds to solve this problem will not require raising the gas tax, the sales tax or car tab fees. I will continue pushing to make this crossing a priority and hope to work with the Walz administration to get it done."

Governor Walz is still in "DC" mode, we guess.

The governor should realize the election ended many months ago.

He has hobbled his new administration by filling its ranks with inexperienced political flacks who know campaigns but don't know the legislature.

He has surrounded himself with an echo chamber that is looking to the next election and not the current legislative session.

He had better start listening to some different voices if he's to avoid a governing disaster this session.

SMELLS LIKE VICTORY

You may have missed it if you read the legacy media, but there was another huge GOP victory this week in Minnesota.

Republican Nathan Nelson scored a decisive 68-32% win over his DFL opponent in the Senate District 11 special election.

This election was to replace Rep. Jason Rarick, who won a historic special election victory in his own right when he captured a state Senate seat that had been in DFL hands for decades.

Republicans have been winning special elections nation-wide since November.

The party can do well, so long as the president can refrain from ridiculous,

inflammatory, narcissistic comments.

This week wasn't so great, as Trump continued to attack the ghost of John McCain.

Attacking a dead man, particularly a war hero, doesn't play so well.

This is especially true when your complaint is that the family didn't thank you enough for the state funeral.

AN UGLY BILL

Every Watchdog should be following, and opposing, Senate File 751, perhaps the worst bill of the 2019 legislative session.

Authored by Republican Senator Julie Rosen, the bill imposes a significant tax on opioid pain medication.

The bill violates nearly every anti-conservative governing philosophy.

First, it's a \$20 million tax increase during a time of surplus. Any "needs" of government can easily be addressed with surplus dollars.

Second, it's a tax on pharmaceutical companies, which means a tax on their customers – sick people.

Taxing medicine is horribly regressive and remarkably cruel.

Republicans shouldn't be about growing government on the backs of the sick and dying.

Even the United Nations is on record opposing taxes on medicine as regressive and cruel.

Excuse us, but are not Republicans against raising the cost of health care?

Third, the tax relies on the old trick of calling it a "fee."

A "fee" is the price government charges to cover its costs in administering a license or other activity.

The "tax" in this case comes in the form of an enhanced license fee levied against pharmaceutical manufacturers and wholesalers operating in Minnesota.

The bill raises those fees exponentially to fund certain programs.

Clearly, the lion's share of the money will go to activities and purposes other than government's cost to administer the license fee.

That makes the “fee” a “TAX.”

Importantly, the bill is a blatant violation of the state constitution’s prohibition on Bills of Attainder.

While the subject matter may sound arcane and irrelevant to today’s life, it isn’t.

Basically, the prohibition prevents trials and conviction by the legislative branch.

It’s a separation of powers issue designed to protect rights and ensure basic, fundamental concepts such a fair trial and equal protection under the law.

In short, it’s a big deal.

In this case, there is no question the bill’s \$20 million in fees is designed as some sort of “damages” for the alleged crimes of opioid manufacturers in particular.

The legislative record is filled with references to holding them “accountable” and “forcing them to the table” and “making them pay” for a perceived role in the opioid crisis.

To be clear, this publication offers no opinion regarding that perceived guilt.

Instead, the point is that any determination of guilt, apportionment of damages, findings of fact, and conclusions of law should be carried out by the judicial branch, which is uniquely equipped to administer justice.

The legislative branch is political in nature and primarily equipped to make law, not interpret and administer it.

This is an important distinction that goes to the heart of the bedrock principle that America is a Nation of Laws.

Either we believe in the rule of law or we don’t.

There is no in between.

While opioid companies are unsympathetic actors, they are for that reason precisely why we believe in the Rule of Law.

Every actor deserves equal protection under the law.

If we start walking down the road of believing that certain citizens aren’t worthy of equal protection, we are further along the road to serfdom.

Maybe these companies are guilty as hell.

Maybe not.

That is for a court to decide.

No Republican should vote for this bill, much less author such a bill.

March 29th, 2019

Quote of the Week: “Today House Democrats joined the Walz/Flannagan administration in a contest to see who could tax and spend the most and unfortunately, Minnesota families and taxpayers will be the ultimate losers.”
- Sen. Paul Gazelka (R – Nisswa)

Quote of the Week: “Minnesota has a \$1 billion surplus, and hundreds of million in fraud in our public welfare programs, but House Democrats answer is always the same: raise taxes, take more money, and make life more expensive for every family in Minnesota.”

- Rep. Kurt Daudt (R – Crown)

Quote of the Week: “Senate Republicans will produce a budget for the next two years that funds our priorities without raising taxes. We want to help people with accessibility and affordability, and hold government accountable, because those qualities can co-exist.”

- MN Senate GOP

In This Issue:

1. Budget Battle Brews;
2. Amy’s Very Bad, Rotten, No Good Week;
3. Speaking of Bad Weeks.

BUDGET BATTLE BREWS

Senate Republicans yesterday released their budget targets for each major spending area, thus adding their budget blueprint to the conversation.

House Democrats and the governor earlier released their budget targets, meaning that the House, Senate, and chief executive have all now released their overall spending plans.

Two of the three are ugly. Can you guess which two?

The bottom line is that the Senate GOP plan doesn’t raise taxes.

The other two budgets raise taxes, be it a 70% increase in the gas tax, a \$900 million tax increase on health care, or corporate tax increases that will only be passed on to Minnesotans in the form of higher costs and fewer jobs.

That the House DFL and governor would propose tax increases in this environment demonstrates just how radical they've become.

Minnesota is already the most tax-unfriendly state in the union.

The state is sitting on a \$1 billion budget surplus.

And yet no compunction about confiscating more wealth from the people who earned it – and own it.

By most measures of tax-friendliness, Minnesota lags far behind, be it Social Security taxation, the income tax, regressive taxes, or sales taxes.

The Senate GOP majority is committed to holding the line on taxes and is freedom-loving Minnesotans last line of defense.

It is clear that the new governor and new DFL House majority will engage in massive overreach.

The GOP must hold firm and will be rewarded for that commitment.

This massive spending overreach isn't what most taxpayers want and is outside the mainstream.

AMY'S VERY BAD, ROTTEN, NO GOOD WEEK

Our Senator of Small Things is finding out that running for president is tough.

There tends to be actual scrutiny of your words, actions (or lack thereof) and record.

Earlier, it was scrutiny of Klobuchar's abuse of staff and unprofessional conduct towards them.

This week was arguably tougher.

First, she voted "present" and refused to take a stand on the Green New Deal, a centerpiece of the liberal agenda to transform America.

Even worse, Klobuchar is a sponsor of the legislation.

That's right. The Senator of Small Things chickened out on a vote on her own legislation.

Oh, Amy.

And then the media did some actual research and reporting on Klobuchar's time as the Hennepin County attorney.

During her tenure, a spate of police civilian shootings and police misconduct cases were either not prosecuted by her or turned over to a grand jury, a process widely criticized for not skewing in favor of law enforcement and government.

Not good for a person running for the Democrat nomination for president, where minority voters are a critical constituency.

Of the six U.S. Senators running for president, Klobuchar introduced the fewest criminal justice reform bills.

Which isn't surprising, considering she was busy leading the pack in writing bills to rename post offices, declare evil to be, well, evil, and name Spumoni as the national ice cream.

No wonder she's down in the low single digits in poll after poll.

Frankly, there's not much to like about Amy Klobuchar.

As this publication has noted, she's only a big deal in her own zip code.

SPEAKING OF BAD WEEKS

It was also a really nasty bad week for Democrats in Washington.

The aforementioned Green New Deal vote in the Senate embarrassed Dems by actually forcing them to vote on one of their public policy priorities – and it wasn't pretty.

Not one senator voted for advancing the legislation. 57 voted "no" and 42 voted "present" including presidential candidates like Bernie Sanders and Kamala Harris.

Four Democrats joined Republicans in voting against the legislation.

Many Democrats tried to dismiss the vote as a "farce" or a "sham" vote.

The farce here is that Democrats got behind this legislation and then ran for the hills when it was time to cast the vote.

Over in the House of Representatives, things didn't get much better for the Dems.

It has become increasingly likely that the new Democrat majority won't bother to write a budget this year.

No big deal, the core job of the legislative branch is only to appropriate money.

The problem is that writing a budget would force Dems into a corner by forcing them

to either scale back their insatiable appetite for government spending or keep the budget wishes and reveal the deficits it would cause.

This is all problematic since the current leadership has called writing a budget a “prerequisite for governing.”

Oops.

And then there was the big honkin’ massive big a\$\$ news that special counsel Robert Mueller found no evidence of collusion between the Trump campaign and Russia.

After two year, \$25 million in taxpayer dollars, 19 lawyers, 40 FBI agents, 500 witness interviews, and thousands of subpoenas, the special counsel came up empty.

Of course, this was the cruelest of blows to the Dems, who were hoping that this exercise in “justice” would produce a favorable political outcome.

Expect Democrats to whine for months moving forward that more investigations are needed.

Yes, much like their ongoing investigation to find the real perpetrator of the Brett Kavanaugh assaults who turned out to be someone other than Kavanaugh.

Or like working with OJ to find the real killers.

The Watchdog staff will spend this weekend lighting up a fat cigar, pouring a fine scotch, and enjoying a hearty laugh at the expense of liberals.

HA HA HA HA HA HA!

April 5th, 2019

Quote of the Week: “But I'll tell you right now, I'll tell you right now the story that can be told, and the story that not just Minnesota needs but the country needs is a bipartisan and a split government that came together in the good of the people and moved things forward for Minnesota. That's what we can do.”

- Governor Tim Walz

Quote of the Week: “Governor Walz's speech called for us to work together to get things done for Minnesotans, but those words are going to have to be followed-up with actions. We hope the Governor will work in good-faith with Republicans and back off his 70 percent gas tax increase, his plans to increase health care costs, and his opposition to the Line 3 pipeline.”

- Rep. Kurt Daudt, House GOP Leader

Quote of the Week: “The legislative failures of the past four years have revealed that the Legislature needs to reform the way it conducts business. I am hopeful the Minnesota Senate will partner with us to make the legislature more efficient, effective, and transparent.”

- House Speaker Melissa Hortman

In This Issue:

1. State of the Legislative Session;

STATE OF THE LEGISLATIVE SESSION

As is the norm in politics, rhetoric rarely matches actions.

Such is the case these days at the Capitol in Saint Paul, where the talk is happy and optimistic. Visions of bi-partisan compromise and vapid platitudes about “One Minnesota” and exhortations to “do the people’s work” are thrown about like pennies into the wishing well.

Such is not the reality.

The reality is the Democrats, who campaigned on themes of bi-partisanship and transparent law making, have done none of that.

Of course, the media has done nothing to shine the light of truth and accountability of the hypocrisy.

Yes, democracy dies in darkness. Whatever.

Thus far, our governor has demonstrated his commitment to bi-partisanship by proposing a radical, confrontational budget that offends Republican principles and values regarding fiscal restraint and policy considerations.

Readers are also mindful of the governor's ham-handed attempts to confront Republicans by showing up in their districts to fear-monger transportation safety issues and his wife's threats to GOP senators regarding gun control.

Even worse is the House DFL's unmitigated hypocrisy and arrogance regarding their own campaign promises, especially as they relate to transparency and accountability.

Let's get in the way-back machine and all the way back to 2018 to review what current House Speaker Melissa Hortman was saying about the GOP majority in the House.

Hortman's promise regarding these reforms was captured in an interview in Minnesota Lawyer, given just after her election as Speaker of the House.

Quoting Hortman, the interview piece noted, "She said that she will schedule more bipartisan activities and foster collegiality between the caucuses. And she will direct committee chairs to avoid constructing Omnibus Prime-styled mega-bills like the one Gov. Mark Dayton vetoed in May."

Further, Hortman stated, "What I hope we will do—which we used to do under Republican and Democratic speakers—is pass a bunch of little bills. If we can pass a bunch of bills by 120-14 votes in the early going, we can get a pattern of working together and then use that later to attack the bigger, harder issues."

So, how's that going?

This publication has contacted GOP House members, none of whom could point to any these proffered bi-partisan activities. Perhaps the media will ask for a list of these events.

More importantly, the new House DFL unveiled with much fanfare a Subcommittee on Legislative Process Reform.

The purpose of this committee is to review and implement reforms to eliminate the very problems Hortman and her team ran on in 2018.

The subcommittee has not met once.

Again: THE SUBCOMMITTEE HAS NOT MET ONCE.

No meetings. No documents. No hearings. No bills. No reform.

How about that promise to pass “a bunch of little bills” and establish that pattern of working together?

So far, Governor Walz has signed a grand total of six bills into law.

Six bills. Out of over 5,000 introduced.

While this publication doesn't see legislative action as an unqualified public good, the promise to get a bunch little bills done is malarkey.

And what of the complaint about massive, omnibus bills?

In 2018, Hortman criticized a 990-page bill that contained *all* GOP spending bills.

For comparison, here is the page total for *each* House DFL spending bill unveiled so far.

Health and Human Services: 998 pages

Transportation: 113 pages

Jobs: 237 pages

Agriculture: 50 pages

Education: 243 pages

Judiciary: 63 pages

Environment: 87 pages

All of this does not include other omnibus bills forthcoming like taxes and public safety, which will no doubt entail many hundreds of additional pages.

In any case, these are bills that total well over the 990 pages the DFL complained about in 2018.

The HHS omnibus bill alone beats that number.

The only metric left to fail is to have negotiations go behind closed doors in late May, where the governor and the two caucus leaders decide the budget, far from the transparency of the committee process and public input.

Said Hortman earlier this year, "It gets difficult when you have four guys solving

issues in a backroom. I think Minnesota will be far better off having all 201 legislators engaged in the lawmaking process."

We will see.

Thus far, the House DFL has utterly failed to deliver on their promises.

The House GOP must do more to hold them accountable for these failures.

Moreover, the DFL's outrageous budget proposals are setting up the legislature for gridlock, budget failure, and a special session which could lead to a partial government shut down.

In short, the DFL proposes to spend the surplus (over-taxation amount) and raise taxes on top of it, all in a state that is the most taxpayer-unfriendly in the nation.

The Senate GOP must hold the line on these tax and fee increases.

The Senate GOP has done well in this regard, other than the \$20 million tax on FDA approved opioid pain medication, a remarkably cruel and regressive tax disguised as a "fee."

The road to GOP success in 2020 will start with arresting flagrant DFL overreach in 2019.

DFL process and policy is out of step with the majority of Minnesota and is reflective of the outrageous Democrat overreach at the national level.

Voters are poised to check this overreach. The GOP must reassure voters that they are with the majority of Americans who favor center-right governance.

April 12th, 2019

Editor's Note: The Minnesota legislature will be on their annual Easter – Passover break next week. Enjoy your respite from the DFL's \$12 billion tax hike. We also trust House Speaker Melissa Hortman is looking forward to the break. She's had a tough month, what with the broken promises about omnibus bills, the packing of incendiary policy issues crammed into spending bills, and the internal strife in her own caucus between the far Left and the far, far Left members.

Quote of the Week: "The House tax plan is a disaster. The state simply cannot endure this level of taxation and spending and hope to succeed. This will not bring people here. This will not increase investment. This will not grow jobs. The House and Senate's tax proposals are about as stark a contrast as you will find – their proposal is oppressive and abusive, and while our tax bill will make people's lives simpler and easier, relieve their burdens, and give them opportunity and hope."

- Sen. Roger Chamberlain (R – Lino Lakes)

Quote of the Week: "It appears the House DFL is out to prove they can raise every tax in Minnesota – and with the release of their tax bill today they're awfully close to that goal. With a \$1 billion surplus, Senate Republicans believe we can meet the state's priorities without raising taxes on the families and small businesses that too often get forgotten in the rush to spend more money and grow the bureaucracy."

- Sen. Paul Gazelka, Senate Majority Leader (R – Niswaga)

In This Issue:

1. The Omnibus That Ate Saint Paul;
2. The Road Crisis That Was Not;
3. Another Bad Week for Government.

THE OMNIBUS THAT ATE SAINT PAUL

Among the biggest headaches for Minnesota's rookie House speaker is the abject hypocrisy regarding promises to avoid omnibus spending bills, especially those that combine into larger "omnibus prime" bills and especially those that contain poison pills of highly controversial policy provisions.

After campaigning on a promise to reform the system, Hortman and company have become the system.

Readers will recall from last week's installment that the House DFL in 2018 railed against a House GOP omnibus bill that contained multiple spending areas. That bill was 998 pages long.

Readers will also recall that the House DFL Health and Human Services (HHS) omnibus bill *alone* is over 1100 pages.

Moreover, the House DFL is now combining omnibus bills with other omnibus bills, creating the so-called "omnibus prime" effect.

For example, the House DFL this week rolled their omnibus housing finance bill into the agriculture omnibus bill (so much for keeping bills to a single subject).

They also rolled two energy omnibus bills into their Jobs bill.

As if this wasn't enough, the House also cynically crammed controversial policy bills into these finance bills in order to keep them alive against the Senate, where these bills don't have enough support to become law.

One example is their gun confiscation bills and their legislation to give drivers' licenses to people who are in this country illegally (so much for the Rule of Law).

Speaker Hortman is obviously feeling the heat and hypocrisy on the issue, as she took to social media this past week in a weak attempt to explain away the issue.

She wrote, As we move toward the end of the time when the Minnesota House is posting, debating, amending & passing its omnibus finance bills out of committee and move into the time where (hopefully) the Minnesota Senate will be moving theirs, I offer the following food for thought on the topic of omnibus bills.

There are 2 kinds of omnibus bills - (1) single subject ones that are a normal & necessary part of the legislative process and (2) Frankenstein omnibus bills that throw multiple unrelated subjects together. Single subject omnibus bills do not violate the MN Constitution, Frankenstein omnibus bills do.

Last year's Omnibus Prime was an example of the second. Worse, its 998 pages were constructed in the closing days of the 2018 session. It mixed noncontroversial items with highly controversial items, and legislators were not given the chance to review its contents before having to vote.

We will not construct omnibus bills of that kind, or in that manner.

Normal omnibus appropriation and omnibus policy bills that obey the single subject clause of the MN Constitution help get things done in an efficient manner.

The problem in recent sessions has not been long bills or the existence of omnibus bills. It has been Republicans using that mechanism to try to force Gov. Dayton to sign provisions he opposed into law, rather than negotiating and compromising.

When the MN legislature appropriates \$18 billion to fund Health and Human Services for example, it is, by necessity, always a long bill. The process is the

important part. The Minnesota House DFL bills are being put together in public with full notice. And long before the end of session.

All this sophistry can be summed up as follows:

In 2018, four legs good, two legs bad!

In 2019, four legs good, two legs better!

THE ROAD CRISIS THAT WAS NOT

As Republicans in the legislature have pointed out, the DFL proposal to jack up the gas tax 70% is regressive, oppressive, and un-needed.

Confirmation of that viewpoint came from an unlikely source this week when the Star Tribune ran an excellent article pointing out the financing and statistics underpinning the state's recent road and bridge funding.

Since 2012, for example, appropriations to the state's Transportation Department (MnDOT) are up 35%, far outpacing inflation and population growth.

So much for not funding transportation. Moreover, three of those years of spending increases happened during the Pawlenty administration, a favorite boogeyman of the Left.

Since 2007, the state has spent \$2.5 billion on bridge maintenance and replacement, leading to a dramatic drop in the number of deficient bridges, according to the article.

The article further pointed out that the state's roads are better shape than in 2011 and are in better shape than Iowa and Wisconsin.

Finally, commute times in the Twin Cities are flat over the past few years and far lower than many metropolitan areas.

The simple reality is that despite the cries of the DFL, and attendant attempt to yet again raise taxes, our roads and bridges are in good shape.

ANOTHER BAD WEEK FOR GOVERNMENT

Rational, reasonable people recognize that government is inherently inefficient, unresponsive, and often times abjectly incompetent.

Lately, that incompetence has shown itself in the information management realm.

Put simply, the state of Minnesota has found it nearly impossible to safeguard the information it collects on citizens.

The state revealed this week that the personal data of 11,000 citizens was compromised, including last names, dates of birth, and social security numbers, and medical treatment information.

This is the third known data breach in the past year, affecting 35,000 citizens.

Sen. Michelle Benson (R – Ham Lake) summed it up best, “This begs a larger question: how serious is DHS about data security? Three breaches in a year affecting 35,000 people. This is unacceptable. It was in February of this year that DHS purchased software to prevent phishing emails from going through our system. So, we have some questions that need to be answered to restore trust.”

As if that turd wasn’t enough for taxpayers to swallow, the non-partisan Office of the Legislative Auditor (OLA) this week released its report regarding the state’s program integrity regarding the Child Care Assistance Program (CCAP).

Readers will recall that news reports last year highlighted widespread fraud and taxpayer abuse in the program.

Predictably, the Democrats dismissed the reports.

So, what did the OLA find?

This:

CONCLUSIONS

The Department of Human Services’ (DHS) program integrity controls are insufficient to effectively prevent, detect, and investigate fraud in Minnesota’s Child Care Assistance Program (CCAP). Both DHS and local human services agencies must do more to develop, coordinate, and implement policies, processes, and resources to identify and respond to the risk of fraud in CCAP.

FINDINGS

Finding 1. DHS and county agencies did not sufficiently leverage independent, external data sources to verify recipient eligibility for CCAP.

Finding 2. DHS had weak processes to validate that CCAP provider billings aligned with actual child care provided.

Finding 3. Among other functions, MEC2 was developed to accurately process provider billings and payments; however, MEC2 lacked some key controls to identify errors and to inhibit, track, and recover improper payments.

Finding 4. DHS did not implement sufficient program integrity controls for licensing child care providers.

Finding 5. DHS did not adequately identify and analyze the risk of fraud in CCAP and had weak processes to coordinate investigations statewide.

To the Republicans serving us in the legislature: Not a penny more!

April 19th, 2019

Quote of the Week: "I am deeply troubled by a hiring process at the IRRRB that lacked transparency and fairness. As a former IRRRB Commissioner and a member of the board now as a legislator, I have spent years working to improve the image of the agency. This kind of political maneuvering undermines public confidence in the agency and reinforces the worst impressions people hold—fairly or not—about the IRRRB."

- Rep. Sandy Layman (R – Grand Rapids)

Quote of the Week: "I don't see the issue."

- Mark Phillips, IRRRB Commissioner

Factoid of the Week: Nearly two-thirds of voters statewide oppose Governor Walz's 20 cents-per-gallon gas tax increase, and more than half (54%) strongly oppose it. 31% support
65% oppose (54% strongly)

- MN Chamber of Commerce Poll (4/7/19)

In This Issue:

1. A Major Scandal;
2. The Eagle has Landed;
3. About That Gas Tax.

A MAJOR SCANDAL

The first major scandal of the Walz administration erupted this week when the Timberjay newspaper published a thorough investigative report on the hiring of a DFL political crony to a plumb \$100,000 per year job at the Iron Range Resources and Rehabilitation agency (IRRR or IRRRB), a state agency.

<https://timberjay.com/stories/irrr-hiring-decision-comes-under-fire,15002>

The scandal centers on the hiring of Joe Radinovich, a DFL political flack with little experience for the job into which he was hired.

So why is this a scandal?

First, it appears that IRRR leadership circumvented state hiring laws to ensure that Radinovich was the one hired.

It's very important to understand that this job is a civil service job and not one of the handful of jobs in state government that are exempted from hiring laws and reserved for political appointees.

These civil service jobs are governed by state laws designed precisely to avoid them being turned into political patronage jobs. The public policy is to ensure that these jobs go to the best qualified applicants and not to well-connected political cronies.

It appears that this is exactly what happened.

For example, the job was only posted for 24 hours, which is highly unusual. State policy calls for posting these jobs for 21 days.

Moreover, email and other correspondence uncovered by the Timberjay show that IRRR leadership clearly expected the job to go to Radinovich. In fact, an internal organizational chart showed Radinovich in the job even before it was posted.

