

THE VOORHIS VOICE

Liberal Voice of the Pomona Valley

October, 2011

www.claremontdems.org

MEETINGS AND SPECIAL EVENTS

Friday, October 14

Monthly Luncheon at the LYL Gardens Restaurant

Speaker: Robin Haulman on consumer affairs

921 W. Foothill Blvd., Claremont. Tel. 909-626-9151

Cost is ten dollars; meal is served family style; no pork on menu; many vegetarian dishes

Saturday, October 22, 11am to 5pm

Village Venture in Claremont Village

The DCC will have an informational booth at this event, and volunteers are needed to staff it in two-hour shifts.

Call Carolee Monroe 909-626-8122

October 27-28-29

“Brave New Planet” Environmental Conference in Claremont

Progressive Christians Uniting and other religious and environmental groups will sponsor "Brave New Planet: Imaging Ecological Communities" on Oct. 27, Oct. 28 and 29 at Claremont Presbyterian Church. Climate-change activist Bill McKibben, author of *Eaarth: Making a Life on a Tough New Planet*, who last month organized and led protests in Washington, D.C. against the Keystone oil pipeline project, will be keynote speaker at the gathering on Oct. 27. Topics for exploration include regional food/water issues, building sustainable local communities, and historical precedents for ethical action. Registration and information:

<http://www.pcu-la.org/PCU/BraveNewPlanetRegister.html>

Monday, October 31, 7:00 PM to 9:15 PM

Monthly Membership Meeting at Porter Hall

601 Mayflower Rd., Pilgrim Place Campus, Claremont

Access Porter Hall from the west side of Berkeley St., at 6th St.

Rick Perry's Political Agenda

Hang 'Em High!

During nearly 11 years in office, Governor Perry of Texas has overseen more than 230 executions — by far the most of any recent governor in the United States — and has rarely used his power to grant clemency. He has granted 31 death row commutations; 28 of those were the result of a 2005 United States Supreme Court decision banning capital punishment for minors.

Ignore Climate Change!

Perry claims that climate change is a “contrived, phony mess.”

Eliminate the Federal Income Tax!

Perry declares that the federal income tax was the “great milestone on the road to serfdom.”

Empower Politicians!

Rick Perry thinks that Senators should be chosen by legislatures, not the people.

Abolish Social Security!

Perry says that Social Security is a “failure” enacted during a power grab called the New Deal and is “something we have been forced to accept.”



Independents Elude Obama

abstracted from the New York Times, Sept. 8, 2011

By proposing a jobs package filled with items that Republicans have supported, President Obama is betting that moderate and independent voters will flock to his camp in 2012 as they did in 2008. The trouble is, Mr. Obama has been pursuing independents for the past two years, and they continue to drift away from him. His approval rating among independents plunged to 39 percent in August from 52 percent in May. Absent an improvement in the economy, there is little sign yet that Mr. Obama is gaining traction with independents. For the president, it is the ultimate vexation: How much do

moderate voters care about the specific positions a candidate takes? Mr. Obama has managed, the pollsters say, to come out of this summer with slightly less blame among voters for the debt ceiling and budget fights than have Congressional Republicans. But his attempts to appear willing to compromise have not impressed moderates and independents so far because not only has the economic picture worsened, so, too, has public confidence in Washington's ability to fix it.

Is Government Regulation Causing Unemployment?

By Ivan Light

Conservative politicians and business groups often blame government regulation for unemployment. One might conclude that most business owners agree. However, little evidence of that emerged when McClatchy Newspapers canvassed a random sample of small business owners across the USA. McClatchy reached out to owners of small businesses, many of them mom-and-pop operations, to find out whether they indeed were being choked by regulation, whether uncertainty over taxes affected their hiring plans and whether the health care overhaul was helping or hurting their business.

Their response would surprise Fox News. None of the business owners complained about regulation in their particular industries, and most seemed to welcome it. Some pointed to the lack of regulation in mortgage lending as a principal cause of the financial crisis that brought about the Great Recession of 2007-09 and its grim aftermath. Small business owners complained mainly about the high cost of insurance, including especially health insurance.

When it's asked what specific regulations harm small businesses — which account for about 65 percent of U.S. jobs — the Chamber of Commerce points to health care, banking and national labor. Yet all these issues weigh much more heavily on big corporations than on small business. Conclusion: The US Chamber of Commerce does not really speak for small business.