Furthermore, a well-qualified woman (lacking political connections) applied but didn't get the job, raising further suspicions about the hiring.

The existence of certain state jobs that are exempt from hiring laws is a fair subject for debate.

What isn't up for debate is the perversion of permanent civil service jobs converted to political patronage slots. Bad news.

The Senate GOP majority would be well-served to launch public hearings into this scandal, calling to the witness table the IRRR commissioner, the HR director, and Mr. Radinovich himself.

This underhanded chicanery erodes what little faith remains in government and fuels long-standing suspicions of both the IRRR and the DFL.

The appearance here is that Joe Radinovich, who has publicly acknowledged that he is contemplating another run for Congress in the 8th district, was handed a cushy government job to provide an income and benefits while he prepared another run for political office.

Prove us wrong, Governor Walz.

THE EAGLE HAS LANDED
It's happened, loyal readers.

The most consequential bill of the 2019 session has been introduced.

Rep. Frank Hornstein (DFL – Minneapolis) has introduced HF2836, an act relating to climate change; establishing the “Minnesota Green New Deal Act.”

That's right, the DFL has finally jumped the shark and introduced their own version of the Green New Deal.

And as you might expect, it's chock-full of the same job-killing, economy-killing, prosperity-killing central planning found in the federal Green New Deal.

In fact, the author proudly calls the bill the “Minnesota New Green Deal Act.”

Here are just a couple of choice excerpts from the bill:

The urgency to address the challenge of climate change compels the state to accelerate the greenhouse gas emissions-reduction goal established under Minnesota Statutes, section 216H.02, subdivision 1, by establishing a goal of net zero greenhouse gas emissions by 2030. The commissioner must approve job training programs in occupations that are heavily represented in industries that produce green products and services, and must target the programs to youth, communities of color, indigenous people, individuals with low incomes, workers in fossil fuel industries, and released prisoners. A state agency is prohibited from issuing a permit to construct a facility to transport, store, or process coal, crude oil or its derivative products, propane, or natural gas. The commission is prohibited from issuing a certificate of need to construct an electric generating plant powered by coal, products refined from crude oil, or natural gas. The commission is prohibited from issuing a certificate of need to construct a facility that transports or stores coal, crude oil, or derivative products.

On April 23rd, House Republicans will offer amendments that put this legislation before the entire Minnesota House for a vote.

In short, every member of the Minnesota House will be put on record next week regarding their stance on this legislation.

Grab the popcorn.

ABOUT THAT GAS TAX

Democrats are crowing that a number of red states have increased their gasoline taxes of late, using those increases as a justification for their support of Governor Walz's 20 cents per gallon tax increase.

Let's compare these new tax rates, and the overall tax ranking of those states, to see where Minnesota currently compares, before the consideration of both the gas tax and other assorted tax increases the DFL is proposing.

Gas Tax:

MN 28.5 cents/gallon (48.5 under the Walz plan)

OH: 38.5 cents/gallon (2019)

IN: 28 cents/gallon (2017)

AL: 28 cents/gallon (2019)

TN: 27.4 cents/gallon (2017)

AR: 24.5 cents/gallon (2019)

OK: 19 cents/gallon (2018)

In other words, Minnesota's gas tax is *already* higher than 6 of the 7 states that recently raised their tax.

Overall Tax Burden Ranking (Wallethub – 2019)

MN: 5th

OH: 12th

AR: 17th

IN: 31st

AL: 42nd

OK: 45th

TN: 48th

Here's a suggestion: If Governor Walz agrees to adopt Tennessee's income tax structure, the GOP will agree to adopt Walz's gas tax.

To say the DFL is cherry picking on the gas tax issue would be a gross understatement.

April 26th, 2019

Quote of the Week: “Certainly we’re far apart, but it’s my job to make the case that the resources we have is what we need to live within. We’re already a high tax state...and so I’ll make the case that we have enough resources if we just use them wisely.”

- Senate Majority Leader Paul Gazelka (R – Niswaga)

Quote of the Week: “We’ve taken the position that there’s enough money. But I don’t think there is.”

- Sen. Jim Abeler (R – Anoka)

Factoid of the Week: Minnesota is the least tax-friendly state in the nation.

- Kiplinger

In This Issue:

1. Those Regressive Democrats;
2. Those Hypocritical Democrats;
3. Iron Range Resignation;
4. Trump Wins Again.

THOSE REGRESSIVE DEMOCRATS

The so-called party of working people continues to screw those same working people as the party shows itself as one controlled by coastal elites at the national level and urban elites at the state level.

After the DFL has proposed to hammer the working poor with a 70% increase in the gasoline tax, one of the most regressive taxes, they are at it again.

This week, the governor’s own Department of Revenue released an analysis of his overall tax proposal, showing the “state and local burden” of his proposal.

One would think, hearing all the rhetoric about “One Minnesota” and the usual pablum about “working families” that the governor’s tax proposal would be

progressive in nature.

Not.

The bottom half of Minnesota income earners would see an average tax increase of 10%.

The top half of Minnesota income earners would see an average tax increase of 6%.

In other words, the person who makes \$30,000 per year would see a tax increase of 10% under the Walz plan while the person who makes \$200,000 would see a 6% tax increase.

So, the Walz plan hits the bottom half almost twice as hard as the top half.

Also recall that Minnesota is a state where the bottom income tax bracket is higher than the highest income tax bracket in 23 states.

Also recall that Walz (and some Republicans) are also supporting tax increases on pain medication, another highly regressive tax.

Tax increases on gasoline, medicine, income, real property, personal property, and the other things we buy.

THOSE HYPOCRITICAL DEMOCRATS

It's probably superfluous to place "hypocritical" next to "Democrats" but the evidence just keeps piling up.

This is no surprise, since today's Democrats are quite similar to Soviet apparatchiks and Third World ruling juntas in both ideology and contempt for the masses.

Given the recent obsession with tax returns, candidates have been stumbling over each other to see who can out-disclose whom with tax information the average voter doesn't care about.

The bad news for some Democrats is that the hypocrisy is further exposed.

Of course, that exposure only matters if one has enough integrity to be ashamed by the publication of the embarrassing information.

Cranky old "get off my lawn!" Bernie Sanders released tax returns that showed that he is both wealthy and incredibly parsimonious with respect to charitable contributions.

And Beto (what's a Beto?) O'Rourke, who tries too hard to be cool, learned he is just like Old Man Bernie in that they are both big time cheap skates with respect to

charities.

In 2017, O'Rourke and wife made \$370,412 but only donated \$1,166 to charity, a miserly 1/3rd of 1% of their income.

Realizing that running for office requires at least the appearance of caring, O'Rourke assured the public the he has instructed his wife to go back through shoe boxes and file cabinets to see if there aren't some donations that escaped the tax return.

Perhaps Mark Dayton can give him a call and let him know it doesn't matter. Hyper-partisan liberals will vote liberal no matter what. Even a didn't-earn-it-born-on-third-base-silver-spoon-South-Dakota-trust-fund governor can donate pennies to charity and still earn the adoration of the sheeple who call themselves "progressive."

Bernie Sanders wasn't much better. \$566,000 in household income only yielded \$17,000 in charitable contributions.

By the way, the median household income in America is \$63,688.

By the way, the average amount of charitable giving in America is \$5,800 per person.

The lesson here is both clear and disgusting.

Moochers and looters like Sanders and O'Rourke et. al. will steal your money in a heartbeat but aren't so willing to offer their own funds.

This hypocritical display is just as disgusting as the liberal politicians who sentence kids to failing public schools while sending their own children to elite schools, all in the name of placating their public union pals in education.

Here in Minnesota, DFL legislators have sent kids to Saint Paul Academy, Breck, Blake, and other elite college preparatory schools that boast tuition rates in excess of what many people earn each year.

These Democrats are nothing more than arrogant elites who don't give a damn about people. They tax them, sentence them to bad schools and bad neighborhoods, and kill their jobs in the name of climate fanaticism.

IRON RANGE RESIGNATION

Readers of this publication, and just about any other Minnesota outlet, know that a scandal erupted recently over the questionable hiring of a DFL political hack at the Iron Range Resources and Rehabilitation Board (IRRRB).

This political crony of the governor was hired into a high-paying executive job in a

manner that bypassed the regular and normal process for these types of civil service jobs.

Yesterday, the person hired into that job resigned.

Joe Radinovich, who most recently ran as a Democrat for Congress in the Eighth District, stepped aside in a resignation letter to the IRRRB commissioner.

While the right thing was done here, it will be interesting to watch the follow up.

Specifically, will Radinovich end up in another government job, appointed by some DFL politician?

Moreover, what will Governor Walz do to ensure that this won't happen again?

Finally, the IRRRB commissioner was the one who broke hiring rules to get Radinovich hired.

Will Walz hold him accountable?

TRUMP WINS AGAIN

Here's another fact that the mainstream media won't tell you.

Trump employs more women as senior advisors than presidents Obama, Bush, or Clinton did at the same point in their administrations.

Trump has eight female senior advisors.

Obama had five.

Bush had three.

Clinton had five (no word on how many he tried grope).

This fact is similar to other facts such as the record economic prosperity being experienced by communities of color under Trump.

Just like with charitable contributions school choice, and jobs, it's Republicans who walk the walk and Democrats who only talk the talk.

May 3rd, 2019

Quote of the Week: “Working people who have got to get to their job, get their kid to a medical appointment, shouldn’t get hit again.”

- Sen. Ron Wyden (D – OR) on a federal gas tax increase

Quote of the Week: “Notably, an amendment to incorporate the Governor’s fee increases on tabs and massive gas tax failed without a single vote of support. Every member of the Senate, including 32 Democrats, voted against the Governor’s transportation plan.”

- Senate Republican Press Release

In This Issue:

1. Budget Battle Brews;
2. DFL Sophistry Abounds;
3. The Sound and Fury.

BUDGET BATTLE BREWS

Loyal readers, we are now in the danger zone. The legislature and Governor Walz are now moving into the final phase of the 2019 legislative session, deciding how much to tax and spend.

As you read this edition, the governor and legislative leaders are meeting to negotiate “targets”, meaning how much money the conference committees will be permitted to appropriate as they negotiate the state’s upcoming bi-ennial budget.

Although Minnesota is already among the worst states with respect to tax burden (arguably the highest), Walz and the DFL legislators are looking for more, ignoring the clear and growing evidence that capital flight is real.

Of course, this rapacious and audacious money grab is clothed in the rhetorical garb of “investments” and “fair share” and emotional, intellectually vapid cries of “equity.”

As the debate intensifies, it would be prudent to review recent state budget history.

Let’s take the case of a young man or woman who will reach the age of majority this year, born in 2001.

When that person was born, the state’s “all funds” bi-ennial budget was thus:

\$37 billion

Ten years later, that budget was:

\$58.4 billion

The latest budget spent:

\$83 billion

This rapid and breathtaking expansion of government spending is well beyond inflation and population growth.

Worse, it's unsustainable.

For Republicans, the issue isn't simply a knee-jerk reaction against tax increase proposals.

Instead, it's a very thoughtful and deep concern that the state cannot simply continue to shovel money at favored DFL constituencies and expect anything other than a fiscal day of reckoning.

The warning signs are everywhere, from Connecticut to Venezuela.

Even the profligate spenders who mismanage New York are pulling back, realizing that they are close to killing the goose that lays the golden egg, otherwise known as productive and successful citizens.

They are clearly admitting that mooching and looting has its limits.

Republicans need to do what they can to resist tax increases.

If no budget agreement is reached by May 20th, the legislature will go into special session to resolve the budget.

If no budget is reached by July 1st, state government will shut down.

What is interesting is that a state shutdown will be a true shutdown.

Shutdowns in the past were only partial shutdowns, as the judicial branch mandated that certain funding continue.

Recently, the Minnesota Supreme Court has ruled, correctly, that the judicial branch has no authority to compel the legislative branch to appropriate money.

Thus, any shutdown will be a true shutdown.

DFL SOPHISTRY ABOUND

And if the legislature is to finish its work on time, the DFL must not only drop its tax and spend proposals, they must also quit with the gimmickry and tricks.

Let's start with budget gimmickry.

Readers will recall that nearly half of the DFL's proposed gas tax isn't new money. Instead, it's merely money to back fill taking money out of the transportation budget that comes from the general fund.

Put another way, there are general fund monies that are today allocated to transportation (auto-related sales tax revenue).

The DFL proposes to take that money back into the general fund to spend on favored constituencies, such as the education-industrial complex.

The DFL gas tax increase is a sham and side-show.

Democrats at the state federal level are already back-tracking, repudiating the tax as regressive and harmful to the working poor.

The unanimous vote this week in the Minnesota Senate against the governor's gas tax plan proves it.

The second budget scam involves the healthcare provider tax, otherwise known as the sick tax.

The DFL talking point is that this tax, set to expire this year, must be continued in order to provide government-subsidized health care.

Bunk.

Did you know that 77% of the sick tax simply goes to the general fund?

That's right, over 3/4th of the sick tax disappears into the general fund, to be spent on all the things the legislature likes to buy.

Finally, if these conference committees are to be productive, the House must respect the process while also respecting their colleagues in the Senate.

The House DFL is already playing games with the committees, as best explained by the letter below from Sen. Eric Pratt (R – Prior Lake) to Rep. Tim Mahoney (DFL – Saint Paul):

“Following up on our conversation from earlier this evening, I respectfully decline to commence the Jobs & Economic Development, Energy and Commerce conference committee on Friday, May 3. This is to inform you that the Senate conferees will not

be able to participate... The fact that testifiers for this hearing were contacted before Members of the Senate were named to the Conference Committee points to an unusually hyper-partisan process... Informing me that you are scheduling a conference committee meeting before the Senate conferees were assigned disrespects our chamber, disrespects our members, and is the wrong way to begin effective negotiations. We sincerely hope that you and Speaker Hortman reconsider your decision.”

It's time to get serious.

THE SOUND AND FURY

Much has been written, and will be written, about President Trump and the Mueller investigation and its aftermath.

This publication believes that this affair will ultimately show the worst scandal and abuse of power in American political history.

Not on the part of Donald Trump, but on the part of Barack Obama.

Now that collusion has been disproven, and now that obstruction of justice has been disproven, it is time for the American people to focus on the investigations of the fake dossier that led to the Mueller investigation.

The investigations will show, we believe, that Obama administration politicized and weaponized federal law enforcement to spy not only on the Trump campaign, but to spy on all political opponents.

The Department of Justice and the Federal Bureau of Investigation (DOJ/FBI) likely, if informed speculation is to be believed, lied to the FISA court to obtain surveillance warrants to put political opponents under surveillance years before Trump became the GOP nominee.

If this speculation turns out to be fact, it will be a scandal that will rock this nation to its very core and demonstrate that there is indeed a “Deep State” political infrastructure that subverted our political institutions and engaged in an egregious abuse of power.

This is perhaps why Democrats have become so unhinged over Trump and other officials like attorney general Barr.

In Donald Trump and his team, the Democrats have come up against a man who is willing to play the dirty game they play and do it better than they do it.

Now that gang is scared. Very scared.

May 10th, 2019

Quote of the Week: “Between 2016 and 2023 our state budget is forecast to grow \$11.5 billion. The Governor and House want to add \$12 billion in new spending”
- Sen. Michelle Benson (R – Ham Lake)

Quote of the Week: “As people are tweeting about budget negotiations, keep in mind the 1,000 new employees added to the Department of Human Services since 2016.”
- Sen. Michelle Benson (R – Ham Lake)

In This Issue:

1. Budget Battle.

BUDGET BATTLE

The difference between Democrats and Republicans down at the Capitol isn't just a donnybrook over numbers. It's more than just haggling over how much the state will spend over the next two years.

Instead, it's an important clash of ideas regarding both how government approaches both taxing and spending. It's a deep philosophical clash over the direction of state government.

Thus, the resistance of the Senate Republican majority to tax increases isn't just a knee-jerk reaction to the DFL budget proposals. It's a deeply felt concern that this proposed budget, combined with the state's spending trajectory over the past years, is simply unworkable and unsustainable in positioning Minnesota for a future in which capital is hyper-mobile.

Here are the reasons why Republicans are right to reject tax increases – all of them.

Minnesota is Already Taxed Too Much.

Every reputable organization that analyzes tax burdens ranks Minnesota among the least tax-friendly states in the nation.

With respect to overall tax burden, Minnesota is in the top 5 of every reputable ranking, including being the dubious distinction of #1 overall in Kiplinger's rankings.

No matter the metric, Minnesota punishes its taxpayers.

Kiplinger's also ranked Minnesota as the least friendly state in the nation for retiree income.

For example, it's one of the few states in the nation to tax Social Security income.

Add to that high estate taxes, and retirees have little reason to live here, other than the magnificent weather.

The North Star state also has a nasty reputation for punitive taxes on the working poor through high regressive taxes.

Regressive taxes fall particularly hard on the poor.

The primary regressive taxes are on tobacco, alcohol, and gasoline.

For tobacco, Minnesota again makes the top 10, standing at #7 for highest taxes in this area.

For alcohol, the state is just outside the top 10, at number 12.

With respect to the gas tax, Minnesota is about average, but the Democrats aim to fix that. Their proposed 70% increase would boost the state into the top 5, with the 4th highest gas tax in the nation.

Perhaps most disgusting is Minnesota's bottom income tax bracket. The state's poorest income earners have their income taxed at a rate higher than the *highest* tax rate in 21 other states.

Capital is Mobile – And it Will Flee.

When taxes are too high, taxpayers will flee to lower taxed jurisdictions. This is especially true for higher net worth taxpayers, who generally have the resources and sophistication to engage in careful tax planning.

High tax states are falling into a fiscal death spiral as they raise taxes to cover more and more spending while at the same time fewer and fewer taxpayers remain to shoulder the burden.

Connecticut is the poster child for this liber-induced fiscal death spiral.

New York is becoming so. Recent changes to the federal tax code limited the deductibility of state taxes, which was essentially a federal subsidy for wealthy people living in those high-tax states.

Both tax and real estate data are showing that wealth New Yorkers are leaving the state and establishing domicile in tax friendly jurisdictions like Florida.

Minnesota Spends Too Much.

In addition to limits on taxation, there are limits on spending. The state is on an unsustainable trajectory, with a day of reckoning coming because taxes simply can't

be raised high enough to support DFL spending desires.

Last week's edition showed the massive and exponential growth of the state's "all funds" spending over the past 50 years. This growth has far exceeded population growth and inflation over time.

As recently as 2001, the state spent \$37 billion in that biennium.

This biennium will see all funds spending of \$83 billion.

Entitlement spending is on a runaway course as well. This spending, which the state authorizes regardless of cost, is out of control, especially in the area of health and human services.

Spending that radically outstrips inflation, population growth, and wealth enhancement is simply unsustainable.

Minnesota Wastes Money.

Before asking taxpayers to kick in an additional \$12 billion in tax increases, government ought to make sure its house is in order, which it is most decidedly not.

Examples of wasted taxpayer resources abound:

- Over \$100 million for the broken MNLARS vehicle licensing system;
- \$271 million of ineligible Obamacare subsidies;
- Over \$150 million spent on the Obamacare state web site;
- Subsidies for child care that are "high risk for fraud and error";
- A \$100,000 plus sweetheart job for a political crony at the IRRRB;
- Hundreds of thousands of dollars in bonuses and severance pay for marginal political appointees of Governor Dayton;
- \$10,000 for a vile painting depicting law enforcement as Nazis and Klansmen.

Regardless of tax increases or any spending increases within the current budget, Republicans are right to demand greater fiscal accountability.

There is No Mandate.

Governor Walz has made claims that his tax and spend policies have been endorsed and ratified by the taxpayers because he won the governor's race. He further brags that he received a record number of votes.

That may be true, but it's also true that Republican Jeff Johnson received a record number of votes. In fact, he received more votes than successful GOP gubernatorial candidates like Tim Pawlenty, Arne Carlson, and Al Quie.

Moreover, Senate Republicans have their own mandate. There have been two special elections in the state Senate recently. The GOP won both, including a seat that had been in DFL hands for over 20 years.

Let's also be realistic. Many voters in 2018 were casting a referendum vote on the president. The fact that Walz made a vague promise to raise the gas tax can hardly be seen as a motivating voter issue unless the governor can provide detailed exit polling of which this publication is unaware.

It's more than a disingenuous stretch for the governor to claim some sort of universal mandate for his tax and spend chicanery.

Of course, at least 33% of voters indeed voted for all this. They're voters who reflexively vote DFL in Pavlovian fashion. The crude appeal to class envy, group identity politics, and the culture of complaint is all that's needed.

Republicans are right to stand against these DFL taxing and spending proposals.

May 17th, 2019

Quote of the Week: “No money shall be paid out of the treasury of this state except in pursuance of an appropriation by law.”

- Article 11, Section 1 of the Minnesota Constitution

Quote of the Week: “This right of privacy, whether it be founded in the Fourteenth Amendment's concept of personal liberty and restrictions upon state action, as we feel it is, or, as the District Court determined, in the Ninth Amendment's reservation of rights to the people, is broad enough to encompass a woman's decision whether or not to terminate her pregnancy.”

- Justice Blackmun

In This Issue:

1. Déjà Vu All Over Again;
2. Abortion at the Fore.

DÉJÀ VU ALL OVER AGAIN

Here we are again. Minnesota government on the verge of a special session, perhaps moving to a shut down.

If the governor and legislature fail to reach agreement on a budget prior to midnight Monday night, a special session will be needed to finish work.

Practically speaking, a special session will be needed regardless, as any agreement reached now wouldn't allow enough time for non-partisan staff to revise and assemble the agreement into the proper legislative format, which would then require a very short special session to ratify.

Barring any type of late agreement, the next practical deadline for the governor and legislative leaders is July 1st, when the new fiscal biennium begins.

If no agreement is in place by then, a government shutdown would begin.

Thus, the governor and legislature really have another six weeks until they have to get serious about resolving differences.

The only real driver of a timely budget agreement in the regular session is the desire of Speaker Hortman and Governor Walz to demonstrate that they can do things differently, as they both campaigned on such a promise.

Let's also take a moment to note that Speaker Hortman in particular railed against the closed-door budget negotiation process. A process she has now happily embraced.

Four legs good, two legs bad.

Four legs good, two legs better!

On the other hand, Majority Leader Gazelka really has nothing he and his caucus want from government.

Instead, he wants to deliver on the promise all Republicans offer with respect to fiscal restraint.

In this regard, the DFL has given him much material.

With the state sitting in a sizable budget surplus, a huge budget reserve, and a booming economy, the DFL has nonetheless proposed tax increases. No, they have proposed massive tax increases, such as a 70% increase in the gas tax.

Pandering to the far Left has created a big political headache for Walz and company.

Gazelka and Republicans are occupying the political high ground, offering both spending increases and no tax increases, other than the mistake of advocating for tax increases on pain killing medicines (there's still time to kill that).

In short, Gazelka is the responsible adult in this room and the public sees it.

This brave band of 35 GOP senators needs to stand firm. The cacophony inside the Capitol will no doubt resound with the faux outrage of paid protestors banging pans and chanting vapid talking points about taxing the rich or honoring the grievances of some special interest group.

But outside the dome, far away from the bussed in protestors from Minneapolis, the average voter, the forgotten taxpayer, is toiling at work, balancing the family budget, and raising children to be responsible adults.

This forgotten taxpayer has no paid lobbyist. He has no special connections in Saint Paul. He doesn't know what an omnibus bill is or when the next conference committee meets.

What he does know is that government is too big and takes too much. He knows government has no compassion. He knows many legislators don't give a damn about his job or his family.

This is the man the Senate GOP and their House GOP colleagues are fighting for.

Remember him.

ABORTION AT THE FORE

Abortion politics, essentially dormant for a number of years, has exploded to the fore, with states passing laws to push for both expanded abortion options and robust restrictions on the practice.

This isn't real surprising, considering that the country is once again swinging into a cycle of the culture war heating up.

With the nation so politically polarized, it was only a matter of time until the abortion debate joined the gun control and gay rights debates in occupying the nation's attention.

While reasonable minds can differ regarding abortion, what can't be debated is the simple yet powerful fact that Roe vs. Wade is bad law.

The meltdown of many on the Left over the prospect of the Supreme Court revisiting the case is unjustified.

Overturing the ruling would honor the court's constitutionally assigned role to interpret the law, not make it.

Moreover, vacating the case would respect federalism by returning abortion laws to the states, where such health and welfare issues rightly belong.

The Court's radical decision to take pull abortion away from the state's and under the ambit of federal courts was perhaps the most egregious example of judicial overreach and severely damaged the court's reputation and eroded its credibility as a democratic institution.

After overturning the decision, the issue would rightly return to the 50 "laboratories of democracy" where each state would decide for itself abortion laws and regulations.

There is little doubt that many states would outlaw or severely restrict the practice while some states would maintain and expand it. Imagine California and New York competing with each other for the title of Abortion Capital. Can you say "infanticide?"

The undeniable reality is that there is no right to an abortion under the federal constitution.

The word is nowhere to be found within and there is no reference to it.

Furthermore, there is nothing in the history of the constitutional debate amongst the Framers indicating that they even contemplated abortion, much less enshrined the right to one in the constitution.

In short, the Roe majority simply made up the right to an abortion.

Moreover, their legal reasoning, expressed by Justice Blackmon, was sophomoric and facile. A law school exam featuring such reasoning would have likely failed to earn a passing grade.

First, the Roe majority declared that there is a “right to privacy” under the federal constitution. They did this shortly after admitting that the constitution doesn’t speak to a right to privacy.

Through a number of cases, the Supreme Court has found that the right to privacy “does exist” even though one can’t find it in the text.

Next, the Court pointed to a second quantum leap of logical gymnastics in its recent jurisprudence by reminding the country that there are “penumbras” of privacy rights, meaning small, tiny areas of privacy rights that can be found in the constitution if you squint really hard when reading it.

Such was the reasoning behind the Court’s similar ruling that the constitution guarantees the right to birth control.

Thus, the Supreme Court turned the country upside down by finding that there is an abortion “penumbra” somewhere down the block from the made-up right to privacy that says abortion rights are guaranteed. And despite the fact that there exists not a shred of historical evidence that the Framers contemplated abortion in their deliberations.

The bottom line is that Roe vs. Wade is bad law. It’s bad law because it’s made up law. It’s pretend law.

It is little more than judicial fiat, an edict that there shall be abortions, that the laws of the 50 states, decided by popularly elected governors and legislators, shall be invalid.

Overturing Roe v. Wade, which would make liberals sob, would do much to restore the sacred concept of federalism, honor the 10th Amendment, and help restore the credibility of the Supreme Court as a political institution.

Let us hope that any one or a number of recent abortion laws passed in various states leads to such a result.

May 24th, 2019

Quote of the Week: “The dynamic of five individuals meeting behind closed doors has to stop. We need a new construct for our conversations that brings the give and take and debate fully into public view.”

- House Speaker Melissa Hortman 11/16/17

Quote of the Week: “Senate Republicans stopped a 20-cent gas tax increase, delivered middle class tax cuts, and boosted spending for education in this budget deal.”

- Senate Majority Leader Paul Gazelka

In This Issue:

1. Where We Stand;
2. Yes, the Republicans Won;

WHERE WE STAND

Many of our loyal readers have jobs, families, and other obligations that prevent them from closely following the play-by-play at the legislature.

Here’s where things stand as this edition goes to publication.

On Sunday evening, May 19th, legislative leaders and the governor reached a global budget agreement that set the overall biennial spending number and the spending “targets” for each major finance committee.

In addition, certain small spending and other policy items were settled by the leadership at that time.

Speaker Hortman then stated that the conference committees would work “in public” at “breakneck speed” to resolve the difference between House and Senate bills and appropriate money to meet the spending targets.

Because the state constitution mandates that the legislature adjourn this year by midnight Monday, May 21st, the legislative conference committees had little time to act.

The conference committee meetings didn't happen.

Instead, conference committee chairs met privately or traded offers privately.

Most conference committees were unable to reach agreement, leaving the higher education spending bill as the only one that passed the legislature prior to the midnight Monday deadline.

The rest of it was left undone.

With the "regular" legislative session adjourned and the legislature not yet in a special session (only the governor can call a special session), the legislature and governor were in a bit of a no man's land to resolve the outstanding issues.

The process used to resolve the many outstanding spending and policy issues the conference committees didn't resolve was for the governor, House speaker, and the Senate majority leader, along with conference committee chairs, to privately resolve those issues.

Critics of the process derisively referred to the group as the "leadership tribunal."

Regardless, the leadership group has closed out all bills, with most of them posted for public review.

As of Thursday of this week, all of the relevant legislative committees, called "working groups" since the legislature isn't in session, have met, have staff walk through the agreements, and allow for committee questions.

The only exception as of this writing is the Health and Human Services area.

Nonetheless, the governor has issued a proclamation for the special session to convene.

Two major issues also remain unresolved.

First, it is unknown whether or not there will be a capital investment or "bonding" bill.

It takes a 3/5ths super majority to pass one, meaning that the minority caucuses would need to provide votes.

In the House, Minority Leader Kurt Daudt has stated that his caucus isn't interested in providing those votes.

Two, the special session will last at least three days, barring a successful motion to suspend the rules for a one-day special session.

Again, a super majority is needed to suspend the rules and thus far the minority caucuses have not agreed.

The deals are cut, the committees have met, and we are awaiting the special session.

YES, THE REPUBLICANS WON

As with any decent compromise, there is grumbling all the way around.

This compromise agreement is no different.

Having said that, it's hard to understand the loud grumbling of some Republicans.

After getting smoked on Election Day last November, legislative Republicans began the legislative session with their backs against the wall.

A sizable House majority evaporated as the DFL romped, including many strong Republican districts in places like Savage, Shakopee, Lake Elmo, Rosemount, and Eden Prairie.

Governor Tim Walz won a convincing victory for governor.

Senate Republicans, nursing a narrow one seat majority, added to that majority by winning a special election early in 2019, making for a 35-32 majority.

Despite that, Majority Leader Paul Gazelka not only won victories, prevented bad legislation, and did it all essentially on time.

Here's what Gazelka won:

- Stopped \$12 billion in tax increases;
- Stopped a 20 cent per gallon gas tax;
- Cut the second-tier income tax;
- Cut the "sick tax";
- Stopped gun control legislation;
- Stopped government-run health care;
- Stopped an ultra-expensive paid family leave bill;
- Kept a dedication of auto-related sales taxes to road and bridges;
- Stopped loony energy legislation like the MN Green New Deal';
- Held the Education-Industrial Complex to 2% increase each year.

Here's what Governor Walz and Speaker Hortman won:

- A continued sick tax, albeit at 1.8%, not 2%.

For only having one leg of the three-legged stool, Sen. Gazelka did very well.

Moreover, the deal wasn't going to get better.

Whether in May, June, or September, the DFL was going to get something.

In fact, Gazelka managed to defeat the long-standing aphorism that "governors get most of what they want."

With a massive budget deal, there are of course other smaller issues that one could classify as either a win or a loss for Republicans.

But the bottom line is that if you have laid out this scenario back in January and asked Republicans if they would take it, the answer would have been a resounding "yes."

Let's recognize a win.

If you don't think it was enough, then work harder in 2020 to elect and re-elect Republicans.

Knock more doors.

Give more money.

Pound more signs.

Get more neighbors out to vote.

We won. Embrace it.

May 31st, 2019

Quote of the Week: "... A city's charter is, in effect, its local constitution. Here, there is no evidence in the record that the petition presented in October 2018 was deficient in anyway. [City leaders] concede that the petition was sufficient. Consequently, it was an improper exercise of power for the Council to refuse to place the Referendum on the November 2019 ballot."

- Ramsey County District Court Judge Leonardo Castro

In This Issue:

1. Judge Takes Out the Trash;
2. Republicans Saved Me How Much?

JUDGE TAKES OUT THE TRASH

A significant legal ruling was handed down from Ramsey County District Court yesterday, holding implications for both Minnesota's environmental laws and the legal rights of charter cities.

The ruling centered on the policy of so-called "organized collection" of residential waste in the City of Saint Paul.

Readers will recall that this publication has examined "organized collection" many times in recent years and found it to be a rather odious public policy.

Briefly, it is a state law that empowers cities and counties to essentially take over trash collection, granting either a monopoly license to one hauler or entering into a contract with a cartel of multiple haulers that divide the jurisdiction into fiefdoms.

In short, government steps into the shoes of the citizen, picking their hauler for them, including all the terms and conditions of the hauling contract.

This displacement of haulers provides no compensation for the haulers who lose their business, not because of marketplace actions, but because government decided by fiat to take their business and give it to a competitor.

The proffered public policy benefits underpinning the law are reduced truck traffic, increased safety, reduced road deterioration, the ability to direct where trash is offloaded, lower costs to residents and other environmental and citizen benefits.

These supposed benefits have been long debunked. Our friends at Garbage Haulers for Citizen Choice have an excellent, easy to read web site that explains why "organized collection" doesn't deliver on its promises. Visit

haulersforchoice.com for more information.

In Saint Paul, the city followed the statutory process to implement organized collection, entering into a contract with a cartel of haulers to deliver residential waste collection services, with each member hauler getting a slice of the city in rough proportion to what they had under the prior free market system.

Many licensed haulers, particularly small, independent haulers, complained that the city offered little more than a contract of adhesion (a “take it or leave it” contract), leaving them to either take the deal and prepare to sell their company at a discount or refuse to sign and simply abandon their book of business in Saint Paul.

Many residents were unhappy with the system, either because they simply disliked their freedom to choose their hauler being abrogated or because the system was a one-size-fits-all proposition that failed to meet their unique circumstances. For example, the city requires that every homeowner have a contract with their assigned hauler. Many residents don't have service because they don't generate enough trash to justify having service (think ultra-environmentalists, elderly residents who share a can with neighbors, or people allowed to throw their trash in a dumpster at work).

Because Saint Paul is a charter city, these residents did the time-honored American thing and they followed a charter provision that allows for a voter referendum to reverse city ordinances. For the uninitiated, a city charter is essentially a city constitution. Most cities in Minnesota are “statutory” cities that are governed by state statute. Some are charter cities, which follow state law but self-govern in areas where the state allows it.

The citizens presented the requisite number signatures to put the organized collection ordinance on the ballot for reversal.

The city, for a number of reasons, denied the petition while acknowledging that the requisite number of valid signatures was presented to the city council.

In response, the citizens formed an ad hoc group and sued the city to vindicate their rights under the charter.

This week's ruling was the response to that plea for justice.

Judge Castro in no uncertain terms found in favor of the citizen's group while strongly rebuking the city.

Regarding the charter question, the judge wrote, “... A city's charter is, in effect, its local constitution. Here, there is no evidence in the record that the petition presented in October 2018 was deficient in anyway. [City leaders] concede that the petition was sufficient. Consequently, it was an improper exercise of power for the

Council to refuse to place the Referendum on the November 2019 ballot.”

Moreover, the judge had little sympathy for Saint Paul’s related claims, such as the ruling impairing the contract with the hauler cartel. “The suspension of [the trash ordinance] will undoubtedly present an inconvenience to the City and its departments. However, this inconvenience cannot justify the circumvention of the plain language of the City’s Charter and the right of the citizens to cast a vote.”

Next, the organized collection ordinance will be suspended June 30th until the city holds the required referendum vote.

It will be interesting to see the outcome of both the campaign and the final vote, which is expected to coincide with Election Day 2019, although the city can hold a special election at a different time.

REPUBLICANS SAVED ME HOW MUCH?

You’ve no doubt heard that the DFL proposed some \$12 billion in tax increases this past legislative session.

So, what did some of those taxes look like?

Here’s a sampling of some of the biggest hikes.

Paid Family Leave. This bill would mandate paid leave for all employees. Employers would pay taxes to fund the paid leave. The total would cost employers \$1.6 billion each fiscal biennium and result in 316 new state employees to administer the program.

House DFL Transportation Omnibus Bill. This one is a doozy. While the massive 70% increase in the gas tax got the lion’s share of attention, it was one of only many tax and fee increases.

Electric vehicle surcharge increase to \$200.

MNLARS surcharge of \$4.75 on vehicle tab renewals.

\$2.50 increase to \$8.50 for tab renewals.

Filing fee increase to \$13.50 for new vehicles.

A \$4.50 fee increase for driver’s license renewals.

A \$4.75 technology surcharge to renew a driver’s license.

A \$4 “filing fee” increase to renew a driver’s license.

The motor vehicle sales tax would increase from 6.5% to 6.875%.

Gas tax increase of 20 cents per gallon, indexed to inflation.

Tax on electric vehicle charging stations of 5 cents per kilowatt hour.

A .5% sales tax increase in the Metro area.

A vehicle registration tax increase from 1.25% of value to 1.5%.

These increases total some \$1.1 billion, once fully phased in.

House Omnibus Tax Bill.

This bill raised taxes by about \$1.2 billion, despite Minnesota earning the dubious distinction of the least tax-friendly state in the nation for 2018 by Kiplinger's, perhaps the country's foremost financial news outlet.

The majority of the \$1.2 billion increase came from taxing corporate earnings from overseas when brought back to Minnesota, as if the state's job creators didn't face high taxes here as well.

Moreover, this tax falls into the old trap of the DFL basing their tax assumptions on "static" as opposed to "dynamic" scoring.

This is a gimmick whereby the rake from a particular tax looks bigger than it likely will be because it presumes the same taxpayer behavior in the face of a tax increase.

This flies in the face of human nature and long experience, which dictates that the more you tax something, the less you get of it.

If you jack up taxes on foreign income, more of that income will stay overseas.

The Sick Tax. The biggest victory for the DFL, in their eyes, is the maintenance of a tax on health care services.

Set to expire this year, the sunset on the tax was abolished, although the tax was cut from 2% to 1.8%.

Ostensibly dedicated to health care, this tax in recent years has become another revenue stream for the general fund, raided to pay for all manner of things.

The DFL has been upfront in stating that they see this tax revenue as the pot of money to fund single-payer health care.

This item will cost taxpayer about \$1 billion each biennium.

When you see a Republican legislator, thank him or her for saving you from tax Armageddon.

June 7, 2019

Editor's Note: The Watchdog solemnly observes this week the 75th anniversary of Operation Overlord, a pivotal moment in American history. May we never forget the brave men who stormed the beaches, landed in drop zones behind enemy lines, and the others who supported them by air, land, and sea to defeat tyranny.

Quote of the Week: "We're here to mark that day in history when the Allied armies joined in battle to reclaim this continent to liberty. For 4 long years, much of Europe had been under a terrible shadow. Free nations had fallen, Jews cried out in the camps, millions cried out for liberation. Europe was enslaved, and the world prayed for its rescue. Here in Normandy the rescue began. Here the Allies stood and fought against tyranny in a giant undertaking unparalleled in human history."

- President Ronald Reagan 6/6/1984

In This Issue:

1. Legislative News;
2. Prosecutorial Misconduct;
3. Medieval, CA

LEGISLATIVE NEWS

While the legislature has gone home until 2020 (probably), there is always news to report, for better or worse.

This week, House Speaker Melissa Hortman said she was open to a September special session to tackle an insulin price regulation bill as well as a "modest" capital investment bill, otherwise known as a "bonding" bill.

This sentiment on the part of the speaker is a bit strange.

One, if the insulin issue is truly a health care emergency as it's been described, why wait three months to do something?

Either it needs to happen now or it can wait until February.

That's some bizarre messaging. "This is an emergency we will tackle once we get back from the cabin and wolf down some cheese curds at the State Fair."

Moreover, a bonding bill certainly isn't needed in special session.

One reason is that there are plenty of bonding projects still in the pipeline that have been authorized in previous bonding bills but have yet to come to fruition.

According to Minnesota Management and Budget, the state has over \$103 million in authorized yet unspent bonding that is in danger of cancellation because they were authorized in 2014 or earlier and will cancel under state law unless given further dispensation.

So, when you have \$103 million in aged money about to cancel, a \$500 million bill isn't any kind of priority.

Speaking of bonding, Rep. Patrick Garofalo (R – Farmington) this week released a proposal that would increase transparency and result in better projects by breaking the bonding bill into five separate bills, allocated by subject area.

Instead of one, all-or-nothing bonding bill, there would instead be five: higher education, transportation, infrastructure, asset preservation, and a "miscellaneous" category.

This process would hopefully reintroduce a meaningful role for the committees of competent jurisdiction to exercise authority, lending their subject matter expertise.

It would be good public policy to have the transportation committee have a role in deciding which bonding projects to fund.

The break-up would also reduce the practice of jamming meritless projects into one large bill, forcing legislators to swallow bad projects (e.g. snow making machines) in order to secure core function funding (e.g. building prisons).

Finally, such reforms would hopefully put an end to the bi-partisan practice of assembling bonding bills behind closed doors and then simply producing one, much in the same way Athena was born.

Over in the executive branch, it's worth noting that Governor Walz issued not a single veto this session, something that hasn't happened since 1978.

While this publication doesn't share the governor's world view, it is nonetheless a pleasant surprise to see a chief executive properly assume the role, giving respect to the legislature and the legislative process.

This is a marked contrast to Mark B. Dayton, who conducted himself as a petulant, spoiled child for eight years.

It's almost as if Mr. Dayton was some sort of trust fund rich kid.

Finally, the Minnesota Court of Appeals this week upheld the Walz administration

appeal, begun under Mark Dayton, of the Final Environmental Impact Statement (FEIS) granted to the Line 3 pipeline replacement project.

Apparently, the 13,500-page FEIS was lacking in the mind of the three-judge panel (2-1 decision) that overruled the judgement of the Public Utilities Commission, which deemed the FEIS adequate.

The most studied pipeline in world history will now undergo further revision and review to better assess the impact of an oil spill in the Lake Superior Watershed.

PROSECUTORIAL MISCONDUCT

As Attorney General William Barr conducts his investigation into the domestic spying operation against the Trump Campaign, it's helpful to take in various aspects of this appalling and pervasive hoax that cost taxpayers \$35 million and failed to prove its *raison d'être*, collusion between the Trump campaign and Russia.

Start with the fact that over a dozen of Special Counsel Mueller's prosecutors are registered Democrats, including Jeannie Rhee, who served in the Obama Administration.

Also consider what happened to various targets of the witch hunt, er, investigation.

Jerome Corsi. Corsi, 72, endured more than 40 hours of interrogation in a windowless room and racked up over \$100,000 in legal fees.

Corsi's friends and family were subjected to unannounced FBI visits and Corsi himself suffered heart troubles.

In the end, he was never indicted and is no longer the subject of active investigation.

Jason Fishbein. Fishbein, an attorney, had once done legal work for WikiLeaks.

The FBI grilled him for over 6 hours and gathered more than 500 pages of documents from him.

He was asked about his foreign travels and a poker friend with a "Russian-sounding" name.

Fishbein was never charged.

Carter Page. In many ways a central figure in the spying scandal, Page was put under surveillance during the campaign and subsequently interrogated before a grand jury.

Now nearly bankrupt because of legal fees, Page was never charged with a crime.

Joseph Schmitz. A Trump campaign staffer, Schmitz was never implicated by Mueller, yet was the subject of leaks and media pursuit.

In particular, CNN came after him, staking out his home and confronting him on camera with questions about the now-debunked bogus dossier.

CNN then ran a story insinuating Mueller might be investigation Schmitz.

This publicity tarnished Schmitz's reputation.

He was never charged.

Freedom loving people everywhere are eagerly anticipating the Barr investigation.

Watchdog sources in Washington tell the publication that the attorney general's investigation will soon bear fruit and news will be forthcoming "soon."

Amen.

MEDIEVAL, CA

The Watchdog is considering creating a trivia game entitled, "Medieval Times or 2019 California?"

Consider that Los Angeles is currently facing a typhus outbreak, a disease carried by infected fleas and transmitted by rats.

Over 1,000 people in the area have been sickened by Hepatitis A, a disease spread through fecal matter.

Piles of trash and garbage openly fester on the streets.

Instead of hosting a "Skid Row", the entire town has become one, save for the bucolic lands of the rich, hidden behind iron gates and security guards.

Up in San Francisco, the situation is similar, except that the city has benefited from the immense talents of tech industry wunderkinds, who have developed apps that show where piles of human feces have been laid down, kind of like a traffic app for poop.

"Avoid Main Street at Fourth. Stinky mess. Use Maple Street."

No wonder people are fleeing the state like the plague has come.

Give it time.

June 14th, 2019

Quote of the Week: "It's very clear there are huge ethical problems with Rep. Omar."

Rep. Steve Drazkowski (R – Mazeppa)

Factoid of the Week: Northstar commuter rail subsidizes each rider approximately \$13,000 per year.

Factoid of the Week: One can lease a brand-new BMW for less than half that amount per year.

In This Issue:

1. Gaffes, Whoppers, and Lies;
2. Outrage of the Week;
3. Again?!

GAFFES, WHOPPERS, AND LIES

The Legacy Media, the Left, and the politicians who pander to them take great delight in pointing out every perceived gaffe or incorrect statement uttered by President Trump.

No statement is beyond their scrutiny, such as them claiming that the recent agreement with Mexico to crack down on migrants in that country was already in progress, thus making the president a liar for taking credit.

Not surprisingly, these same folks don't, and never have, held their fellow liberals to the same standards, instead fawning over them and churning out propaganda on their behalf.

Let's play a game, below are listed 10 statements from politicians. You guess who uttered the nonsense.

Quote: *"During my service in the United States Congress, I took the initiative in creating the Internet."*

Person: Al Gore, who is credited nowhere for taking the initiative to create the Internet.

Quote: *"I remember landing under sniper fire. There was supposed to be some kind of a greeting ceremony at the airport, but instead we just ran with our heads down to get into the vehicles to get to our base."*

Person: Hillary Clinton, who later had to admit she "misspoke," which is Clinton-speak for "I lied and got caught."

Quote: *"If you like your doctor, you'll be able to keep your doctor; if you like your health care plan, you'll be able to keep your health care plan."*

Person: Barack Obama, but you knew that.

Quote: *"I remember hearing about the Iowa Caucuses when I was a young boy."*

Person: Bill Clinton, who was 30 years old when the Iowa Caucuses became a national political event in 1976.

Quote: *"It's almost a false argument to say we have a spending problem."*

Person: House Speaker Nancy Pelosi

Quote: *"I did not have sexual relations with that woman, Ms. Lewinski."*

Person: You know that answer to this one.

Quote: *"Over the last fifteen months, we've traveled to every corner of the United States. I've now been in 57 states, I think — one left to go. Alaska and Hawaii I was not allowed to go to ... my staff could not justify it."*

Person: Barack Obama

Quote: *"The number one job facing the middle class, and it happens to be, as Barack says, a three-letter word: jobs. J-O-B-S."*

Person: Joe Biden

Quote: *"Stand up, Chuck, let them see you!"*

Person: Joe Biden, referring to State Senator Chuck Graham, who is a paraplegic.

Quote: *"A zebra does not change its spots."*

Person: Al Gore

Indeed, Mr. Gore. Indeed.

OUTRAGE OF THE WEEK

While there is always a plethora of candidates, this week's winner is the Saint Paul Schools district.

A recent article in the Pioneer Press explains that capital improvement projects in the district are experiencing massive cost overruns, even by government standards.

There are 18 such projects that are running a collective \$180 million over the projected budget of just two years ago.

In what could have been the quote of the week, a former school district official observed, "Every contractor wants to come work for St. Paul Public Schools because it's frickin' open checkbook."

As is so typical in government, it appears that oversight and expertise were woefully

lacking in this case.

Another school official said of the man in charge of the debacle, “The (Facilities Master Plan) would be a challenging and ambitious undertaking for a well-seasoned, experienced public-sector facility director who managed a similarly large portfolio of properties. Tom Parent was neither.”

An accountant for the district noted, “Tom Parent (the man in charge) pushed ahead with construction at several schools at once but paid little attention to how he’d pay for the work.”