Even if a burden, regulations fall equally upon all competitors, and do not disadvantage some at the expense of others, except when some cheating companies illegally evade regulations that others observe. The remedy for this problem is enhanced enforcement. If government regulation caused the current high unemployment rates, as the Chamber of Commerce maintains, then regulation must have greatly increased since the Clinton administration (1992-2000) when the economy was booming. Actually, government regulation decreased under President George W. Bush (2000-2008) who followed the standard GOP view about the harmfulness of regulation. The lack of government regulation in the banking industry was importantly responsibility for the depth of the financial crisis in 2008.

True, regulations are not per se good, but that does not make them evil. Regulations should be promptly eliminated when they are obsolete. More should be done to expedite the trimming of obsolete regulations from the business code. Obama, listen up! However, many regulations are important, even essential. Regulations prevent corporate business from dumping their toxic waste in the drinking water supply or in the atmosphere people breathe. The BP oil disaster in the Gulf of Mexico last year was a product of insufficient government regulation of the petroleum industry. Regulations prevent cigarette companies from selling their product to teen-agers. Are we ready to rescind these regulations so that cigarette companies can sell more cigarettes to teenagers and hire more workers? There's obviously a trade-off between the damage these unregulated companies would do to the environment and to public health vs. the short-term jobs that would be created were they

permitted recklessly to damage both. How much is your health worth to you?

Read more: <http://tinyurl.com/446juvp>

War: Economic Stimulus of Last Resort

By Ellen Brown

Conservatives do offer a favorite way government debt can stimulate the economy, war. Borrow money and wage war with it. That's how George W. Bush financed the invasion and occupation of Iraq. Here at last is a social program of which Republicans approve! Reviving Bruce Springsteen's quip, Ellen Brown here critiques this most wasteful and demonic method of economic stimulation, international warfare.

Ellen Brown is president of the Public Banking Institute, and the author of eleven books, including [Web of Debt: The Shocking Truth About Our Money System and How We Can Break Free](#). Her websites are [WebofDebt.com](#) and [PublicBankingInstitute.org](#).

War stimulates demand and increases the purchasing power of survivors, if you win the war, but happily there are less wasteful alternatives. Today we have major unmet needs — bridges and highways in disrepair, overcrowded classrooms, obsolete energy systems, closed research labs in need of funding. The most cost-effective solution today would be for the government to stimulate the economy by spending on work that actually improves the standard of living of the people.

This could be done while actually reducing the national debt. David Swanson mentions the \$60 billion lost by the Pentagon to waste and fraud in Iraq and Afghanistan. This money could alternatively have created 193,000 more jobs than its military use created in Iraq and Afghanistan, if diverted to domestic commercial purposes. If Uncle Sam had spent that said \$60 billion on clean energy, he would have created 330,000 more jobs than the paltry few created by two regional wars – and no dead bodies to bury. If he'd spent it on healthcare, he'd have created 480,000 more jobs. And if he'd spent it on education, we'd have created 1.05 million more jobs plus millions of highly qualified workers, who would build a high-tech economy.

Now, suppose Uncle Sam wants to create 29 million jobs in 10 years. That's 2.9 million each year. Here's one way to do it. Take \$100 billion from the Department of Defense and move it into education. That creates 1.75 million jobs per year. Take another \$50 billion and move it into healthcare spending. There's an additional 400,000 jobs. Take another \$100 billion and move it into clean energy. There's another 550,000 jobs. And take another \$62 billion and turn it into tax cuts, generating an additional 200,000 jobs. Now the military spending in the Department of Energy, the State Department, Homeland Security, and so forth have not been touched. And the Department of Defense has been cut back to about \$388 billion, which is to say: More than it was getting 10 years ago when our country went collectively insane. Bonus: Instead of uselessly killing our soldiers we'd be improving our economy. Is this hard to understand?

Religious Law? Not in America

By Charles Bayer

One of the fears occasionally surfacing is that radical Islamists will take over some political jurisdiction in the United States, putting its citizens under Sharia law. Women will lose all their hard fought-for rights, be required to dress modestly including headscarves, and find it necessary to walk behind their husbands. But that, we are told, is the mildest part of Sharia law. Those who violate certain religious taboos would be subject to public stoning. There are obvious ominous results were this to happen. 1-The American Constitution and the Bill of Rights would be gutted. 2-The separation of Church and State would be obliterated, and we would be in a similar fix as was Salem during the witch trials, Blacks during slavery and Spanish heretics during the Inquisition.