What an indictment. Any private sector employee who wasted resources like that would be fired.

Any public official who does so should be prosecuted.

Odds are that this man won’t even be disciplined and will likely parachute out with a nice severance package or early retirement.

Perhaps the most egregious example of the waste is at Humboldt High School, where a \$14.4 million project estimate now sits at \$48 million, just two years later.

And what are taxpayers getting for their considerable investment in these schools and the district?

At Humboldt, 28% of their students don’t graduate.

Only 19% are proficient in reading.

Only 10% are proficient in math.

A dismal 6.5% are proficient in science.

The legislature should refuse to subsidize this failure and demand strict accountability for both spending and results in the classroom.

Frankly, a school where 9 out of 10 aren’t proficient in math isn’t worth a \$48 million facelift.

It’s lipstick on a pig.

AGAIN?!

Less than a month after dealing with their latest scandal, the much-maligned, scandal-plagued Iron Range Resources and Rehabilitation Board (IRRRB) is once again in the news for financial mismanagement.

The state agency was in hot water last month for circumventing hiring rules to give a \$100,000 plus job to a DFL political crony, who subsequently resigned under pressure.

Even Governor Walz had to rebuke the agency's leader for his lapse in judgement and order that hiring rules be equally applied.

This week, it was revealed that the agency paid a long-time staffer \$166,000 to retire early and then hired him back as a consultant just one month later for up to \$43,000 per year.

The retirement payoff consisted in \$66,000 in unused vacation and sick days as well as nearly \$100,000 in cash!

Why there is no cap on the unused vacation and sick days is inexplicable.

Why state law simply authorizes the IRRRB to offer cash incentives for early retirement with no cap or payment structure is inexcusable.

The legislature, when it passed this early retirement law specifically for the IRRRB in 2017, should have "scandal proofed" it, understanding that they were giving spending authority to an agency notorious for DFL cronyism, waste, and taxpayer abuse.

As would be expected, the DFL apologists for the sweetheart arrangement stood tall.

Senate Minority Leader Tom Bakk (DFL – Cook) who sits on the IRRRB executive board, dismissed the scandal with a cavalier statement that "State agencies do this all the time."

Yes, and that's exactly the problem.

While this news is no longer surprising, it still jolts the collective conscience of Minnesota taxpayers.

This behavior has been tolerated for years. It's time to put a hard stop on it.

All of it.

June 21st, 2019

Quote of the Week: “The Southern institution of racial segregation or racial separation was the correct, self-evident truth which arose from the chaos and confusion of the Reconstruction period. Separation promotes racial harmony. It permits each race to follow its own pursuits, and its own civilization. Segregation is not discrimination.”

- Sen. James Eastland (D-MS)

Quote of the Week: “I want you to know that I very much appreciate your help during this week’s committee meeting in attempting to bring my anti-bussing legislation to a vote.”

- Sen. Joe Biden (D-DE) in a letter to the aforementioned Sen. Eastland

In This Issue:

1. Super Creepy Joe Biden;
2. Murder Boat;
3. Corrupting Money;
4. Radio Silence.

SUPER CREEPY JOE BIDEN

“My cable’s out, so I’m down at the rec center, watching folks swim.” “And I love the smell of other people’s hair.”

The famous words of Super Creepy Rob Lowe could easily be mistaken for the words (and creepy actions) of Sleepy Joe Biden. There has to be a campaign commercial in here somewhere.

They say that timing is everything, which is true in life and especially politics.

It’s appearing thus far that Joe Biden, the Super Creepy Septuagenarian (trademark pending), has picked the wrong time to make yet another run for president of the United States.

Videos demonstrating his long and ignoble record of feeling up women, smelling their hair, and otherwise acting the lecherous fool didn’t age so well, much like his shopworn and tiresome gaffes.

Such words and actions do much to paint Biden as an unwelcome reminder of a past we would all like to forget. It's like he's a living mullet, pair of leg warmers, and Member's Only jacket all rolled into one. A history that evokes nervous laughter and eye rolls all around.

Biden's anachronistic status was boosted this week by his own bizarre boasting of working in the U.S. Senate with avowed white supremacist colleagues like the infamous James Easton and Herman Talmadge (D-GA).

(Editor's Note: These southern white supremacists were all Democrats.)

In particular, it has come to light that Biden teamed up with them to oppose mandatory bussing, a primary tool in desegregating public schools to reverse the shameful history of Jim Crow laws that proliferated in the aftermath of federal action to abolish slavery.

Joe Biden may go down as one of the worst presidential candidates in modern times regarding timing.

First, today's democrats want nothing to do with a candidate who preaches pragmatism and centrism. The crazier the better. Elizabeth Warren and Bernie Sanders are clearly the candidates who fit the times for the tin foil hats who control the modern democrat party.

Second, Democrats went with the consummate establishment candidate in 2016 and suffered an embarrassing loss, to Donald Trump no less.

Sleazy Hillary Clinton and her sex offender husband personified the money-grubbing, nihilistic, focus-group driven, politically malleable establishment.

Biden is so 1996.

Or 1956, as the case may be.

In short, this publication says Joe Biden won't be the front runner by the end this calendar year.

In terms of credibility as a presidential candidate, he just a step above Amy Klobuchar, who can't even take sides on her favorite ice cream (is "comb" a flavor?).

MURDER BOAT

Oh, those patriotic Democrats.

On the occasion of the launching of the Navy's newest ship, the USS Minneapolis-

Saint Paul, William Davis, who works as the Deputy Communication Director for the Minnesota DFL, took to Twitter to say the following: "I think it's gross that they're using the name of our fine cities for a murder boat."

So, as murder is war crime when committed by members of the Armed Forces, Davis condemned every sailor on the ship as prospective war criminal.

What a deeply insulting slap in the face to the men and women who will proudly serve our country aboard this ship.

There has been a deafening silence emanating from the state DFL headquarters down on Plato Boulevard since this explosive tweet.

To his credit, Governor Walz, a veteran himself, strongly criticized Davis's tweet.

Too bad the DFL chairman could only be troubled to note that this clown will no longer handle "public-facing communications" for the DFL.

Moreover, this isn't the first time Davis's lack of social media maturity has landed him in trouble.

He was suspended by the DFL just last October after remarking on his Facebook page that Republicans should be "brought to the guillotines."

Stay classy, DFL.

CORRUPTING MONEY

Progressives, by definition, are hypocrites. Regardless of the issue, there is a "good for thee, not for me" arrogance in their behavior.

Campaign finance is one of those issues, where the shopworn bromides against Citizen's United, the Koch Brothers, and "dark money" are thrown about with regularity.

None of it is true.

Fake news.

Recent Minnesota campaign finance reports for 2018 show that monied, outside liberals are funding (and tilting) elections in this state towards DFL candidates.

Take a look at the biggest donors. Guess the ideology and guess the home address:

Alida Messigner (the former Mrs. Dayton): \$2.2 million;

Jenifer Allen-Soros: \$1 million

Jonathan Soros: \$1 million

George Soros: \$250,000

Almost \$4.5 million donated by liberal out-of-towners with infamous, radical agendas.

Another indicator of the corrupting influence of liberal money are the independent expenditures run for or against candidates:

Tim Walz: \$6.3 million FOR;
Jeff Johnson: \$5.8 million AGAINST;
= \$12.1 million to tilt the race for the DFL candidate.

Keith Ellison: \$715,000 FOR;
Doug Wardlow: \$1.6 million AGAINST.
= \$2.3 million to tilt the race towards the DFL candidate.

Putting a thumb on the scale? How about standing on it?

Don't ever let liberal co-workers or family take the moral high ground regarding the buying of elections.

Dems do it better than anybody.

RADIO SILENCE

Where's the news these days regarding Ilhan Omar's fraudulent tax returns?

It must be buried along with the continuing coverage regarding the Democrat quest to find Christine Blasey Ford's assaulters or OJ's quest to find the real killers.

Funny how quiet that item has become already.

July 26, 2019

Editor's Note: The Watchdog apologizes for the recent interruption in weekly commentary.

We've experienced some technical difficulties, the result of Russian interference, no doubt.

The Watchdog today resumes the normal weekly commentary. Having said that, the morning news aggregation service will be terminated. The rise of paywall content has made the task of assembling free, newsworthy content quite difficult.

Quote of the Week: "the investigation did not establish that members of the Trump Campaign conspired or coordinated with the Russian government in its election interference activities."

- The Mueller Report

Quote of the Week: "I would say our country should be more fearful of white men across our country because they are actually causing most of the deaths within this country."

Rep. Ilhan Omar (D – MN 5)

In This Issue:

1. A Faustian Bargain;
2. Government Lobbying Government;
3. The War on Mining – Again;
4. Beyond the Pale.

A FAUSTIAN BARGAIN

Washington, DC finally gave up the ghost this week and dropped all remaining pretense of fiscal responsibility by striking a bi-partisan deal on the only subject that unites the parties in DC these days: spending money.

The deal "suspends" the debt ceiling until 2021, allowing all incumbents to safely ignore the national debt and the budget deficit until after the 2020 elections.

Note that the deal "suspends" the debt ceiling and doesn't raise it. It's not like raising the limit on your credit card. It's like the bank lifting ANY limit on your credit card for two years.

Moreover, the deal raises federal spending by \$320 billion over limits set in the 2011 Budget Control Act.

That spending level is projected to equate to \$1.7 trillion in additional spending over the next decade above what was projected with the budgetary caps.

Federal debt is projected to be 97% of GDP by 2029.

That's more than the debt to GDP ratio in 1944, the height of World War II, when it was 91% of GDP.

It's official. Barack Obama was more fiscally responsible than Donald Trump.

It's a fact. And a sad one at that.

No wonder House Republicans rebelled.

Of the 197 Republicans in the House, 132 voted against the budget agreement.

Rep. Thomas Massie of Kentucky perhaps summed it up best when he introduced an amendment to rename the legislation "A Bill to Kick the Can Down the Road and For Other Purposes."

The amendment failed.

For those of you looking for bi-partisanship and cooperation, here you go.

Washington is united in spending money the government doesn't have.

GOVERNMENT LOBBYING GOVERNMENT

Most of our long-time readers know that government spends money to lobby government.

In other words, taxpayer dollars spent by one level of government to obtain tax dollars from another level of government.

It's about as attractive as government suing government – the risk all being borne by the taxpayer.

Thankfully, Minnesota law requires that these local units of government provide information each year regarding how much they spend on lobbying services.

This year's report, compiled by the State Auditor, was recently released for 2018 spending.

Last year, local units of government spent \$8.7 million of your tax dollars on

lobbying and lobbyists.

In all, 113 local units of government reported spending money lobbyists and lobbying. It makes one wonder how all the other ones get by without lobbyists.

Per tradition, we now unveil the infamous “top ten” list of the biggest spenders on these services.

Any guesses? We’ll take “Minneapolis” for \$1,000, Alex.

One: Hennepin County (\$331,564)
Two: City of Minneapolis (\$274,339)
Three: Minneapolis Park Board (\$215,762)
Four: City of Saint Paul (\$208,796)
Five: City of Bloomington (\$165,000)
Six: Ramsey County (\$159,356)
Seven: Saint Louis County (\$152,661)
Eight: City of Moorhead (\$123,192)
Nine: Dakota County (\$118,167)
Ten: Anoka County: (\$114,300). Disappointing. Fiscal restraint?

Further evidence that spending is out of control everywhere, from Washington to your park board.

Will the real fiscal conservatives please stand up?

THE WAR ON MINING – AGAIN

The DFL’s war on mining – and on rural Minnesota – continues apace.

This week, a cabal of 18 DFL legislators sent a letter to Governor Tim Walz, asking him to suspend state-issued permits for the Polymet mining project.

The primary reason for the letter is an allegation that the process for reviewing and issuing the permits didn’t follow procedures.

The letter drew an immediate, bi-partisan response from both legislative Republicans and some (remaining) rural DFLers.

House GOP Minority Leader Kurt Daudt said, “It’s disappointing that Metro Democrats are spreading misleading and false information about the environmental review process in an effort to derail this project and its tremendous benefits for Minnesota jobs and Minnesota’s economy. PolyMet is the most thoroughly reviewed industrial project in Minnesota history and has been going through the environmental review process for 14 years.”

It’s true that Metro Democrats continue to wage a war on rural Minnesota’s jobs,

economy, and way of life.

Truly, the DFL believes what Barack Obama said out loud: rural Americans, in their view, bitterly cling to their guns and religion.

BEYOND THE PALE

Remember when invoking the Holocaust through political imagery and rhetoric was off limits?

For many generations, American politics rightly respected Holocaust victims by refraining from calling opponents “Nazis” or labeling things as “concentration camps.”

No longer.

It’s clear that Democrats have rescinded that political custom.

Many have referred to immigrant detention centers as “concentration camps.”

“Nazi” is a label freely and carelessly thrown about.

Just this past week, failing presidential candidate Beto O’Rourke attempted to call attention to himself by calling President Trump’s recent political rally a “Nuremberg” event, comparing it to the rallies Adolf Hitler held in that city in the 1930s.

It’s appalling that this rhetoric isn’t called out and condemned.

The Holocaust should never be used as a political prop by politicians who are seeking to shock Americans into paying attention to their unrealistic, selfish political ambitions.

Disgusting.

August 2nd, 2019

Quote of the Week: "Anyone who took the walk that we took around this neighborhood would not think you're in a wealthy nation. You would think that you were in a Third World country."

- Sen. Bernie Sanders

Quote of the Week: "But today what we're talking about is a community in which half of the people don't have jobs. We're talking about a community in which there are hundreds of buildings that are uninhabitable."

- Sen. Bernie Sanders

Quote of the Week: "Residents of Baltimore's poorest boroughs have lifespans shorter than people living under dictatorship in North Korea. That is a disgrace."

- Sen. Bernie Sanders

In This Issue:

1. Baltimore;
2. Put a Number on it.

BALTIMORE

With Baltimore dominating the news cycle this week accompanied by near fist fights over the city's quality of life, the staff thought it would be interesting to bestow our readers with some fun facts regarding America's self-anointed "Charm City."

Fact: Baltimore's last three mayors have left office in disgrace.

Way back on May 2nd, 2019, Mayor Catherine Pugh resigned from office after it was revealed she earned over \$800,000 in book deals from organizations that she either had influence over or were looking for contracts from the city.

The books, a series geared towards children and healthy habits, were entitled "Healthy Holly," which critics panned as unreadable.

Pugh was given a \$500,000 contract for 100,000 copies by the University of Maryland Medical System. Pugh sat on the board of directors for the system.

Some 50,000 copies were never accounted for by authorities during the criminal investigation. In fact, authorities are trying to determine if any of the 100,000 copies were ever delivered.

In addition, Pugh earned a \$300,000 contract from health insurance carriers who were seeking contracts with the city.

One of the carriers subsequently earned a \$48 million contract from the city.

Prior to Pugh, Mayor Stephanie Rawlings-Blake decided not to run for re-election after she was widely criticized for handling riots that broke out in 2015.

The governor revealed that she failed to return phone calls for two hours from him regarding needed permission to activate the national guard.

Moreover, she was severely criticized for subsequent remarks about the need to give rioters "space" to destroy things.

And prior to Rawlings-Blake, Mayor Sheila Dixon resigned after she was convicted by a jury for stealing gift cards that were meant for underprivileged children.

Fact: Law enforcement leaders have also been convicted.

In 2004, police commissioner Edward Norris plead guilty to federal charges of corruption and tax cheating.

In December of 2018, police commissioner Daryl DeSousa plead guilty to tax cheating as well.

Fact: Baltimore is one of most unlivable cities in the country.

For example, USA Today ranked the city #9 on its most recent hall of shame list.

Fact: Baltimore is rat infested.

Orkin, a large pest control company, recently listed the city as the 9th "rattiest" city in America.

Fact: Baltimore is a dangerous city.

Federal uniform crime statistics show it. Many publications listed Baltimore the country's most dangerous city for 2018.

One recent list showed that 6 of the nation's 25 most dangerous neighborhoods are in Baltimore.

In fact, Baltimore is one of the most dangerous cities in the world.

The city's murder rate is comparable to violent cities in Mexico, Venezuela, and El Salvador.

Fact: Baltimore is an impoverished city.

24% of city residents live below the poverty line.

28% of the city's high school students never graduate.

Fact: Baltimore has over 16,000 abandoned homes.

Fact: People are leaving Baltimore.

In 1950, 950,000 people called the city home. Today, just over 600,000 call it home, a decline of over 1/3rd.

So there you have it, loyal readers. Decide for yourself.

PUT A NUMBER ON IT

Pundits, political observers, and normal people of all stripes have seen the Democrat presidential candidates, at least the front-runners, propose policies that are breathtaking in scope and represent a hard-core lurch to the left.

So much will all those proposal cost?

According to the Free Beacon publication, those proposals in the aggregate would cost a staggering \$210 trillion.

For perspective, the entire GDP for the country was less than 1/10th that amount last year, coming in at \$20 trillion.

Bernie Sanders leads the pack with spending plans that would cost over \$36 trillion, with his "Medicare for all" plan projected to cost a whopping \$32 trillion over 10 years.

Little known Andrew Yang comes in second, as his plan to provide every American with \$12,000 in guaranteed basic income projected to cost \$30 trillion.

Little known Sen. Kirsten Gillibrand comes in at \$10.8 trillion, with \$10 trillion earmarked for her Green New Deal plan.

Actually, Elizabeth Warren looks like a piker, as her spending is projected to cost “only” \$4.6 trillion, with a large part eaten up by her plan to relieve students of their decisions to take out loans to get a degree in art history.

It’s interesting that even moderate Dems like former Rep. Delaney and current Rep. Tim Ryan are seeing this crazy spending as both an opportunity for them personally and a mortal threat to any hope Dems have re-capture the White House or keep their House majority.

Truly, these plans are radical, unprecedented, and out of the mainstream.

These are the kind of ideas that cause Dems to lead with their collective chins and ask to get knocked out.

Not only is the spending outrageous and unrealistic, the policies underpinning them are hard sells on main street America.

Medicare for All, for example, entails abolishing private health insurance.

The Green New Deal would reorder American life, making energy expensive, killing jobs, and imposing hardships such limiting or outright eliminating air travel.

Combined with other radical ideas like decriminalizing border crossings and slavery reparations, and you have a formula for overall defeat, even though the coastal elites would bask in it all.

The current state of affairs is a battle for control of the Democrat party. It’s the Biden-Pelosi axis versus the Squad and Bernie Sanders.

When Nancy Pelosi is your voice of reason, alarm bells should be ringing.

August 9th, 2019

Quote of the Week: “We have been raising alarms about the accounting and costs in DHS for years. Today just shows that the agency’s mismanagement, underperformance, and incompetence has cost the taxpayers millions of dollars. This is actual money we’ve robbed from the taxpayers for at least five years.”

Sen. Michelle Benson (R – Ham Lake)

In This Issue:

1. The Ghost of Mark Brandt Dayton.

THE GHOST OF MARK BRANDT DAYTON

When this publication labeled Mark Dayton a “failed” governor, we didn’t think it was overstating the situation.

Given the ongoing excavation of skeletons from his administration, it isn’t hyperbole to consider Dayton this state’s worst governor – ever.

Tim Walz probably didn’t think he would spend his first year in office walking around with a massive fiscal pooper-scooper, cleaning up the piles of elephant dung Dayton left for him after eight years of what was apparently a free-for-all down at the executive branch.

It’s stunning to look back at the legacy of incompetence, waste, fraud, and abuse tolerated by the Dayton administration.

What’s the over/under on the number of scandals Walz and the legislature will uncover and then clean-up over the next three years – or longer?

The latest turd in the fiscal punch bowl is the discovery of over \$25 million in illegal payments from the Department of Human Services to two tribal nations regarding opioid treatment programs.

While an investigation is ongoing to determine whether a mistake or intentional, there is no dispute that at least \$25 million in illegal payments went out the door for at least the past 5 years.

One or two major scandals in an administration is breathtaking. To consider what happened (and has recently been uncovered) shocks the conscience.

And to think the people of this state a) elected him after a disastrous tenure as U.S. senator; and b) re-elected him after four years of tomfoolery.

While it hurts, let's review Dayton Hall of Shame career. The man may be gone from office, but his Ghost of Blunders Past (and Future) haunts the halls of Saint Paul.

MNLARS

Under Dayton, the state attempted to craft software to update the state's vehicle licensing system, used by the DMV.

It should have been pretty easy. 49 other states, including Mississippi and Arkansas, manage to do it.

The roll-out was a miserable failure and a boondoggle.

Long lines, glitches, and bugs galore led to the outright ditching of the system.

All told, the taxpayers will have spent over \$153 million on a failed system that delivered nothing.

The state will soon simply start over, developing a new system with the acronym "VTRS," which stands for Vehicle Title and Registration System.

MnSURE

This is a unique scandal in that there are multiple skeletons in this closet.

MnSURE is the state's cute name for our version of Obamacare, the government take over of our healthcare that promised to lower costs, expand care, and allow us to keep our healthcare plans and our doctors.

A recent audit of the program, rolled out under Dayton, estimates that massive error rates in determining eligibility have resulted in illegal payments of upwards of \$271 million.

Then there's the MnSURE web portal, the "Travelocity" style web site that government promised would make for easy, simple Obamacare policy/plan choices.

In the end, taxpayers ended up spending \$190 million to develop the web site, that to this day is plagued with problems.

And that's not all. Despite the massive problems with MnSURE, 14 managers in the program received bonuses! All told, 14 managers received cash payments that equaled 1.5% to 2.5% of the annual salaries.

All for a job decidedly not well done.

COMMISSIONER SALARIES

Dayton incurred the wrath of both Republicans and Democrats when he jacked up the pay of his political appointees, some of them getting 100% pay raises.

Dayton proudly declared that since he wasn't running again, he could grant these pay raises and not face political consequences.

Here's the pay structure Dayton implemented:

- Administration, \$144,991
 - Agriculture, \$144,991
 - Commerce, \$144,991
 - Corrections, \$150,002
 - Education, \$150,002
 - Employment and Economic Development, \$150,002
 - Health, \$150,002
 - Housing Finance, \$144,991
 - Human Rights, \$144,991
 - Human Services, \$154,992
 - Labor and Industry, \$144,991
 - Management and Budget, \$154,992
 - Natural Resources, \$154,992
 - Higher Education, \$144,991
 - Pollution Control, \$150,002
 - Public Safety, \$154,992
 - Revenue, \$154,992
 - Transportation, \$154,992
 - Veterans Affairs, \$144,991
-
- Commissioner, Bureau of Mediation Services, \$140,000
 - Executive director, Gambling Control Board, \$119,997
 - Commissioner, Iron Range Resources & Rehabilitation Board, \$140,000
 - Chair, Metropolitan Council, \$144,991
 - School Trust Lands Director, \$125,009
 - Ombudsman for Mental Health & Developmental Disabilities, \$119,997
 - Commissioner, Public Utilities Commission, \$140,000
 - Executive Director of Pari-mutuel Racing, \$115,988

I SIGNED WHAT?

What can you say about a chief executive who doesn't know what's in the bills to which he affixes his signature, transforming proposed legislation into the law of the land?

Among the many instances of Dayton admitting he didn't know what was in the bills he signed, two in particular stand out.

The first was a bill that applied the sales tax to the repair of farm equipment like combines and grain wagons.

Understandably, the bill caused a great deal of anger in farmland, where equipment repairs can run into the tens of thousands of dollars.

After running into a maelstrom of criticism from angry farmers, Dayton admitted that he didn't know about the tax "until it was too late."

Really. The constitution gives the governor three days (excluding Sundays) to consider any bill that reaches his desk.

Moreover, a governor has dozens of staffers and attorney who review the legislation and provide guidance and counsel to the governor before he signs or vetoes.

In other words, there's really no excuse.

The second infamous "I signed what?" incident occurred around the Vikings stadium bill.

The bill contained permission for the team to charge "personal seat licenses" to season ticket holders and keep all the revenue.

These "PSLs" are essentially flat fees a season ticket holder pays for the "right" to buy season tickets.

When PSLs became a flashpoint around the stadium, as the funding mechanisms fell flat, Dayton claimed that he didn't know of the PSLs and that the legislature "snuck" them into the bill he signed.

Embarrassing.

CHARITY IS FOR OTHERS

Finally, there was the episode where it was revealed that Dayton gave virtually nothing to charity, as reflected in his tax returns.

Dayton's tax returns from 2012 and 2011 revealed that he gave a total of \$2,750 to charity during that time, despite income of \$685,000 over that time, for a giving rate of .4% of his income.

This is relevant for two reasons.

One, a large chunk of Dayton's income wasn't earned, it was income from trust funds set up for him. A true silver spoon affair.

Second, like all Dems, Dayton loved to engage the rhetoric of higher taxes in the name of the wealthy "paying their fair share."

Thus, Dayton practiced charity at the point of a gun for others, yet voluntarily gave virtually nothing when it came to his own charitable practices.

You elected this guy governor, Minnesota.

Twice.

August 16, 2019

Quote of the Week: “Poor kids are just as bright and just as talented as white kids.”

- “Sleepy” Joe Biden

In This Issue:

1. The Leviathan Cometh;
2. Green’s Dirty Secret.

THE LEVIATHAN COMETH

Finding and documenting waste, fraud and abuse in Minnesota government is like shooting fish in a barrel.

It may be easy, but it’s very important.

The state will spend this biennium over \$45 billion of your hard-earned money.

Of that amount, over \$13 billion will be spent on health and human services by the Department of Human Services (DHS).

DHS has been in the news quite a bit lately, as scandal after scandal has engulfed the beleaguered agency.

It seems as if the story of Minnesota government is simply a revolving door of agencies trading places and rotating the title of “worst agency.”

The busiest man in government has to be Jim Nobles, who runs the Office of Legislative Auditor (OLA), which is responsible for investigating and auditing state government.

He is now in the process of firing up an investigation into how HHS overpaid two Indian tribes over \$25 over the course of about 5 years, according to initial estimates.

It’s nothing short of appalling to consider the turmoil and scandal emanating from HHS in the recent past:

October 2013: MnSURE (Obamacare) web site launch failure. Ultimately, the web site would cost \$190 million to get up and running.

January 2016: A failure to properly determine eligibility for various programs results in at least \$271 million in improper benefits being paid.

July 2017: \$7.7 million in fraudulent Medicaid payments discovered.

April 2018: DHS writes off over \$30 million in Minnesota Care premiums because of software problems.

May 2018: The OLA reports significant problems with oversight of the DHS Childcare Assistance Program (CCAP). OLA noted, "DHS did not implement sufficient program integrity controls for licensing childcare providers and lacked some key controls to identify errors and to inhibit, track, and recover improper payments."

July 2018: Data breach at DHS exposes the personal data of 21,000 citizens.

September 2018: Data breach at DHS exposes the personal data of 3,000 citizens.

April 2019: Data breach at DHS exposes the personal data of 11,000 citizens.

June 2019: Medical director at DHS demands more agency accountability measures – gets fired.

July 2019: After placing the DHS Inspector General on investigatory leave, it's revealed that the investigation has yet to even begin.

July 2019: Top deputies resign.

July 2019: DHS commissioner resigns after only months on the job.

August 2019: DHS overpays two Indian tribes over \$25 million, OLA starts investigation.

It's hard to believe that so many taxpayers want to give the DFL total control, resulting in more unaccountable money being spent, along with no real desire to exercise the legislature's oversight obligations.

GREEN'S DIRTY SECRET

The "renewable" energy crowd has long gotten away with propagating an image of the industry as pristine, clean, and nothing but beneficial for the environment.

Not true.

Take the wind industry, which is dominated by massive, and growing, wind turbines that dot America's prairie's and coast lines.

To start, the turbines are an eyesore, which is why so many liberal NIMBY's don't

want them in their own backyards.

The vista from the veranda of summer homes on Martha's Vineyard surely can't be sullied, even if in the name of saving the planet from the ravages of global cooling, er, global warming, er, climate "disruption."

Moreover, the turbines every year kill and maim increasing numbers of federally protected birds, including the Bald Eagle.

Most importantly, these turbines are filled with a great deal of metals, much of it mined from jurisdictions with appalling environmental records.

While different models require different amounts of these metals, the "ballpark" estimate of one 3 mega-watt turbine is as follows:

335 tons of steel;
4.7 tons of copper;
1,200 tons of concrete;
3 tons of aluminum;
2 tons of rare earth elements, including neodymium and dysprosium.

Much of these elements and their constituent parts must be mined, which is normally anathema to eco-nut crowd, who spend a lot of time opposing mining.

More troubling, the necessary rare earth metals are mined and processed in China, a country both hostile to American national security and a country sporting a reprehensible environmental record.

It is estimated that China controls over 95% of the world's rare earth deposits, and has the market cornered in large part because most first world countries won't issue permits for such mining.

The U.S. wind industry requires between 5 and 6 million pounds of rare earth metals each year.

Note that the mining of neodymium and dysprosium produces radioactive waste on a one to one basis.

For every ton of the mineral mined, it produces a ton of radioactive waste, according to the Bulletin of Atomic Science.

As one can appreciate, China doesn't have disposal safeguards in place that even come close to protecting people and the environment. Horror stories of Chinese citizens near these mines becoming sick and dying are legion.

Compare that to America, where radioactive waste storage is so thick with

standards and safeguards, we can't even get a permanent storage site in desolate Nevada approved.

Solar panels aren't a whole lot better.

These panels contain materials like cadmium telluride, copper indium selenide, cadmium gallium (di)selenide, copper indium gallium (di)selenide, hexafluoroethane, lead, and polyvinyl fluoride. Additionally, silicon tetrachloride, a byproduct of producing crystalline silicon, is highly toxic.

There are increasing concerns that these chemicals can be washed out of panels by rainwater. Moreover, they certainly get washed into the ground when panels are broken during severe weather outbreaks like thunderstorms and hurricanes.

In any case, despite the presence of these chemicals, solar panels are currently disposed of by chucking them in landfills.

It is estimated that in 2016, 250,000 metric tons of solar panel waste was produced world-wide.

Moreover, the economics of recycling solar panels don't turn a profit, meaning that there is no market incentive to recycle the panels in the absence of subsidies.

The bottom line is that "clean" energy isn't so clean and comes with its own trade-offs.

It isn't just coal, nuclear, and natural gas that comes with a downside.

August 23rd, 2019

Quote of the Week: “Sea level increases are going to continue no matter what we do now. But we can prevent much larger sea level increases. Much more rapid increases in temperature. The heat wave was in Europe. Now it’s in Arctic. We’re seeing huge melting of the ice there. So, the warnings of the scientists 10 years ago, 20 years ago, 30 years ago, unfortunately were accurate.”

- Al Gore 8/11/19

Quote of the Week: “I’m hearing from people questions about what’s been achieved, and I realized that impeachment, trade wars, the racist tweets, they command these news cycles.”

- Rep. Dean Phillips (D – MN3)

In This Issue:

1. Inconvenient Facts;
2. Believe Her;
3. Denied.

INCONVENIENT FACTS

Did you forget that you’re supposed to be scared of global-warming-climate-change-climate-disruption?

You would be forgiven for having done so, even though 42 of the 44 Democrats running for president have named this menace the biggest threat to national security.

China, anyone? Iran? North Korea? Russia? Anyone?

With interest in global warming at an all time low (not even half of independents think global warming will be a problem in their lifetime), the media has been doing much to keep the issue alive. After all, Al Gore has only made about \$200 million off the issue and a man has to feed his family, so says Latrell Sprewell.

So, where does Mother Earth stand after Gore made his predictions of the apocalypse back in 2006?

Sea levels will rise as much as 20 feet. That pitch, as they say, was just a bit outside. Sea levels have risen, on average, 1/8th of an inch per year, for the last 10,000 years. Thus, your big toe may be underwater since 2006, but probably not your house.

Storms will grow more powerful and frequent. Hurricane activity has slowed down. Moreover, many climate experts say that it's nearly impossible to blame global warming for recent hurricanes.

In fact, there have been no named Atlantic Ocean storms so far this hurricane season, which hasn't happened since 1982, some 24 years before Gore's 2006 pronouncements.

Mount Kilimanjaro is losing its snowcap. Wrong. The snow cap is increasing.

Polar bears, according to Gore, are "being forced off the planet." Not true. There are four times as many polar bears now as in the 1960s.

Gore also claimed that summer sea ice in the Arctic could be completely gone by 2013. While Arctic ice is shrinking, Antarctic ice is increasing.

In short, climate change is becoming just another sci fi scare tactic that will go the way of global cooling, over-population, acid rain, AIDS killing everyone, alar, and Ebola.

BELIEVE HER

Believer her. If he's Republican. It's been a tough few weeks for the real #metoo movement, as it continues to be weaponized by the Left.

First, we had the recent puff piece in the New Yorker, portraying erstwhile senator Al Franken as the avuncular, disheveled nice guy from Minnesota who got ruffed up by the ladies in DC and was bullied into giving up his Senate seat.

Now he's relegated to moping around his million-dollar manse, looking for purpose in life and forlornly spending his hours staring out the window, wondering what might have been – if only he hadn't been caught.

Never mind the rape jokes and the photographic evidence of his piggery.

As a democrat, there is a certain amount of rehabilitation to which he is entitled from the media.

Now comes Mark Halperin, a disgraced democrat and erstwhile media mogul (synonymous) who dashed out the public eye in 2017 when over a dozen women came forward alleging his sexual harassment, including exposing himself to women and using violence to make unwanted advances.

But that was waaaayyy back in 2017.

Plus, Halperin is about to publish a book about how to beat Trump in 2020.

Some things are just too important, apparently.

The book was written with the help of liberal stalwarts like Donna Brazile, James Carville, David Axelrod, Kathleen Sebelius, Bob Shrum and Mark Mellman.

No word on whether Anthony “Carlos Danger” Weiner chimed in on the book.

Many of Halperin’s alleged victims are outraged, saying they’re being victimized again.

“Men like him don’t change. He spent decades using his position of power in the media to sexually assault women. He hasn’t even apologized to his victims!”

“Every person who’s helping him regain power and a public platform is complicit in retraumatizing all the victims.”

“He leveraged his position as a prominent journalist to prey on women.”

“He has yet to take responsibility for his actions by apologizing to his victims or demonstrating genuine contrition. Giving him a book once again puts him in a position of authority and that is a slap to all the women that he has victimized.”

This publication has written before regarding the shameful co-opting of this issue by political opportunists who want to turn a very serious social and legal issue into a political weapon.

Sexual harassers must be identified and punished, regardless of politics or station in life.

Selective outrage on the part of the Left in the name of partisan politics demeans the experience of many victims and undermines broad-based support for needed public policy changes.

Unfortunately, sexual harassment is found across the political spectrum. It should be off limits to partisanship and political game playing. And it should be stamped out wherever it is found.

DENIED

It’s apparently controversial for a sovereign nation to deny entrance to people who have made controversial remarks about that nation and also support measures to harm and weaken that nation.

This is apparently true, even when that nation is the subject of regular attacks from neighbors who publicly avow to destroy that nation and refuse to recognize its right to even exist.

Welcome to the Jewish state of Israel, which this week denied travel visas to two members of Congress, Minnesota's own Ilhan Omar and Rashida Tlaib of Michigan.

This publication has no trouble with the decision.

As a sovereign nation-state, Israel can admit anyone it wants and deny admission to anyone.

For any reason or no reason at all. That's what sovereignty is all about.

In this case, however, there was ample justification.

This is all explained best by the words of, get ready for it, liberal comedian Bill Maher.

Said Maher, "It's predicated on this notion, I think — it's very shallow thinking — that the Jews in Israel, mostly white, and the Palestinians are browner, so they must be innocent and correct, and the Jews must be wrong. As if the occupation came right out of the blue, that this completely peaceful people found themselves occupied"

He further noted, "Congresswoman Omar has said things like 'It's all about the Benjamins,' 'Israel has hypnotized the world,' 'May Allah awaken the people and help them see the evil doings of Israel.' She apologized for it, but it's out there: Jews control the world, control the money. I can see why they don't get a hero's welcome."

So can we.

August 30th, 2019

Quote of the Week: “It’s too easy to drive in this city. We want to reach the riders that left and get to the new ones as well. And part of that has to do with actually making driving harder. Sometimes you have to tell people what’s good for them.”

- Phil Washington, executive director of Los Angeles Metro

Quote of the Week: “They’re stupid questions. Do you understand what ‘no comment’ means?”

- Rep. Ilhan Omar (D – MN5)

In This Issue:

1. The Paternalistic Transit Sovereign;
2. The Paternalistic Education Sovereign;
3. The Curious Case of Ilhan Omar.

THE PATERNALISTIC SOVEREIGN

In case you forgot, you would be well served to recall that the heart of the liberal dogma is a belief that government is needed to properly direct the lives of the governed. There is a smug, paternalistic, arrogant belief that properly bred and educated bureaucrats are needed to provide direction and guidance to the great unwashed masses who would otherwise live pathetic, brutish lives.

The logical outcome of such a belief is total governmental control of our lives, totally antithetical to Founding principle of natural rights and the principle that government possess only those limited powers delegated by the people.

Nowhere is this arrogance on display more than in the field of mass transit. Oh, did you think that mass transit was about “options” and “choice?”

How quaint.

Transit, much like housing and education, is a titanic battle over who shall control citizens. Shall government dictate, or shall citizens govern themselves?

These issues are playing out in very direct ways, with California and New York seeing these issues come to a head.

A recent Wall Street Journal article highlighted the mass transit fight in Los Angeles, where private automobiles and ride sharing programs are beating the spot out of mass transit in the marketplace.

Since 2013, public transportation in LA has seen a 24% decline, as commuters migrate to either their own cars to ride shares like Uber and Lyft.

The reason is quite clear: mass transit is slower, less direct, and often entails sharing a bus with people who range from annoying to dangerous. In today's LA, that person sitting next to you on the bus could be carrying typhus, scurvy, or the bubonic plague.

This is all very frustrating, of course, to the erudite bureaucrats who have been charged with getting the hoi polloi out of cars on to busses.

This is especially true since the city is in the midst of a 40-year, \$120 billion Maoist "master plan" to create a mass transit utopia.

Basically, there are two ways to influence consumer choice. You can either provide a superior product or service and entice change, or you can coerce people through the explicit or implicit threat of negative government sanction.

In the eyes of the bureaucrat, there is only one way.

Thus, those in charge of LA Metro, the city's transit authority, are contemplating ways to force people out of cars.

Of course, those options must be examined and vetted by a well-paid outside consultant.

These options center on eliminating road lanes in favor of bike lanes as well as eliminating parking spaces, which is hardly new or innovative.

What's interesting is that in uber-liberal LA, a rebellion is brewing, with crowds showing up at public hearings to protest these exercises in central planning.

As Phil Washington, the bureaucrat in charge will lecture us, "Sometimes you have to tell people what's good for them."

And sometimes, Mr. Washington, the people have to tell the government to get bent.

THE PATERNALISTIC EDUCATION SOVEREIGN

Right here in Minneapolis, the fight for educational choice is coming down to a similar decision regarding who will control the education of a child.

This year, the Minneapolis public schools lost over 1,500 students to charter schools or open enrollment into neighboring districts.

Over 80% of those students are students of color, leaving behind failing public schools in search of a better education.

In fact, over 1/3rd of Minneapolis school age children attend a school other than their local public school.

The flight out of Minneapolis public schools are been a long-term trend and a growing one.

In 2003, 4,669 students attended school outside a district school. Those attending a local public school numbered 45,443.

In 2018, 18,044 students attended a school outside their local public school. Those attending a local public school in Minneapolis numbered 35,141.

Clearly, parents, particularly parents of color, are voting with their feet and sending their children to a charter school, a private school, or an open enrollment option in a neighboring district.

Just like in transportation, the response has been to either restrict or outright prohibit charter schools and open enrollment options.

Led by the powerful teachers' union, California and New York are leading the charge in this regard.

While the obvious reason is to force students into school district where their union members work, the ostensible reason to force children into failing schools is that these children bring funding with them, which will "properly" fund those failing schools.

To believe this tripe, one must engage in the suspension of disbelief and believe that the reason many public schools are failing is merely because they haven't been "adequately" funded.

Right. Funding for public education has skyrocketed in recent decades while the outcomes have plummeted.

Public schools are failing for reasons that are both within and out of the control of government.

In any case, parents deserve the right to have a choice in education.

This choice is a fundamental right and absolutely critical to any chance at upward mobility for many of these children.

Sentencing a child to a failing school is a moral crime.

Republicans would be well served make a public fight with Democrats over this issue.

Let parents see who supports parents and who supports political donors.

While the fight isn't quite here yet, it's coming.

With 2020 just around the corner, the DFL and Education Minnesota are no doubt contemplating what the legislative agenda will look like if the DFL controls everything.

THE CURIOUS CASE OF ILHAN OMAR

The Watchdog needs help. We admit it.

We can't keep up with the love life of Ilhan Omar. We need a wire chart.

To whom is she married. What does she mean by "married?" "Married" as recognized by her faith? "Married" in the eyes of the law?

For a first-term member of Congress, it appears she's been loving more than legislating.

What bill has she passed?

How many town halls has she held?

The state's campaign finance board, the Department of Revenue, and the Minnesota House have all been pulled into the business of trying to figure out who's been spending time with Ilhan.

Now it appears that the Congress, the Federal Elections Commission, and the IRS may all get their turn in wrestling with this brain teaser.

Yet another romantic bombshell exploded this week as divorce papers filed in DC claim that Omar has been stepping out with a married man.

This married man also happens to be a campaign consultant who works for a political consulting firm that has received hundreds of thousands of dollars from Omar's campaign.

This all begs the very important question of whether monies were paid for legitimate

campaign work or whether the payments facilitated the alleged affair.

Regardless, Omar should be grateful she lives in a country that not only afforded her the privilege of serving in Congress, it also practices religious freedom and pluralism. Most importantly, those adjudged guilty of engaging in extramarital affairs aren't killed.

In her home country of Somalia, social norms and cultural mores are decidedly a bit different – and medieval.

Consider:

[Somalia's](#) Islamist group [al-Shabaab](#) has publicly [stoned](#) a woman to death in a town in the south for [cheating on her husband](#), an official told Reuters.

Sheikh Mohamed Abu Abdalla, al-Shabaab's governor for Somalia's Jubba regions in the south, said Habiba Ali Isak, a 30-year-old mother of eight children, was killed by stoning in Sakow on Thursday afternoon.

Or:

Somali Islamist insurgents stoned a man to death on Sunday as punishment for alleged adultery, they said, a reminder that the militia is still strong enough to carry out public executions despite losing its grip on most towns and cities.

Hundreds of witnesses watched the death of 44-year-old Dayow Mohamed Hassan in Ramo Adey village in the south-central Bay region, the regional governor representing the al Qaeda-linked insurgency said.

Moalim Geedow told Reuters that Hassan was buried neck-deep in a hole then pelted with stones.

America, what a country!

September 6th, 2019

Quote of the Week: *“After much consultation and prayer with my family, I have decided to run for Congress. Western Minnesota families deserve a representative who will fight for their values in Washington and support President Trump’s agenda – not the socialist agenda of Nancy Pelosi, Ilhan Omar, and the rest of the squad. People here believe in our constitutional rights. They believe in the right to life. They believe in making sure the next generation has the opportunity to pursue the American dream right here in Western Minnesota.”*

- Michelle Fischbach

In This Issue:

1. Fischbach Throws in Her Hat;
2. Down-ballot Matters;
3. California Koo-Koo;
4. State Fair Poll.

FISCHBACH THROWS IN HER HAT

Former state senator, lieutenant governor, and Pawlenty running mate Michelle Fischbach of Paynesville this week announced her congressional candidacy for Minnesota’s Seventh District.

Her announcement is noteworthy because she is the first “tier 1” candidate to run for the seat in some time. Moreover, the district is interesting because it is one of those rural districts that has seen a political re-alignment in recent years, with Donald Trump taking the district by a whopping 31 points in 2016.

On top of that, the district has been represented by a moderate “blue dog” democrat, Colin Peterson, for many years.

This race will be one to watch for sure.

First, Fishbach is an excellent candidate, experienced, articulate, and dialed into both the Minnesota donor base and sure to receive attention from national GOP and aligned groups.

Second, as mentioned, the district has become distinctly red over the years. The district boasts the biggest winning margin for Trump in a district won by a democrat in 2016 – by far.

Will Colin Peterson yet again defy the district's GOP margin, especially now that he faces a serious, credible challenger?

In Peterson's favor is his long history in the district, giving him name recognition and relationships that have in the past overcome the low DFL index, making him "bigger" than the DFL in the district.

Next, 2020 isn't 2016. Will Trump remain highly popular? Clearly, the tariff issue is hurting farmers across the district, much like the rest of the nation. Moreover, presidents running for re-election often see a dip in popularity, as the burden of governing weighs on favorability ratings.

This race will be one of the most closely watched in the country, much like Minnesota's Eighth District in 2018, where Republican Pete Stauber took over a district that turned from deep blue to red over the years.

With the Trump campaign team already targeting Minnesota, it appears that our state will once again be a battleground, which is amazing considering that we were a bit of a political backwater for so many years.

DOWN-BALLOT MATTERS

Don't forget that the stakes are higher than normal at the legislative level.

The legislature elected in 2020 will be charged with re-drawing legislative district maps for the next decade.

Governor Walz won't be on the ballot, so the DFL already has a leg up on the GOP.

If the DFL further succeeds in retaining their House majority and then flipping the senate, where the GOP has a slim 35-32 majority, the DFL will draw the maps as they please, subject only to potential litigation.

While the unfortunate fact is that every election matters, thanks to government's size and scope, this one matters in a big, big way.

CALIFORNIA KOO-KOO

One advantage that the GOP will have in 2020 is that the Democrats are in full-tilt crazy mode, promulgating ideas and policies that are way, way out of step with main street America.

The Green New Deal, reparations, free college, free health care, climate change as a national security threat, confiscating guns, abortion-cum-infanticide, impeachment, no plastic straws, banning meat, no reliable electricity, and on and on.

As they say, fads all start on the west coast. The latest from Crazy California

comes from the epicenter of insanity, San Francisco.

This week, their board of supervisors (city/county council) unanimously passed a resolution labeling the National Rifle Association (NRA) a “domestic terrorism organization.”

That’s right, America’s premier firearms advocacy organization has been labeled a bunch of terrorists.

The resolution, of course, is filled with hyperbolic tripe wholly unsupported by fact.

"The National Rifle Association through its advocacy has armed those individuals who would and have committed acts of terrorism."

There apparently isn’t anything going on in San Francisco these days that demands attention.

Never mind that the city resembles a Dark Ages city-state, with ruling elites bathed in opulence while legions of citizens contend with homelessness, malnutrition, and health issues that have been eradicated in the vast majority of First World countries.

The city may be the only one in America that has smartphone apps that pinpoint areas of human excrement, so the well-heeled may avoid it and allow the city’s dedicated team of human pooper scoopers to pick it up.

San Francisco is clearly pointing out the sliver in the NRA’s eye while ignoring the log in its own.

STATE FAIR POLL

The always popular, although unscientific, state fair poll results have been released.

So how do Minnesotans feel about the issues of the day?

Here you go:

FULL RESULTS (All percentages are rounded to the nearest one-tenth. Totals are for those who actually voted on the question.)

1. Should Minnesota residents be required to provide proof of citizenship or lawful presence in the country to obtain a state driver’s license or identification card?

Yes — 42.6% (4,738)

No — 50.4% (5,607)

Undecided/No opinion — 7% (774)

2. School districts are prohibited by state statute from beginning classes before Labor Day. Should that prohibition be repealed?