Happily, there is not the remotest chance that this doomsday scenario could be produced anywhere in the United States. No one except the most paranoid anti-Muslims even suggests the possibility of Sharia law here. The real threat is not from Moslem advocates of Sharia law, but from a significant contingent of home-grown Christians who advocate the adoption of Biblical law.

“Reconstructionism” has been around since the 1960s when a sect led by J. Rushdoony openly advocated replacing American law with Biblical law, drawing mainly from the Old Testament, which includes such penalties as the death penalty for homosexuality and apostasy. Although denounced by leading conservative Christians, an adaptation of the notion has recently resurfaced in a somewhat less threatening form. Two current candidates for the Presidency seem to live on Reconstructionism’s borders.

Michelle Bachmann lifted from Rushdoony’s followers the notion that as a matter of law the government should be prohibited from collecting taxes in excess of 10%. In a book titled “Call to Duty,” which she recommends, the Civil War was depicted as a battle between the devout Christian South and the godless North, while it lauds slavery as a benevolent institution. Her academic hero is John Eldsmoe of Oral Roberts University, a devout Reconstructionist. She and overt Reconstructionists in the Tea Party hold that God has set the proper role of government, which does not include such things as public education or assistance to the poor. Instead God desires a Christian government in which an evangelical worldview is enforced. While she might never use the Reconstructionist label, her roots lie deep in that soil.

Rick Perry, while not as blatant in his support of Reconstructionist goals, stands clearly on the border of that movement. His unsuccessful April 22-24 “Days of Prayer for Rain in Texas” seems to assert that the State would be blessed by God if Jesus’ loving people prayed hard enough. Jesus has always been part of his anti-tax, anti-regulation, pro-gun, pro-life agenda. His supporters include the American Family Association, which regularly denigrates gays and lesbians and other minority groups, and holds that the First Amendment applies only to Christians, and therefore Muslims should not be allowed to build mosques. Perry has declared “as a nation we must call upon Jesus to guide us through unprecedented struggles.” His politically sponsored August 6 prayer rally leaned almost all the way toward Reconstructionism.

A few weeks back I published a piece concerning breaches in the wall of separation between Church and State. A score of responses suggested I had ducked the chance to be specific and to name names. So here they are. The real problem is not what these people believe. They have every right, and one would hope that all candidates had underneath their political proclivities some sort of ethical rootage.

But when they openly declare clearly defined Christian doctrine as the basis for their political agendas, that wall has not only been breached, it has been dismantled. Bachman and Perry have a perfect right to hold what they believe to be faithful political perspectives, but to insist that their goal is to promote a narrow biblical view as the basis for national law, puts them on shaky unsupportable ground.

DCC Monthly Meeting of September 26, 2011

By Ivan Light

Claremont, Sept. 27 - - - President Zephyr Tate-Mann convened the September meeting of the DCC, first introducing two speakers, then turning to club business. The first speaker was Hilary LaConte, incumbent candidate for re-election to the Claremont School Board. LaConte spoke to the difficulties of maintaining academic quality in today's harsh budgetary environment, then to the problem of deferred building maintenance, and finally she answered questions from the floor. Ms LaConte indicated that she's happy to discuss educational policy with voters, and invited voters to call her at home at (909) 625-1178 or email her campaign, laconte4schools@aol.com.

The next speaker was Chris Holden, candidate for State Assembly in the 41st AD, former Mayor of Pasadena, and currently a member of the Pasadena City Council. Mr. Holden introduced himself, and underscored his background interests in education and transportation, which he expects to continue in the event he's elected to the State Assembly. Holden does not expect that GOP-sponsored litigation will disrupt the AD boundaries now in place as a result of the Citizens' Redistricting Commission, but consider there is some likelihood of GOP disruption of the new Senatorial District boundaries. The 41st AD has a Democratic registration advantage of approximately 10 percent, and Claremont is at the eastern boundary of this district, fifty-seven percent of whose voters live in and around Pasadena. Mr. Holden explained that he wants to learn about issues before he takes positions on them, and stressed his willingness to compromise in the interest of policy formulation. Holden can be reached at (626) 664-5251. His email is holden88@msn.com, and he publishes a blog where his views can be accessed. This is www.chrisholdenblog.com.