Yes — 41% (4,547)
No — 42.4% (4,699)
Undecided/No opinion — 16.7% (1,847)

3. Should criminal background checks be required on all gun sales, including private transactions and at gun shows?

Yes — 89% (9,914)
No — 9% (998)
Undecided/No opinion — 2% (219)

4. Should the state provide a tax credit for donations that fund scholarships to private K-12 schools?

Yes — 36% (3,974)
No — 52.3% (5,763)
Undecided/No opinion — 11.7% (1,292)

5. Should high school students be required to take a class in personal finance, even if it means they have to give up another elective or postsecondary enrollment course option?

Yes — 70.1% (7,781)
No — 18.9% (2,101)
Undecided/No opinion — 11% (1,211)

6. Should the state ban abortions for women who are more than 20 weeks into their pregnancy?

Yes — 29.9 % (3,316)
No — 61.7% (6,847)
Undecided/No opinion — 8.4% (932)

7. Should Minnesota allow the recreational use of marijuana for those age 21 and over?

Yes — 56.3% (6,272)
No — 33.8% (3,761)
Undecided/No opinion — 9.9% (1,102)

8. Would you support a quarter-cent sales tax increase in the seven-county Twin Cities metropolitan area to fund transit improvements and expansions?

Yes — 65.5% (7,264)
No — 26.8% (2,972)
Undecided/No opinion — 7.8% (862)

9. Should the state create an insurance program to provide workers with up to 12 weeks of paid family and medical leave, to be funded by a new tax on employers and employees?

Yes — 53.3% (5,899)
No — 31.7% (3,504)

Undecided/No opinion — 15.1% (1,666)

10. A person convicted of a felony is not eligible to vote while serving any part of their sentence, including time in a correctional facility and while on probation, parole or other supervised release. Should the law be changed so a person convicted of a felony regains their right to vote immediately upon release from a correctional facility?

Yes — 60.3% (6,699)

No — 32.5% (3,607)

Undecided/No opinion — 7.3% (807)

11. Should Minnesota ban “conversion therapy” for vulnerable adults and those under the age of 18 by prohibiting mental health practitioners or professionals from seeking to change an individual’s sexual orientation or gender identity?

Yes — 74.4% (8,200)

No — 16.7% (1,844)

Undecided/No opinion — 8.9% (979)

12. Should elementary school students be required to learn cursive writing?

Yes — 55.1% (6,135)

No — 28.7% (3,194)

Undecided/No opinion — 16.2% (1,798)

September 13, 2019

Editor's Note: The Watchdog somberly notes this week the anniversary of the 9/11 terrorist attacks. May we never forget.

Quote of the Week: "Osama bin Laden died scared s**tless. Hiding behind his wife."

- Robert J. O'Neill, the Navy SEAL who killed him

In This Issue:

1. Swamp Thing;
2. The Big Takeaway from Tuesday.

SWAMP THING

News broke this week of an emerging scandal that may rank amongst the slimiest in recent Minnesota legislative history.

Would you believe it involves Democrats and the University of Minnesota?

Shocking. We know.

As this edition goes to press, questions are swirling around the manner in which State Rep. Jamie Long (DFL – Minneapolis) was hired at the University of Minnesota and who funded his salary.

This past July, Long was hired by the university's Institute on the Environment to "conduct research on Minnesota's clean energy system."

The executive director of the institute, and the one who hired Long, is Ellen Anderson, a former DFL senator from Saint Paul.

Although not reported by the media, emails provided to them show another staffer, Barb Jacobs, was involved.

Jacobs, a "project manager," is a former DFL legislative staffer.

No word on whether ANY employee at the institute isn't a DFL activist.

Primarily, taxpayers and GOP legislators want to know if Long got a sweetheart deal in getting hired and what the motivation was for the still-anonymous donor to fund

his paycheck.

According to both Long and the university, it's all good.

“Writing a job with an individual in mind is not against University HR policy for a temporary position, which is typically built around a short-term project-based need,” said a bureaucrat from the university.

Apparently, so long as the job is “temporary,” you can bypass standard hiring protocols.

Long, for his part, claims both that his hiring was “competitive,” and that the whole affair is “politically motivated.”

Clearly, an investigation is needed to answer four questions.

First, was the job created with Long in mind or did he simply see the posting, shine in the interview, and win it all?

Let's look at the timeline.

In March of 2019, email records indicate that Long was in touch with Anderson about the job, telling her it was his “top choice” for post-session employment.

In April, Anderson emailed Long, asking for help in creating the position description, in a way that would be “optimal” for Long's hiring. Later that month, Long provided language that was extensively incorporated in the final position description.

In May, university staffer Barb Jacobs noted in an email, “We got \$50K from [REDACTED] to hire Jamie Long for one year.”

In June, the job was publicly posted.

In July, Long was hired.

Re-read that timeline and ask yourself if it was a “public” and “competitive” process.

Second, serious questions have been raised regarding the anonymous donor who put up \$50,000 to fund the position.

The donor must be publicly identified and the motivation for the donation must be determined.

Is the donor a registered lobbyist? Does the donor have business before the legislature? Is the donor a wealthy DFLer, looking to bankroll Long for some reason? Did Long author or -co-author legislation in which the donor was

interested?

This may be the most important of all the questions raised.

Editor's Note: As this edition went to press, news reports indicate that the McKnight Foundation was the organization redacted from the email which noted: "We got \$50K from [REDACTED] to hire Jamie Long for one year." While questions remain, the foundation also offered a statement noting that their grant awards prohibit lobbying or the influence of legislation.

Third, Long was in contact with university employees regarding employment during the 2019 legislative session.

Did the prospect of employment influence Long's votes in the House? To what extent did his votes support the university's legislative agenda? Did he author or co-author legislation to curry favor with the university, his "top choice" for post-session work?

Finally, the position description calls for Long to engage legislators. Did any of Long's work fall under the state's definition of "lobbying?" If so, were any laws broken?

MNLARS, DHS personnel, MnSURE, and now this.

But perhaps this isn't new.

Former DFL legislator Joe Radinovich recently resigned from his job at another state agency, facing uncomfortable questions about how he was hired.

And don't forget about DFL Senator David Tomassoni of Chisholm. Way back in 2015, he was hired to be the executive director of an organization representing local government units on the Iron Range.

A state legislator working for a group that lobbies the legislature for funding.

He resigned that job.

There seems to be a pattern here that calls for a law change.

Perhaps no legislator should work for any organization that receives public dollars.

THE BIG TAKEAWAY FROM TUESDAY

You've surely heard by now that Republicans are three for three in special elections for Congress this year.

While the Left attempts to downplay the wins, there is some very troubling data

behind the wins that should cause concern for Democrats.

Take North Carolina's 9th district, where Republican Dan Bishop won a narrow victory over his Democrat opponent.

Of course, there was a lot of crowing in defeat about the thin margin.

But buried in the numbers are some interesting data points.

Take Robeson County, where 74% of residents are non-white.

Democrat Dan McCready, who also ran in 2018, saw his margin of victory go from 15% in 2018 down to 1% on Tuesday.

Cumberland County, also in the district, is 60% non-white. McCready won it in 2018. He lost it on Tuesday.

The answer might have something to do with the economy, where polling has consistently shown black and Hispanic voters giving the economy high marks.

Black and Hispanic unemployment is at a generational low.

Jobs matter. Or, to borrow a phrase, "It's the economy, stupid."

Perhaps this is also why the legacy media is running stories about the impending collapse of the economy and why President Trump doesn't deserve credit for a robust economy.

After all, these were the same pundits who claimed a Trump victory would crash the stock market.

It would probably also surprise the white, urban, liberal elites to learn that non-white Americans want many of the same things that white Americans want.

Jobs, opportunity, safe streets, and a better life for their kids.

Imagine that.

Many of these same stunned faces that couldn't comprehend Trump in 2016 are headed for a harsh case of déjà vu.

September 20, 2019

Quote of the Week: "It was totally against my alignment, what went down. The guy has a very impressive record. He has a very impressive record. So the bottom line is, you just don't screw with the process here, I don't think. That's my firm belief."

- Leland Keyser, defending Brett Kavanaugh

In This Issue:

1. We're All Going to Die!
2. The Media Death Spiral;
3. Banned Words and Phrases;
4. Opt-Out.

WE'RE ALL GOING TO DIE!

Not to get all hyperbolic, but we're all going to die – soon – according to climate prophets.

But claims regarding the impending death of Mother Earth have been around for some time. Climate alarmism is really nothing new.

In fact, it's pretty comical.

For some Friday humor, let's take a look back at some recent climate hysteria.

1967: Infamous apocalyptic prophet Paul Ehrlich (Stanford professor) proclaims impending famine for all. He declared that a "time of famines" was upon the world, that would reach its peak in 1975. He went on to proclaim the "battle to feed humanity will end in a rout."

1970: Professor James Lodge predicts that air pollution will obliterate sunlight, causing a new Ice Age by 2000. Furthermore, the generation of electricity will demand so much cooling water, clean water sources will run dry.

1970: Infamous Paul Ehrlich declares that the oceans will be "dead" by 1980. Sticking with the 1980 theme, he further predicts water and food rationing by that date.

1971: Columbia professor S.I. Rasool predicts a new Ice Age by 2021, predicting cooling temperatures year after year.

1974: Time magazine proclaims a coming Ice Age. "Telltale signs are

everywhere. From the unexpected persistence and thickness of pack ice in the waters around Iceland to the southward migration of a warmth-loving animal like the armadillo from the Midwest,” the magazine warned readers.

1974: Remember the ozone “hole?” Dozens of experts spent years warning that millions would die of skin cancer if drastic steps weren’t taken *immediately*. 45 years later, the ozone layer remains with its “hole” and skin cancer rates aren’t too much different.

1980: Remember acid rain? Experts predicted that our lakes and rivers would resemble a moonscape if radical action wasn’t taken. Congress commissioned a \$537 million study on the subject. Ten years later, the study concluded that acid rain wasn’t an environmental crisis.

1988: Australian climate experts predict that the Maldives Island chain will be under water by 2018 because of rising ocean waters from global warming. Hasn’t happened.

1989: The United Nations predicts that entire nations will be “obliterated” by rising ocean waters, creating millions of “eco-refugees.” The UN predicts all this to happen by 2000.

2000: British professor David Viner declares that “within a few years” Britain will be completely free of snow fall in the winter because of global warming.

2004: The federal government publishes a paper declaring that Britain will have a “Siberian” climate by 2020.

2008-2015: Various climate experts predict that the Arctic will be “ice free” soon. The statistics don’t support the claim in the least.

The reality is that weather and climate alarmism is as old as mankind. It’s a sort of mysticism that has existed since time immemorial, now supported by junk science instead of mystical dogma.

Don’t worry, the world isn’t about to end. Plan your day, live your life.

THE MEDIA DEATH SPIRAL

Loyal readers may roll their eyes and give this publication a loud “duh!”, but the media continues to look more and more ridiculous, petty, venal, and downright hateful by the day.

This week, headlines went on full alert that Supreme Court Justice Brett Kavanaugh was yet again the subject of a sexual harassment claim.

The claim was made by a former Yale classmate of Kavanaugh, who claimed that

the supreme court justice thrust his naughty bits into the unwilling hand of a female party guest.

The media went wild, and it took about 2 minutes beyond that for numerous democrats to start using the “I” word. Is there anyone or anything they don’t want to impeach these days?

These days, it’s a wonderful idea to wait 24 hours before believing anything the mainstream media pedals as “news.”

Sure enough, Americans learned shortly after the story was run in the New York Times that a key fact was omitted from the story.

The woman in question has no recollection of such an event ever happening.

From there, the journalistic malpractice got worse. No recollection from the alleged victim, no eyewitness corroboration, an outing of the name of the female in question, and no mention that the FBI was made aware of the claim and declined to investigate.

By the way, the person who offered the raw, unsubstantiated allegation was a man who served as a defense lawyer to Bill Clinton.

The media just gets worse and worse.

Just yesterday, as this issue went to press, the headlines were once again screaming at us that President Trump was the subject of an anonymous whistleblower complaint regarding an unspecified “promise” to an unspecified foreign person at an unspecified time regarding an unspecified issue.

Pardon us if we’re a bit skeptical right now with respect to the veracity and validity of the complaint.

It was just a few short weeks ago that CNN went all fake news on Trump by claiming that his mishandling of classified information resulted in the CIA expeditiously removing a human asset from Russia in order to presumably save the asset from compromise and certain death.

CNN shortly reversed itself when it was revealed that the asset was removed during the Obama administration.

Oops.

The media now beclowns itself in their pursuit of this president.

BANNED WORDS AND PHRASES

The following words and phrases have been banned from the Watchdog, as they have lost all meaning and context, thanks to Democrats:

“Credibly Accused”;
“Fair Share”;
“Invest”;
“Common Sense”;
“Crisis”;
“Impeach”;
“Assault-Style”;
“They”;
“Green”;
“Free.”

Thank you.

More to follow, no doubt.

OPT-OUT

Attention public school teachers.

The month of September is your designated “opt-out” month from paying dues to Education Minnesota, your union and overlord.

As you likely know, the Supreme Court has declared your compulsory union membership to be unconstitutional.

Unfortunately, the union decided that teachers only get to opt out one month a year, which isn’t what the Court said. The Court said compulsory dues offend the constitution – period.

For assistance or more information, visit:

EducatedTeachersMN.com.

October 4th, 2019

Quote of the Week: *The House of Representatives shall choose their Speaker and other Officers; and shall have the sole Power of Impeachment.*

- Article I, Section 2 of the U.S. Constitution

Quote of the Week: *The Senate shall have the sole Power to try all Impeachments. When sitting for that Purpose, they shall be on Oath or Affirmation. When the President of the United States is tried, the Chief Justice shall preside: And no Person shall be convicted without the Concurrence of two thirds of the Members present.*

- Article I, Section 3 of the U.S. Constitution

In This Issue:

1. Deep State Duplicity;
2. Senate Impeachment Role;
3. Miss Richfield.

DEEP STATE DUPLICITY

We here at the Watchdog aren't conspiracy nuts. We don't wear tinfoil hats and the label "deep state" isn't thrown around the break room very often.

Moreover, this publication has frequently disapproved of President Trump's frequent unpresidential behavior.

Having said that, there is growing evidence every day that Trump is indeed the disrupter he claims to be.

There is increasing evidence that he is indeed the subject of harassment from a bi-partisan Establishment that resents a disruptive force occupying the chief executive's seat.

The evidence is legion.

His supreme court pick is a rapist, yet the witness has no recollection.

Trump mishandled classified material, leading to the emergency extraction of a CIA asset. Later we learn the asset was removed during the Obama administration.

An entire independent counsel investigation was launched based on a false dossier and sustained by false representations to the FISA court.

Trump is accused of steering Air Force personnel to his property in Scotland. We later learn that personnel have been staying there for years, and the number is only a small fraction of those who are lodged in the area during refueling/crew rest operations.

Here we go again.

The media has breathlessly hustled the impeachment goal posts from Mueller zone over to the Ukraine zone, where we're told that Trump pressured that country's president to investigate Joe Biden and his loser kid, who was making outrageous dollars to serve on the board of a Ukrainian gas company, even though he had no expertise in the field and no experience in Ukrainian affairs.

Like most of these scandals, we just need to wait a few days for the exculpatory information to start coming out.

No matter the scandal, you can count on a different story to emerge after the initial wave of hyperbole and hysteria.

Same with this matter.

While the mainstream media isn't reporting it, a major bombshell dropped this week when it was revealed that the rules regarding whistleblower complaints were rewritten at about the same time the Ukraine whistleblower dropped his/her complaint.

This is a big deal, so bear with us for a moment.

To start, the law governing whistleblower complaints in the intelligence community grant broad discretion to the Intelligence Community Inspector General (ICIG). Thus, most of what governs whistleblower complaints is governed by ICIG policy.

There is no dispute that when the whistleblower lodged his complaint in August, he did so under rules that explicitly demand **FIRSTHAND** evidence of wrongdoing.

This is important because all news reports concerning the complaint admit that it is based on second-hand, non-eyewitness information. In other words, it's a complaint based on hearsay.

The policy under which the complaint was lodged states, in part:

FIRST-HAND INFORMATION REQUIRED

In order to find an urgent concern “credible,” the IC IG must be in possession of reliable, first-hand information. The IC IG cannot transmit information via the ICWPA based on an employee’s second-hand knowledge of wrongdoing. This includes information received from another person, such as when a fellow employee informs you that he/she witnessed same type of wrongdoing. (Anyone with first-hand knowledge of the allegations may file a disclosure in writing directly with IC IG.) Similarly, speculation about the existence of wrongdoing does not provide sufficient legal basis to meet the statutory requirements of the ICWPA. If you think that wrongdoing took place, but can provide nothing more than second-hand or unsubstantiated assertions, IC IG will not be able to process the complaint or information for submission as an ICWPA.

As you can see, any complaint lacking firsthand information is not credible.

This week, the ICIG admitted that this policy was changed in direct response to the Trump complaint, raising legitimate concerns that the ICIG altered policy to go after Trump.

Strangely, the ICIG dismissed this allegation by arguing that the change only “clarified” a previously ambiguous policy.

In the process of reviewing and clarifying those forms, and in response to recent press inquiries regarding the instant whistleblower complaint, the ICIG understood that certain language in those forms and, more specifically, the informational materials accompanying the forms, could be read — incorrectly — as suggesting that whistleblowers must possess first-hand information in order to file an urgent concern complaint with the congressional intelligence committees.

This response is laughable, when the policy (described above) demanding firsthand information is explicit and unambiguous.

The ICIG, like so many other actors in Washington, will have some serious questions to answer from the Senate.

SENATE IMPEACHMENT ROLE

As long as we’re on the topic of impeachment, let’s take a brief moment to understand the Senate’s role in the process, since the House has shown already that it’s “impeachment or bust” for the crew that won the majority on the promise that they wanted to actually govern and not engage in the maniacal pursuit and harassment of the president.

In simple terms, the Senate would sit as a jury of sorts, listening to evidence

presented by the House and then needing a 2/3rds majority to impeach and remove from office.

But it's far more than that. The Constitution makes clear that the Senate has the SOLE power to try all impeachments. This power is explicit and unambiguous.

There are no other requirements and no other rules, other than perhaps some custom and usage.

This means that the Senate has wide latitude governing this power.

For example, the Senate could immediately dismiss article of impeachment.

It could refuse to take up any proffered articles of impeachment.

It's an interesting question to determine if the Senate could ban some senators from participating in an impeachment trial because those senators have already adjudged Trump guilty and have tainted their ability to serve as an impartial "juror" during an impeachment trial.

After all, the Constitution affords the Senate latitude over its members, including the power to adjudge the "election, returns, and qualifications" of its members as well as the power to expel.

Moreover, many of the rules that govern courtroom trials don't apply to impeachment trials.

The Senate is free to consider evidence, testimony, and other items that would normally be inadmissible in a traditional courtroom.

With the irregularities that have thus far governed House proceedings against the president and his allies, the House might want to exercise some restraint, which it likely won't.

Stay tuned.

MISS RICHFIELD

When we're told to "check out" our local library, this isn't what most people had in mind.

Over in Hennepin County, their library system is sponsoring a deal called "Stories Together with Drag Performers."

According to a news report published by our friends over at Alpha News, the "stories" are as nasty and disgusting as one would imagine.

The performance offered by a dude who calls himself “Miss Richfield” is chronicled in a news story on Alpha’s web site.

Read it here: <https://alphanewsmn.com/minnesota-public-library-hires-adult-entertainment-worker-to-read-to-toddlers-for-story-hour/>

October 18th, 2019

Quote of the Week: “Washington Democrats have been engaged in a three-year-long impeachment parade in search of a rationale. Prominent House Democrats were promising impeachment at the very beginning of this presidency. Fairness and due process are not their objectives here.”

- Sen. Mitch McConnell (R – KY)

In This Issue:

1. Impeachment: Political or Judicial?
2. The Fourth Branch of Government;
3. MEA Follies.

IMPEACHMENT: POLITICAL OR JUDICIAL?

Unfortunately, truth, logic and reason are all casualties of today’s political climate. Instead, emotion, feelings, and the echo chamber of social media self-selection are the order of the day.

Thus, it’s easy to pick just about any political or public policy issue and point out the flaws of the advocates or opponents of that particular issue.

Having said that, there are some issues that are so blatantly and fatally flawed they have to be called out.

One of those issues is the secretive, opaque, and underhanded way in which the U.S. House and Chairman Adam Schiff are conducting their impeachment “inquiry” or whatever they are calling it these days (the meaning of words being the primary casualty of the liberal dogma).

The spectacle thus far has been appalling, with secret hearings, identities hidden, transcripts delayed. There hasn’t even been a formal vote of the House to launch impeachment hearings and proceedings, a clever and corrosive stratagem to allow the Democrats to proceed as they wish while protecting swing district members from going on record.

This charade has been consistently justified by the Democrats and the media as being analogous to judicial grand jury proceedings.

What a crock. Don’t believe it.

The House's power to impeach is nothing like grand jury proceedings.

The Constitution says absolutely nothing about the House impeachment power being similar to a grand jury process.

There is nothing in the text of the document or in the deliberations of the Framers that would indicate such a dubious intention.

What we do know is that the Framers vested the impeachment power in the legislative and not the judicial branch.

Such vestment clearly demonstrates that the Framers viewed impeachment as a fundamentally political exercise and not a judicial exercise.

Moreover, the Framers philosophically favored transparency and openness in government, especially in the legislative branch, the branch of government "closest to the people."

The only modern impeachment inquiry and trial was that of President Bill Clinton in 1998-1999.

Chief Justice William Rehnquist, who presided over the Senate trial, consistently ruled in favor of a broad and open process, allowing evidence that very likely wouldn't have been admissible in a courtroom during a criminal proceeding, lending further credence to the idea that impeachment is more political in nature than judicial.

Ultimately, the voters will have the opportunity to weigh in on impeachment in November of 2020, either before or after the fact.

It is interesting to note that the 1998 mid-term elections took place in the midst of the Clinton impeachment.

House Speaker Newt Gingrich had polling that showed the GOP gaining upwards of 30 seats on the popularity of impeaching Clinton.

That November, the GOP lost 5 House seats.

THE FOURTH BRANCH OF GOVERNMENT

Any rational thinking American can't help but notice that Donald Trump's presidency has exposed two things: the liberal bias of the media and the utter lack of accountability in the bureaucracy.

This resistance in the executive branch has been labeled the "deep state" in some quarters.

That designation, however, is inappropriate as it evokes a sort of paranoid, tinfoil hat connotation that minimizes the legitimacy of the issue.

In reality, the size, scope, and work rules surrounding the bureaucracy has turned it into a separate branch of government, untethered from any meaningful accountability.

Think about it. At core, the bureaucracy exists to assist the chief executive in both executing the laws and assisting the president in carrying out his policies.

In short, these people work for the president – at least in theory.

Now take a look at what's happening to President Trump, where leaks and outright resistance are the order of the day.

In the earliest days of the Trump presidency, senior Justice Department bureaucrats publicly announced that they would not defend the president's executive order restricting travel from certain countries.

A Senate investigation concluded that in Trump's first 18 weeks in office, there were 125 leaks of classified information that were potentially damaging to national security, which is a felony.

Social media is replete with various accounts and pages dedicated to the "resistance" of the Trump administration.

These employees have no right to oppose their employer or their workplace.

The choice is to support the administration or resign.

This dismal state of affairs has two fathers.

The first father is civil service rules that have made it virtually impossible to terminate employees, thus granting lifetime employment.

While it would be absurd to advocate a return to the days of machine politics, a re-balancing of interests is in order, giving the chief executive the authority to enforce some type of loyalty and accountability to person elected to head the branch.

After all, no one elected these bureaucrats.

The second father is the inability of the legislative branch to reign in the size and scope of government. Unchecked growth in government has made the executive branch virtually unmanageable.

While it is probably too much to ask of the legislative branch to do their job, we can

hopefully rely on the Supreme Court to restore the blurred lines of the Separation of Powers doctrine.

It's high time the Court put an end to the regular practice of Congress delegating its powers to the executive and its sub-branch, the bureaucracy.

Justice Gorsuch has already shown himself to be concerned with this issue.

There really is no conspiratorial deep state. The reality is that we have a wholly out of control and unaccountable bureaucracy, which is a matter of great concern, to be sure.

MEA FOLLIES

Most Watchdogs have read news reports this week about the annual two-day school break called MEA, ostensibly to give teachers time off to attend some sort of union confab, that now has been scaled back to one day.

Of course, that one day is a Thursday, continuing to ensure maximum disruption to student learning.

Watchdogs should ask their local public school district what they plan to do in response to this scaling back.

Some districts have announced they will make no changes while others have rightly declared that these two days will be restored to regular school days, giving the two days off at another time like the end of the year or Christmas (if we can still use that term).

It's about time school districts stopped with this charade and put those two days back into student learning.

October 25th, 2019

Quote of the Week: “Listen to this. Democrats’ first target is changing the tax code so that working families across the country have to subsidize wealthy people in states like New York, New Jersey and California.”

- Sen. Mitch McConnell (R – KY)

In This Issue:

1. Those SALTy Liberals;
2. When the Levee Breaks;
3. Stauber!

THOSE SALTY LIBERALS

In case you were wondering whether or not uber-wealthy, uber-liberal coastal elites were running the Democrat party, you need wonder no longer.

This week saw Senate Democrat Leader Chuck Schumer of New York force a vote of the Senate to make the IRS recognize disallowed tax shelters to help wealthy coastal elites get a federal tax credit for high state and local taxes they pay.

Here’s how the “SALT” (state and local taxes) issue has changed under the new tax law passed in 2017.

Prior to 2017, taxpayers got an unlimited federal tax credit for the state and local taxes paid. This was a boon for rich people in high tax states like California, New York and New Jersey.

Of course, it was a further boon to the limousine liberals in places like New York that also have big local taxes (New York City has an income tax, for example).

In effect, the federal government was both subsidizing and encouraging big SALT taxes, giving political cover to big government legislators in these states while making working families from “fly over country” subsidize the scheme.

When Republicans crafted the historic 2017 tax reform bill, the original intent was to eliminate the SALT deduction in its entirety.

After whining and sniveling from members of both parties in these states and other high tax states, a cap of \$10,000 was agreed upon, meaning that taxpayers could only deduct \$10,000 of SALT taxes on their federal return.

To be clear, this change had an impact only on wealthy taxpayers, mostly in the

three states mentioned above.

Moreover, even those taxpayers received other tax benefits under the new law.

In yet another example of the Left being truly exposed for who they are, an immediate push was made in these high tax states to fashion tax shelters to make up for the SALT deduction cap and continue the scheme of allowing states like California to tax the crap out of people and make everyone else subsidize them through the federal tax code.

For example, many states set up tax shelters that allowed the rich to make charitable contributions to state-sanctioned shelters and then allow a dollar for dollar credit on their state return that they could in turn use on the federal code for a deduction. A classic tax-shelter scheme to avoid the letter and intent of the SALT cap legislation.

The IRS immediately crafted rules to disallow this deduction on the federal code, giving effect to the legislative intent to cap the deduction.

Hence the vote this week. The intent from the Democrats was to give legislative approval to the state tax shelters and thereby give a tax break to wealthy taxpayers. You know, the people they constantly say need to “pay their fair share.”

Amongst the voluminous examples of liberal hypocrisy, this one really takes the cake.

Democrat senators, who never miss a chance to bark their talking points about “working families” and an economy “that works for everyone” spent political capital to take a vote to restore a tax break for the wealthy elites who truly run their party.

The resolution was defeated 52-43, with Sanders, Harris, and Warren skipping the vote.

If Republicans were smart, they would schedule a vote on this subject each and every week.

Let America see these Democrats spending their time fighting for tax breaks that only benefit the people who fund their party and have concerns such as where they will locate their homes (multiple).

The rationale is clear. After capping these deductions, real estate data clearly show that the wealthy are fleeing from places like NY to low-tax jurisdictions like Florida.

How interesting, considering that these same people constantly virtue signal to the rest of us about the importance of funding government while crowing about their enlightened view of the benefits of Big Government.

Much like mass transit, the liberal elites consider high taxes as something for other people to experience.

WHEN THE LEVEE BREAKS

Have you heard this one before? School district offers property tax increase levy, justifies it by noting the “chronically underfunded” status of the district, and threatens painful cuts should the ransom not be delivered.

Yes, it’s happening again. This year, nearly 40 districts will be going out to levy, with the White Bear Lake schools seeking a record-setting \$326 million bounty.

As usual, the issue in each district is opaque and unnecessarily complex, with some districts saying increased enrollment is the cause and others saying decreased enrollment is the cause.

Each levy question raises numerous questions taxpayers should be asking.

For example, what has been done with increased state funding?

For reference, the state in 1999 spent \$3.8 billion on education funding. In 2009, the number was \$7 billion. In 2019, the number is \$9.6 billion. Inflation and student enrollment certainly have not gone up that much in 20 years. These increases are well above inflation and enrollment growth.

A related question is what the district has done to control costs. For example, personnel costs are by far the biggest expense in any school district budget. What has the school board done to control those costs? The answer is likely nothing.

How ironic that a recent news article featured quotes from a school district spokesman justifying that district’s levy. Is there some reason why the district superintendent or the board chair couldn’t be interviewed? Does that district really need an additional employee?

Moreover, it is likely that any district has substantial administrative bloat.

In any case, be an informed voter and do your homework. Many of these levees are intentionally scheduled in off years and even at off times in order to depress turnout, which gives the pro-levy side a better chance to mobilize, primarily with teacher union resources.

You may have a levy coming up next month or even in December.

STAUBER!

The political re-alignment in the 8th Congressional District is complete.

While time certainly remains, the DFL has thus far thrown in the towel in this former

stronghold, as challengers to incumbent GOP rep Pete Stauber don't offer much firepower.

One is a candidate from Baxter, MN who appears to have no platform other than complaints about the cost of insulin, a real issue but one that doesn't rise to anywhere close to the top of voter concerns at the federal level. In fact, this candidate professes to not have a firm opinion on mining, a critical issue to the district.

The other candidate is a dude named Soren Sorenson, his legal name as far as the Watchdog can discern.

This candidate deems Dennis Kucinich a political role model.

Consistent with that sentiment, a recent news profile indicates that his platform is "war and peace, as well as progressive staples like single-payer health care, human rights, anti-poverty programs and labor-oriented causes."

Moreover, he appears to be a serial candidate, and not a successful one at that. The same profile piece indicates that he deems this is first real race since losing the Minnesota House 2A race as well as the 8th Congressional district endorsement – way back in 2018. You know, like last year.

So, what has he been doing with his time since the calendar turned from 2018 to 2019?

He says "community activism" has been keeping him busy.

Whatever.

Congratulations on your re-election, Rep. Stauber. Well deserved.

November 1st, 2019

Quote of the Week: "The department did not have legal authority to make the payments; it did not document why, when, and who decided it was appropriate to make the payments; no one at DHS takes responsibility for the decision; and no one at DHS can provide a rationale for the payments."

- Legislative Auditor James Nobles

In This Issue:

1. Katie Hill is no Victim;
2. Comfortably Numb;
3. Had Enough Scandal?
4. Had Enough Scandal?

KATIE HILL IS NO VICTIM

Rep. Katie Hill, who resigned from Congress recently, is being martyred by the left as a victim of sexism, homophobia, revenge porn, and all manner of card playing and whataboutism.

Let's take more measured look at her scandal.

Former Rep. Hill is accused of engaging in a sexual relationship with a staff member of her congressional office and a separate relationship with a campaign staff member.

These allegations are troubling and deserve a full investigation because the law rightly dictates that in situations of a power differential, the subordinate party often cannot legally consent to a sexual relationship.

This is why inmates can't legally consent to a relationship with a prison guard.

This is why patients can't legally consent to relationship with their health care provider.

This is why subordinate soldiers can't legally consent to a relationship with a superior NCO or officer.

The same rationale holds true in this case. Rep. Hill was at the top of the chain of supervision in both her congressional office and on her campaign team. The other parties to alleged relationship were junior staffers and thus in a very unequal power dynamic, making them vulnerable to being leveraged into a relationship.

The law is absolutely correct to recognize that these kinds of relationships are inherently unequal, making one party subject to exploitation.

But has never stopped the left from excusing the behavior of certain favored people, making it clear that “MeToo” is nothing more than a political weapon for them.

Bill Clinton had a relationship with an intern (the ultimate power differential) that was “private” and thus no one’s business.

Al Franken shouldn’t have resigned.

Katie Hill is the victim here.

That she happens to be a declared bi-sexual, a woman, and a Millennial makes no difference in the eyes of the law – nor should it.

On the revenge porn account, there is a legitimate issue to be investigated regarding the unauthorized release of the tawdry photos apparently showing her engaged in sexual acts and drug use.

Having said that, her apparent lack of discretion in capturing these moments on her phone was just plain dumb.

Her apparent recording of these incidents doesn’t make her a hip, sophisticated Millennial doing something that the old folks can’t understand.

Taking photos and video of private, intimate moments is dumb. That so many narcissistic young people feel the need to capture and share these acts with others doesn’t make it less so. If you commit it to your phone or your email, you are risking dissemination to a broader audience, even the public domain.

It’s wrong, disgusting, and often illegal for people to “out” or blackmail people with the release or threatened release of embarrassing material, but the more important lesson is not put yourself in that position in the first place. This is especially true when one is a public figure.

The narrative that this was some sort of “private” relationship underserving of scrutiny is flat out wrong.

The narrative that this all about a bi-sexual woman and not a hetero-sexual man is bunk.

Any person who allegedly engages in a sexual relationship with a subordinate in cases like these should be investigated regardless of gender, orientation, etc. “Credibly accused” is the catch phrase the left likes to employ.

In this case, the left is merely playing politics and excusing the alleged bad behavior of one of their own.

If Katie Hill had an “R” behind her name, we all know that it would be a different story.

This is pandering, deflection, and whataboutism at its worst.

On with the investigation.

COMFORTABLY NUMB

With so many scandals regarding waste, fraud and taxpayer abuse in Minnesota government coming out, it can be easy to become desensitized to the fiscal carnage and resulting erosion of any remaining faith in government to operate in a responsible manner.

The latest mind-blowing revelation is that the state’s Department of Human Services kicked out \$29 million in payments that were illegal and unauthorized. More shocking, the investigating agency couldn’t ever determine who authorized the payments and why.

Talk about a total and complete lack of accountability.

Of course, this all needs to stop.

It needs to stop with Republicans demanding a different course in response.

It’s time to stop demanding accountability from the offending agency and end talk of “reforming” an incorrigible government.

No one will be held accountable for this latest scandal. Even if the people responsible are identified, the “punishment” will likely consist of early retirement, or a severance package, and re-employment with some other unit of government.

Moreover, any proposed reforms will either go nowhere, be watered down, or simply not be enforced.

It’s time, in other words, for Republicans to propose a different way of dealing with this constant, ongoing crisis of waste, fraud, and abuse.

First, it’s time to declare and recognize that state government has simply become too big and unwieldy to operate in any responsible way.

It’s time to admit that government needs to be reduced in size and scope because both taxpayers and the people government programs serve are all too often not served well – or at all.

Does any reader really believe that this is the only scandal happening in state government today?

The reality is that there are scandals happening all over, just waiting for exposure.

Second, the GOP should unveil a program of deterrence that criminalizes this behavior. Bureaucrats who break the law and negligently allow this waste, fraud and abuse shouldn't get severance or retirement. They should go to jail.

They should be barred from future employment with the state or any Minnesota local government unit. Any private entity that employs them in the future should be barred from competing for a state or local unit of government contract.

It's time to provide a legitimate deterrent to this behavior.

Third, the state should provide good incentives and the proper protection for whistleblowers.

Employees who do the right thing to report this behavior shouldn't be pariahs. They should be recognized as good and valued public servants.

Fourth, the Office of Legislative Auditor should be enlarged and given the resources and legal authority to root out this corruption.

The office should be given special prosecutorial powers.

Legislative Auditor Jim Nobles should be made the Elliot Ness of Minnesota government, with a mandate to stomp out corruption, negligence, and restore the serious erosion of trust in our governing institutions.

We are at a crisis point here. The scandals have reached into the hundreds of millions of dollars, with no real accountability or meaningful reform.

It's no longer enough to expose this garbage and then hold a press conference and committee hearing about it. These deep problems have been "admired" for far too long.

It's no longer good enough to hear agency heads make excuses and then recite the standard bromides about how seriously they take the scandal and the empty promises to restore taxpayer trust.

Most taxpayers are well beyond accepting this all-too-familiar song and dance as meaningful.

There's an election coming next year. Republicans should stand up for taxpayers

and challenge the DFL to join them in getting serious about responsible governance.

HAD ENOUGH SCANDAL?

Yes, you say?

Minnesota government says, “too bad!”

On the heels of the \$29 million in authorized DHS payments comes news that another state software program is out of control and failing.

MnChoices is a software program designed to help officials properly evaluate and disburse over \$3 billion in payments to people who qualify for various types of disability assistance.

The state has spent over \$600 million on the software.

Would you believe it doesn't work?

Of course you would.

The software costs over \$170 million a year to operate, more than 10 times the projected cost.

Fixes to the program were supposed to be delivered this year. Now the fixes are promised for 2021.

Those who were supposed to use the system, mainly social services workers, are reduced to using pen and paper and other work arounds for a system that taxpayers shell out \$170 million to operate each year.

Just like other broken programs in state government, taxpayers aren't the only losers here.

Many of the people eligible for these payments are seriously ill people with desperate health issues.

The failure to properly evaluate their claims could result in eligible people being denied proper benefits while ineligible people may walk off with ill-gotten benefits.

The stakes are high as heck.

But we'll all wait around until 2021 until the promised fixes arrive.

Please.

HAD ENOUGH SCANDAL?

Don't leave. We have one more for you.

This one comes from the City of Minneapolis (surprised?)

Having plenty of money and having solved the big problems, the city embarked on the building of new public services building to properly house the many bureaucrats who administer city ordinances, like the one mandating the sale of fruits and vegetables at city convenience stores.

The crowning jewel of this new building is a massive ceiling-mounted sculpture at the building's entrance.

Want to guess the cost?

If you said \$772,000, you would be correct.

\$772,000 for a sculpture.

When called out, do you suppose the city was contrite and embarrassed?

A person from the city with the title of "city arts administrator" said the following:

"We wanted a piece that would capture people's attention when they came into the building. We wanted a piece that would be interesting and exciting. We also wanted a piece that would be interesting to people who came into the building over and over again."

The state sends about \$80 million each year in aid payments to Minneapolis. If they have money like this for sculptures and the salary of an "arts administrator" they certainly don't need these state aid payments.

Have we all had enough government for the week?

If this wasn't all enough, a story about low and regressive math and reading test scores was omitted because of space.

The same is true of a story about a GOP legislator pursuing legislation to ban nicotine sales to anyone under age 21. You can carry a machine gun in Afghanistan. You can get married. You can enter into legal contracts. You can vote. Just don't buy a tin of Copenhagen!

November 8, 2019

Quote of the week: "Coups have started. ... We will get rid of him."

- Whistleblower attorney Mark Zaid

Quote of the Week: "The whistleblower's lawyer gave away the game. It was always the Democrats' plan to stage a coup and impeach President Trump and all they ever needed was the right scheme. They whiffed on Mueller so now they've settled on the perfectly fine Ukraine phone call. This proves this was orchestrated from the beginning."

- Trump campaign communications director Tim Murtaugh

In This Issue:

1. The Real Election Night Results;
2. Big Government;
3. Saint Paul.

THE REAL ELECTION NIGHT RESULTS

So here we are again, loyal readers. Spending yet another week brining you the real news to counter the propaganda of the spinners, liars, prevaricators, and hucksters in the mainstream media.

It's not journalism. It's outright propaganda.

To read the fake news, one would be led to believe that Tuesday's election results were a total disaster for the GOP and a personal rebuke of the president, who serves as the white whale to the media's Captain Ahab.

Here's what the media didn't tell you about Tuesday's results, which were, on the whole, spectacular for Trump, the GOP, and conservatism.

Kentucky.

Yes, Governor Matt Bevin appears to have been narrowly defeated, with a possible recount in the offing. First, the media is lying about the Kentucky race meaning that there has been both a rejection of Trump and a re-alignment in that state's politics.

First, Bevin was remarkably unpopular. Second, Bevin's challenger was a popular

attorney general who hails from a famous political family. In fact, the challenger's own father was the previous governor of Kentucky from 2007-2015. Third, Kentucky has had more democrat governors than GOP in recent times.

Now for the real story, which is that Republicans ran the table in all other races in Kentucky.

Take the attorney general race. The GOP flipped the seat and elected one of their own for the first time in 70 years. Moreover, the GOP candidate made history by being the first African American to be elected statewide in Kentucky – ever. Kentucky was admitted to the Union in 1792. If the new attorney general had been a democrat, the media would have made it a headline.

Republicans in Kentucky also flipped the secretary of state office. In addition, Republicans won state auditor, state treasurer, and the agriculture commissioner.

Finally, there was one special election to the Kentucky House. The GOP won that race as well.

Mississippi.

In the Magnolia State, the GOP won all eight state-wide offices on the ballot, including flipping the attorney general's office.

Texas.

In Texas, a state that the Fake News crowd would like to believe is on the verge of turning blue, voters overwhelmingly approved a constitutional amendment to prohibit a state income tax. Imagine that happening in Minnesota! In Texas, it is now enshrined in the constitution that there shall be no state income tax.

North Carolina.

The media would like you to forget that this was another state they put into the "Republicans are losing" category. In particular, they singled out NC-9, a district that featured a disgraced GOP incumbent who was forced out, making for a special election where the media lionized the democrat.

To their chagrin, the GOP retained the seat Tuesday night.

In another district in the western part of the state, the GOP candidate crushed the democrat 70-30 in that special election.

So much for North Carolina embracing socialism.

Colorado.

We're not done here. Republicans and conservatives scored a major victory Tuesday night, defeating a ballot measure to repeal spending caps under the Colorado's TABOR (Taxpayer Bill of Rights) constitutional amendment that puts

taxing and spending limits on state government.

Virginia.

About the Old Dominion. Virginia has been a blue state for some time. The state voted for Obama twice and went for Hillary in 2016. The D.C. suburbs, with many thousands of handsomely paid federal employees, has become a stronghold for the democrats. Hardly a harbinger of things to come.

Overall, the GOP and the president had a pretty damn good night Tuesday.

Fake news, indeed.

BIG GOVERNMENT

The Watchdog just ran a piece asking readers not to become desensitized to the large-scale waste, fraud, and abuse happening on Governor Walz's watch.

We hope you took the advice to heart, as the skeletons keep falling out of the closet over at the Department of Human Services.

This week's Hall of Shame news is that the agency broke state law over 200 times, releasing \$52 million in contracts and commitments to vendors that failed to follow legal requirements.

200 times.

\$52 million of YOUR dollars.

The tally of illegally spent or wasted tax dollars across state government has reached into the hundreds of millions of dollars.

To be fair, this isn't just a Tim Walz problem. Much of this stupidity occurred under Mark Dayton's watch, making it a clear DFL problem.

When you have no respect for the taxpayers, you get taxpayer abuse.

Again, this publication renews its call for Republicans in the legislature to get serious about punishing the offending employees and reducing the role of government in our lives.

If we limit their power and checkbook, they can only break fewer laws and waste less money.

Republicans in the Senate are right to hold hearings on this stunning debacle.

They need to keep at it.

SAINT PAUL

Speaking of DFL executive mismanagement, it looks like Saint Paul Mayor Melvin Carter is right there with fellow DFL leaders.

While the city drowns in the blood of murder and violent crime victims, the mayor and council are dallying around with trash collection, something that didn't need fixing in the first place.

While the city council haggles with waste haulers over money and contractual issues, the police department scrambles to stem a violent tide.

And voters keep returning the same DFLers to office again and again.

Perhaps its time for GOP legislators to start taking a look at both Minneapolis and Saint Paul.

Both cities receive tens of millions in state subsidies every year, making their problems very much the business of state government.

Over in Minneapolis, many people won't even venture into downtown after dark, as the Warehouse district in particular has become lawless, like some rural Pakistani tribal area.

Maybe the next state subsidy should buy Kevlar flak vests for visitors.

November 15th, 2019

Quote of the Week: “I don’t know why this is a scandal.”

- Sen. Chris Eaton (DFL – Brooklyn Park), responding to the news that the state has violated the law nearly 1,800 times in managing contracts and taxpayer money

Quote of the Week: “We broke the law.”

- Dept. of Human Services Chief Financial Officer Alexandra Kotze

In This Issue:

1. The Scandal Grows;
2. Twentieth Century Motors.

THE SCANDAL GROWS

For the past few weeks, the Watchdog has been reporting on the growing scandal within the Walz administration regarding hundreds of millions of dollars in state contracts and grants that were paid out illegally. Moreover, in some cases, investigators couldn’t even determine who authorized those payments, leaving a cold trail regarding accountability.

The scandal continues to metastasize rapidly, with the scandal spreading to other state agencies, adding millions in illegal payments to the tally.

While the DFL-controlled House ignores the issue, the GOP-controlled Senate this week held a committee hearing to hear directly from the affected state agencies regarding the lack of internal controls and the outright flouting of laws designed to protect taxpayers.

To start, two agency heads didn’t bother to attend. The commissioner of Management and Budget and the Human Services commissioner both didn’t show up.

The numbers are appalling.

Investigators have uncovered nearly 1,800 instances of financial mismanagement and outright illegal payments regarding contracts and grants they administer.

While the Department of Human Services (DHS) has been receiving the lion's share of scrutiny, that beleaguered agency wasn't the worst identified offender.

The Department of Employment and Economic Development (DEED), registered a whopping 584 violations of contracting law and regulations, more than double the violations at DHS.

For most bureaucrats, there was no hiding the fact that they broke the law, which didn't stop some from making excuses.

The primary excuse was that the funded program was so important, following the law was a subordinate consideration.

The other most prevalent excuse was that timelines simply couldn't be met.

There is nothing in Minnesota law that empowers bureaucrats to ignore the law whenever they, in their sole discretion, feel that a service can't be delayed.

There is nothing in state law that empowers them to ignore the law because they can't meet timelines.

1,800 violations. Hundreds of millions of dollars, hard-earned by taxpayers.

Where is House Speaker Melissa Hortman?

Her official web site hasn't had any news on it since October 21st. Nothing mentioned about this massive scandal.

And what of the governor? He's said nothing, too busy hanging out with PJ Fleck, accepting "game balls."

And what of the media? Why no pressing of Walz on this issue?

If it was Tim Pawlenty, the media would have been all over it, camping out in front of his office.

The DFL silence here is as much of a scandal as the waste, fraud and abuse they are trying hard to ignore.

TWENTIETH CENTURY MOTORS

Many readers will recall that this fictional company served as a powerful metaphor in Ayn Rand's seminal classic, "Atlas Shrugged."

The company adopted a "compassionate" business plan under which employees were paid by their need, not their productivity.

Inevitably, the business plan led to resentment, conflict, and ultimately the collapse of the company.

The Watchdog couldn't help but think of this fictional company when reading an opinion piece in the Star Tribune this week.

The author of that piece was arguing that rural Minnesota should be getting more government aid and that this increased aid should be achieved by cutting state aid for the Metro.

Regardless of the merits of the claim, the piece illustrates precisely the point Rand was making in the chapter regarding Twentieth Century Motors.

The simple yet powerful point is that collectivism does nothing to alter or quell man's inherent selfishness.

The Big Government narrative is that collectivist distributionist policies eliminate this selfishness and result in a "we're all in this together" public spiritedness.

It's capitalism that creates a "me" mentality whereas collectivism means "we."

Hardly.

All resources are limited, meaning that there will always need to be a mechanism to distribute those limited resources.

Moreover, the humans involved are inherently selfish (which does not mean utterly lacking in compassion or the ability to share), looking out for their own interests. This is something the Framers well understood. Human beings all have certain desires which transcend all time and place factors and the worst of these desires must be recognized and moderated with legal constraints. If men were angels, there would be no need for laws.

Thus, the question is what kind of system should govern the distribution.

Capitalism is premised on a system that recognizes individual merit and achievement as the foundation of the system.

Collectivism is premised on political power as the foundation of the system. The most politically powerful groups decide.

The throwing open of the public fisc to "solve" our problems often doesn't work out that way. It merely moves the inherent tension in distributing limited resources into a different realm, namely one of raw political power.

After all, every government program is premised upon coercion.

Don't believe it? Try not paying your taxes and see what happens.

Try not paying into Social Security and see what happens.

A system based on merit, or a system based on power.

November 22, 2019

Quotes of the Week:

“Did you receive any indication whatsoever, or anything that resembled a quid pro quo?”

“No.”

- Former envoy to Ukraine Kurt Volker

“Did anyone ever ask you to bribe or extort anyone at any time during your time in the White House?”

“No.”

- Tim Morrison, former NSC official

“No one on this planet told you that President Trump was tying aid to investigations. Yes or no?”

“Yes.”

“So, you really have no testimony today that ties President Trump to a scheme to withhold aid from Ukraine in exchange for these investigations.”

“Other than my own presumption.”

- Ambassador to Ukraine Gordon Sondlan

“I want nothing. I want no quid pro quo. Tell Zelensky to do the right thing.”

- President Donald J. Trump

In This Issue:

1. Game, Set, Match;
2. Government Run Amok.

GAME, SET, MATCH

It's over for the Democrats. The impeachment inquiry or whatever they are calling it these days has become yet another debacle, representing another piece of political scat thrown against the wall, failing to stick.

Yet unlike the Russia collusion fairy tale, the obscure “emoluments” clause in Scotland ruse, or the other fakes, this cynical stratagem implicated on of the most serious powers given to the legislative branch, that of impeachment.

Despite promises of “bombshell” testimony, witness after witness has provided nothing other than conjecture, assumption, opinion, hearsay, and hearsay within hearsay.

When pressed, these witnesses all have one thing in common: no first-hand knowledge of any quid pro quo demands from the president to withhold military aid to Ukraine in exchange for an investigation of the Biden clan’s dealings in that country.

By the way, a couple of important facts are relevant at this point.

First, the Obama administration refused to provide lethal military aid to Ukraine. So, spare us the cries that Ukraine was an important ally in need of expedited lethal military aid.

Second, Ukraine is a slimy country mired in corruption. It’s not only acceptable, but important, to ensure that tax dollars flowing into the country are spent correctly. After all, this isn’t the Minnesota DHS department.

Third, related to point number two, Joe Biden and his no-talent kid have been credibly accused of all manner of shenanigans in Ukraine.

This impeachment scheme has been nothing short of a fiasco for the Democrats.

It’s been so bad, some strategists privately wonder if the House will even send articles of impeachment to the floor for a vote.

Over in the Senate, it seems inconceivable that 2/3rds of that body would vote to overturn the 2016 election and remove the president on nothing more than hearsay, opinion, and innuendo.

This is especially true when there is no popular will among the citizenry to impeach the president.

The public is tuned out, worn down by three straight years of constant ginning up at the hands of the media crying “wolf!” at every turn, only to move the goal posts to a new “bombshell” every few weeks or months.

Television ratings are low, polls are static, and minds are made up.

In short, the democrats have succeeded in turning impeachment into little more than everyday partisan bickering.

Shame on these democrats.

They trashed Brett Kavanaugh and the Supreme Court in a sad and pathetic attempt to keep him off the High Court.

They have trashed Donald Trump and office of the presidency in a cynical attempt to either remove him outright or damage him for 2020 and deflect from the clown show that is the democrat presidential field.

There is a growing risk to democrats that things will blow up in their collective faces in the near future.

The investigators who are investigating the origins of the Russia collusion hoax and related FBI issues are nearly done with their work, and the results could be devastating to the dems.

Sen. Lindsey Graham has also announced he has launched an inquiry into the Biden's slimy dealings in Ukraine.

The game will soon move to the Senate, where Pelosi and company don't make the rules.

Moreover, the impeachment scheme has energized Republicans.

Polls show strong support for the president and opposition to impeachment.

A recent poll in Wisconsin, for example, shows the president beating all potential democrat opponents.

Looks for the dems to double down on their cynical, corrosive antics as they are the ones who are seeing the walls closing in on them.

GOVERNMENT RUN AMOK

And this is how we get Big Government.

The city of Duluth has announced that it is seeking to hire a "sustainability officer", whatever that means.

The job, paying up to \$115,000 annually (plus Cadillac benefits and about 100 paid days off every year), offers a job description that includes "improvement of city policies, programs, and initiatives that promote local environmental, energy, economic, and social sustainability."

Social sustainability? Really?

Thus, the city aims to hire a person who will have every incentive and obligation to push all sorts of expensive, impractical, and burdensome programs on the beleaguered taxpayers of that fiscally desperate city.

For example, Mayor Emily Larson recently opined in a news article that she's interested in figuring out how to defy gravity because the biggest sources of energy consumption in the city is the pumping of water from Lake Superior up the hills to homes and businesses.

Never mind the crumbling streets.

It's the height of arrogance for Duluth to offer up this job while the city is falling apart, failing to deliver on core services, and walking around with its hand out down at the Capitol in Saint Paul.

Keep in mind that Duluth sucks in nearly \$30 million in state aid dollars every year, which is fully 33% of the city's operating budget.

Moreover, the city is seeking an additional \$13.5 million in state dollars for bonding projects in the 2020 legislative session.

And keep in mind that Duluth takes in yet another \$4 million per year in federal and other "intergovernmental" dollars.

On top of that, Duluth sports one of the highest sales tax rates in the state, coming in at a whopping 8.375%. The rake off that is \$13.7 million per year.

Republicans in Saint Paul should keep all this in mind next year when Mayor Larson and her paid lobbyists (the city has three of them) come calling with hands extended.

November 29, 2019

Editor's Note: As with most American traditions, Thanksgiving is under attack from the Loony Left.

Therefore, let us wish all our loyal readers a Happy Thanksgiving, as we give thanks for your loyal readership and the principles and values we share.

In This Issue:

1. Two Proclamations, One Nation.

TWO PROCLAMATIONS, ONE NATION

Washington, D.C.
October 3, 1863

By the President of the United States of America.

A Proclamation.

The year that is drawing towards its close, has been filled with the blessings of fruitful fields and healthful skies. To these bounties, which are so constantly enjoyed that we are prone to forget the source from which they come, others have been added, which are of so extraordinary a nature, that they cannot fail to penetrate and soften even the heart which is habitually insensible to the ever watchful providence of Almighty God. In the midst of a civil war of unequalled magnitude and severity, which has sometimes seemed to foreign States to invite and to provoke their aggression, peace has been preserved with all nations, order has been maintained, the laws have been respected and obeyed, and harmony has prevailed everywhere except in the theatre of military conflict; while that theatre has been greatly contracted by the advancing armies and navies of the Union. Needful diversions of wealth and of strength from the fields of peaceful industry to the national defence, have not arrested the plough, the shuttle or the ship; the axe has enlarged the borders of our settlements, and the mines, as well of iron and coal as of the precious metals, have yielded even more abundantly than heretofore. Population has steadily increased, notwithstanding the waste that has been made in the camp, the siege and the battle-field; and the country, rejoicing in the consciousness of augmented strength and vigor, is permitted to expect continuance of years with large increase of freedom. No human counsel hath devised nor hath any mortal hand worked out these great things. They are the gracious gifts of the Most High God, who, while dealing with us in anger for our sins, hath nevertheless remembered mercy. It has seemed to me fit and proper that they should be solemnly, reverently and gratefully acknowledged as with one heart and one voice

by the whole American People. I do therefore invite my fellow citizens in every part of the United States, and also those who are at sea and those who are sojourning in foreign lands, to set apart and observe the last Thursday of November next, as a day of Thanksgiving and Praise to our beneficent Father who dwelleth in the Heavens. And I recommend to them that while offering up the ascriptions justly due to Him for such singular deliverances and blessings, they do also, with humble penitence for our national perverseness and disobedience, commend to His tender care all those who have become widows, orphans, mourners or sufferers in the lamentable civil strife in which we are unavoidably engaged, and fervently implore the interposition of the Almighty Hand to heal the wounds of the nation and to restore it as soon as may be consistent with the Divine purposes to the full enjoyment of peace, harmony, tranquillity and Union.

In testimony whereof, I have hereunto set my hand and caused the Seal of the United States to be affixed.

Done at the City of Washington, this Third day of October, in the year of our Lord one thousand eight hundred and sixty-three, and of the Independence of the United States the Eighty-eighth.

By the President: Abraham Lincoln

On Thanksgiving Day, we remember with reverence and gratitude the bountiful blessings afforded to us by our Creator, and we recommit to sharing in a spirit of thanksgiving and generosity with our friends, neighbors, and families.

Nearly four centuries ago, determined individuals with a hopeful vision of a more prosperous life and an abundance of opportunities made a pilgrimage to a distant land. These Pilgrims embarked on their journey across the Atlantic at great personal risk, facing unforeseen trials and tribulations, and unforetold hardships during their passage. After their arrival in the New World, a harsh and deadly winter took the lives of nearly half their population. Those who survived remained unwavering in their faith and foresight of a future rich with liberty and freedom, enduring every impediment as they established one of our Nation's first settlements. Through God's divine providence, a meaningful relationship was forged with the Wampanoag Tribe, and through their unwavering resolve and resilience, the Pilgrims enjoyed a bountiful harvest the following year. The celebration of this harvest lasted 3 days and saw Pilgrims and Wampanoag seated together at the table of friendship and unity. That first Thanksgiving provided an enduring symbol of gratitude that is uniquely sewn into the fabric of our American spirit.

More than 150 years later, it was in this same spirit of unity that President George Washington declared a National Day of Thanksgiving following the Revolutionary War and the ratification of our Constitution. Less than a century later, that hard-won unity came under duress as the United States was engaged in a civil war that

threatened the very existence of our Republic. Following the Battle of Gettysburg in 1863, in an effort to unite the country and acknowledge “the gracious gifts of the Most High God,” President Abraham Lincoln asked the American people to come together and “set apart and observe the last Thursday of November next as a Day of Thanksgiving and Praise to our beneficent Father who dwelleth in the heavens.” Today, this tradition continues with millions of Americans gathering each year to give their thanks for the same blessings of liberty for which so many brave patriots have laid down their lives to defend during the Revolutionary War and in the years since.

Since the first settlers to call our country home landed on American shores, we have always been defined by our resilience and propensity to show gratitude even in the face of great adversity, always remembering the blessings we have been given in spite of the hardships we endure. This Thanksgiving, we pause and acknowledge those who will have empty seats at their table. We ask God to watch over our service members, especially those whose selfless commitment to serving our country and defending our sacred liberty has called them to duty overseas during the holiday season. We also pray for our law enforcement officials and first responders as they carry out their duties to protect and serve our communities. As a Nation, we owe a debt of gratitude to both those who take an oath to safeguard us and our way of life as well as to their families, and we salute them for their immeasurable sacrifices.

As we gather today with those we hold dear, let us give thanks to Almighty God for the many blessings we enjoy. United together as one people, in gratitude for the freedoms and prosperity that thrive across our land, we acknowledge God as the source of all good gifts. We ask Him for protection and wisdom and for opportunities this Thanksgiving to share with others some measure of what we have so providentially received.

NOW, THEREFORE, I, DONALD J. TRUMP, President of the United States of America, by virtue of the authority vested in me by the Constitution and the laws of the United States, do hereby proclaim Thursday, November 28, 2019, as a National Day of Thanksgiving. I encourage all Americans to gather, in homes and places of worship, to offer a prayer of thanks to God for our many blessings.

IN WITNESS WHEREOF, I have hereunto set my hand this twenty-seventh day of November, in the year of our Lord two thousand nineteen, and of the Independence of the United States of America the two hundred and forty-fourth.

DONALD J. TRUMP

December 13th, 2019

Question of the Week: Who has the more reliable electric generation grid, California or Venezuela?

Quote of the Week: "I think the activities we found here don't vindicate anybody who touched this."

- DOJ IG Michael Horowitz

Factoid of the Week: A recent Harvard University poll shows 2016 loser Hillary Clinton leading the Democratic field.

In This Issue:

1. Minneapolis – The Closer You Get to Tall Buildings;
2. Taxes Ruin Everything;
3. Judicial Hellhole.

MINNEAPOLIS – THE CLOSER YOU GET TO TALL BUILDINGS

Conservative icon and mayor of Garage Logic, Joe Soucheray, likes to note that the closer you get to skyscrapers, the more liberal things become.

How true, especially in Minneapolis. Recently, all manner of violent crime has spiked in the city, schools can't teach kids, and roads are becoming little more than bike lanes.

The response from the mayor is a proposal to hike property tax rates at a level not seen in over a decade.

If past is prologue, these massive tax increases will do little to increase the quality of life for Minneapolis residents.

While the proposed 6.95% property tax increase is newsworthy, it's the Minneapolis Public Schools that have garnered the embarrassing headlines this week.

Once again, that beleaguered school district is facing a massive budget deficit.

The current deficit is \$32 million, although listed at \$19.6 million, thanks for reserve funds covering up the difference.

Recall that just last spring, the district dealt with a \$33 million budget deficit.

This is all on the heels of a \$30 million voter-approved tax levy increase that happened in November of 2018.

Even more galling is refusal of highly compensated district leadership to accept responsibility and provide a reasonable plan of action to align expenses with revenue, something they obviously aren't familiar with.

A local newspaper is quoted as follows: "District officials are blaming the state and federal governments for not spending enough on local public schools."

Really.

This current fiscal year, the state will spend \$9.6 billion on K-12 education.

Ten years ago, it was \$7 billion per year.

Ten years before that, it was \$3.9 billion per year.

At the federal level, the story is the same, with spending going up exponentially.

During this time, student enrollment has been essentially flat.

Please.

The real story of the budget shortfall is that students are fleeing Minneapolis public schools – and taking the education funding dollars attached to them.

One of every 3 students in Minneapolis attends either a charter school or open enrolls to a different public school district.

Obviously, parents are voting with their feet and sending a stinging rebuke to the Minneapolis district.

What isn't shrinking is the amount of money the district is lavishing on employees.

Next year, the district will increase salaries and benefits by a whopping \$13 million from the current year, all to serve fewer students.

This isn't surprising, since the teacher's union sits on both sides of the bargaining table, having had a big hand in electing the school board.

If this district was a business, it would have been bankrupt years ago.

This is all on top of truly embarrassing test scores and dropout rates.

31% of the district's students do not finish high school.
56% are not proficient in math.
52% do not read well.
63% are not proficient in science.

But go ahead and blame a lack of funding.

As sure as the sun rises each morning, you can count on Minneapolis and its schools to be an embarrassment of some type.

TAXES RUIN EVERYTHING

Minnesota sports fans are used to disappointment and futility.

The Vikings, Twins, and North Stars (Wild) have provided many moments of heartbreaking failure over the years.

This past season, the Twins set the major league record for home runs in a season yet were run off the field by the Yankees in the post-season.

Most baseball fans know the Twins need better pitching if they're going to have any chance at post-season success.

Enter Zach Wheeler, a free agent pursued by the Twins.

Rumors were flying recently that Wheeler and Twins would strike a deal.

Not so fast, according to Ken Rosenthal, a widely respected baseball writer.

According to Rosenthal, Minnesota's high-income tax rate was an issue.

He wrote, "The Twins, aggressively exploring the market for rotation help, would love to sign a starter along the lines one of Wheeler, Madison Bumgarner or Hyun-Jin Ryu. The high-income tax rate in Minnesota, though, could present something of an obstacle. The 9.85 percent rate in Minnesota is second only to California's 13.3 percent (New York's rate is higher than Minnesota's when combining city and state rates, but most players live outside the city). State income tax rate usually is not a primary consideration for free agents, but in certain cases the best gross deal might not be the best net deal, complicating the decision."

This week, Wheeler signed with the Philadelphia Phillies.

By the way, Pennsylvania's state income tax rate is 3.07%, a flat rate, less than 1/3rd Minnesota's top rate.

It seems we can't have nice things when it comes to Minnesota sports. This is just one more reason.

And let's not let the Gophers off the hook. Hockey and men's basketball are in the toilet and the football team brought us close to Rose Bowl dreams before losing to Iowa and getting clobbered by Wisconsin.

JUDICIAL HELLHOLE

And the bad news just keeps on coming for the North Star State.

In addition to high taxes and brutal weather, the state was recently named a "Judicial Hellhole" by the Americans for Tort Reform foundation, a group dedicated to reducing needless and expensive litigation, especially against job creators.

Here's what ATR had to say about Minnesota, appearing at #9 on the list of ten worst jurisdictions:

Making its first appearance on the Judicial Hellholes list in 2018, the Twin Cities continue to move in a troubling direction. The Minnesota Supreme Court issued a series of liability expanding decisions that will impact a number of industries and lead to higher insurance costs for consumers. Additionally, much-needed reforms stalled in the legislature, making prospects of improvement grim.

You can read the grim details here:

<https://www.judicialhellholes.org/2019-2020/minnesota-supreme-court-twin-cities/>

December 20, 2019

Editor's Note: On the occasion of the last edition before Christmas, Harold Hamilton wishes all his readers a very Merry Christmas! Remember the reason for the season!

Quote of the Week: "The frequency with which representations made by FBI personnel turned out to be unsupported or contradicted by information in their possession, and with which they withheld information detrimental to their case, calls into question whether information contained in other FBI applications is reliable."

In this Issue:

1. The Curious Case of Collin Peterson;
2. A Real and Frightening Scandal;
3. The Kavanaugh Playbook.

THE CURIOUS CASE OF COLLIN PETERSON

Some people don't know when it's time to leave the stage. They continue to talk long after their acceptance speech has grown tiresome, the band has started to play, and it's time to go to commercial break.

Congressman Collin Peterson has turned into that guy.

On the surface, he appears to be the kind of guy Congress needs. He seems principled, thoughtful, a bit of a maverick in an institution that prizes conformity.

His statement after voting against both impeachment articles appears to bear out this narrative:

"Throughout my career, I have worked from the guiding belief that only through bipartisan action can we address the country's most pressing challenges. At the beginning of the impeachment debate we were told that it would only move ahead with bipartisan support in the Congress and significant support from the American people.

"After the Russia investigation, Mueller Report and official impeachment investigation by the House Intelligence and the House Judiciary Committees we became more polarized and had less consensus. How can it be that after all the testimony, every Democrat thinks the president has committed an impeachable offense and every Republican thinks he has not?

"I'm not a lawyer and am not sure what 'high crimes and misdemeanor' are, but I do know that this process has not convinced the people in my district we have

impeachable offenses and that the president needs to be removed. I disagreed with how the Russia probe and Mueller report were handled and think it set the stage for the failed impeachment inquiry. The inquiry and hearing have been partisan and have failed in convincing the country while further placating some people who have wanted the president impeached since he was elected.

"This process has been a mistake and I will not be whipped in line by my party. I may stand alone but I stand in good conscience. History will show this to be a mistake and the Senate will make short work of an acquittal."

That's great and all, but after being in office since 1991, the words ring a bit hollow in comparison with the actions.

Sure, Peterson has compiled a fairly conservative voting record, supporting gun rights, life, and voting against Obamacare.

But the record must also reflect that Peterson has enabled the opposite.

He voted to make Nancy Pelosi House Speaker.

He gave Adam Schiff a committee gavel.

Same with Jerry Nadler.

He is in league with the Squad, sharing the Democrat Conference with them.

Thus, he empowers time and again all the forces he votes against.

In this regard, he's the man who gives matches and a gas can to arsonists and then claims credit for being the first to call 911.

A more cynical view is that he sold out to Nancy Pelosi to get a gavel of his own.

Peterson's GOP opponent, Michelle Fischbach, got it exactly right when she released her social media statement on impeachment:

"[Collin Peterson](#) has more seniority than 95% of his colleagues in the U.S. House of Representatives, yet he chose not to use it to take a stand against Nancy Pelosi's partisan [#ImpeachmentSham](#). It's painfully obvious that Peterson has been in Washington for too long, become complacent in its dysfunction, and at times aides it, like when he enabled this political witch hunt to continue by giving Speaker Pelosi the gavel.

Quietly voting "no" from your seat is a lot easier than taking a stand against the Trump-hating radicals in one's party, who are obsessed with undoing the will of the American people, and removing a duly-elected President of the United States from

office.

Western Minnesotans support President [Donald J. Trump](#) and are sick and tired of Collin Peterson voting for Speaker Pelosi, as he has for the past two decades. They are ready for a new conservative voice who will stand against the Democrat's political witch hunt to [#ImpeachAndRemove](#) President Trump. [#MN07](#) [#Trump2020](#).”

The simple reality is that the citizens of Minnesota District 7 can get conservatism in both legislation and legislative process by voting Republican.

Peterson's schtick of regularly voting against the people he empowers is trite, shopworn, and a false choice.

The whole Blue Dog Democrat era is but a memory, making Peterson an irrelevant political anachronism.

It is clear that Rep. Peterson represents a bygone era in Washington and thus no longer represents his district.

Time to leave the stage, sir. Thank you for your service.

A REAL AND FRIGHTENING SCANDAL

The real scandal, beyond the fake impeachment fiasco, is the little noted and little reported Department of Justice Inspector General report that uncovered a series of FBI instances of wrongdoing regarding federal law enforcement spying on the Trump campaign.

The domestic surveillance of a presidential campaign will go down as one of the most shameful chapters in American history and a vile, egregious abuse of power.

The FBI regularly submitted false and misleading information to the FISA court in obtaining permission to spy on the Trump campaign.

In addition, the FBI regularly withheld information that undercut their affidavits to the FISA court.

The chief judge of the FISA court had this to say about the uncovered abuses:

“The frequency with which representations made by FBI personnel turned out to be unsupported or contradicted by information in their possession, and with which they withheld information detrimental to their case, calls into question whether information contained in other FBI applications is reliable”

The shame doesn't end there.

The IG report also detailed a particularly ugly incident in which the FBI set up a briefing for Trump and his senior team during the 2016 campaign solely in order to glean information from Trump and others.

The FBI told the Trump campaign it was a briefing about securing the 2016 election, when, in fact, the briefing was attended by at least one FBI agent who was spying on the campaign, looking for incriminating evidence.

That agent wrote up an investigation report on the meeting.

Of course, the Trump campaign was kept in the dark regarding the “Crossfire Hurricane” spy scheme and had no idea the campaign had been infiltrated by people who got there under the false pretenses of misleading FISA applications and the fake Steele dossier paid for by the Clinton campaign.

Investigations will surely conclude that senior federal law enforcement took sides in a presidential election and used the vast powers of federal law enforcement to attempt to achieve a partisan political goal.

Disgusting.

THE KAVANAUGH PLAYBOOK

No reasonable person should be surprised that Nancy Pelosi is withholding the articles of impeachment from the Senate.

The House knows it has a thin case and will hold the articles in their possession while they “discover” more witnesses and “evidence” that will surely dictate further investigation.

We saw this playbook on full display with Brett Kavanaugh.

Just keep throwing crap against the wall and hope something sticks.

Perhaps the Democrats should do us all a favor and just recycle their “witnesses” from the Kavanaugh passion play.

Christine Blasey Ford, Judy Munro-Leighton, and Deborah Ramirez could simply reprise their roles, claiming new memories, or none at all (facts aren’t really required by Schiff and company anyway).

(By the way, the Democrats are still investigating these claims to determine the truth, right? Yes, and OJ is still looking for the real killers.)

Michael Avenatti, if he’s not in prison yet, could show up and get some face time on CNN, the only television outlet that will treat him as the serious, uncompromised

person he surely is not.

Save the money. Recycle the script. Recycle the props. Recycle the set.

On with the show!