Zephyr Tate-Mann explained that, as a result of redistricting, Claremont's political context has changed. Claremont is now in the 27th Congressional District, the 41st Assembly District, and the 25th Senatorial District. She passed out printed maps of these districts, and invited people to access electronic versions at www.redistrictingpartners.com or email Paul Mitchell at info@redistrictingpartners.com.

Carolee Monroe spoke about the DCC's mentoring effort at Claremont High School. The High School's Democratic Club is thriving. The Democratic Club draws between 30 and 60 students to its lunch hour meetings where, thanks to the Monroe family, pizza and drinks are served. The National Democratic Convention will take place Sept. 3-6, 2012 in Charlotte NC. Monroe will advise the CHS democrats of what they need to be to be elected delegates to this convention.

A spirited debate accompanied discussion of the Issues Committee's proposed resolution concerning the decertification of the Progressive Caucus by the Executive Committee of the California Democratic Party. This occurred after the Progressive Caucus proposed that there be a progressive challenger to the renomination of Barack Obama at the Democratic National Convention in 2012. Angered, the CDP Executive Committee declined to renew the charter of the Progressive Caucus,

which the DCC's Issues Committee considered a violation of internal democracy. Many in the room hotly resented this heavy-handed and authoritarian dismissal of the Progressive Caucus by the CDP leadership. Zephyr Tate-Mann, who is a member of the CDP Executive Committee, explained that the EC had declined to recharter the Progressive Caucus in the interest of party unity, and that the Progressive Caucus "might" be rechartered after the November 2012 election. On the motion of Charles Bayer, the Issue Committee's motion was pared to two clauses:

WHEREAS: The Progressive Caucus of the California Democratic Party has not suggested that any Democrat leave the Party or vote for a candidate of some other party or do nothing in support of whoever is the Democratic Party candidate for the Presidency in 2012; therefore

BE IT RESOLVED: That the Democratic Club of Claremont strongly urges the Executive Committee of the California Democratic Party to unconditionally re-certify the Progressive Caucus of the Party as soon as possible, certainly no later than the November meeting of the Committee.

This version was approved by a vote of 27 Yes with 2 abstentions. The motion will be passed through channels to the State Executive Committee.

Can Claremont Afford Our City Government?

By Merrill Ring and Bob Gerecke

In case you missed it, the following letter by Merrill Ring and Bob Gerecke was published in the Claremont Courier on June 8, 2011.

Our city officials estimate that, in future years, Claremont will have a \$2.3 million deficit. They, like all other elected officials terrorized by the country's current penny-pinching mood, are reluctant to ask us to pay higher taxes and fees, since some residents claim that the people of Claremont can't afford it.

A review of census data suggests that Claremont can. The 2010 Census enumerated 11,255 households in Claremont, with a mean (average) household income of \$110,031. That represents a total of more than \$1.2 billion total annual income for all Claremont households.

Our city general fund budget for 2010-11 is approximately \$19 million (\$19,118,670). That's only 1.54% of Claremont's total income. That's peanuts!

To close the city's \$2.3 million budget gap, touted as so large, we'd only have to increase the percentage of our income spent on our city services to 1.73%. That's still peanuts!

The Census also reported that 3.8% of Claremont households are at or below the poverty line. They cannot afford an increase. Any tax or fee structure that the city uses to eliminate the deficit can be structured to protect the poor residents. Excluding the poor altogether would raise the percentage of total income to be spent on city services for the rest of us to 1.80% from today's 1.54%. That's an

increase of one quarter of one percent of average household income. That is a piddling amount.

We, the people of Claremont, can afford to retain the quality of public services which are necessary to keep Claremont an attractive environment for living. Bear in mind, as well, that homes are worth more in a town that offers a high quality of life, so raising taxes by one quarter of one percent would actually increase the wealth of homeowner households. Increased taxes would be a good investment both for the community and for homeowners.

Democrats Ignored Warnings in Kindee Durkee Case

abstracted from LA Times Sept. 17, 2011

Kindee Durkee is accused of stealing perhaps millions of dollars from her clients, who include dozens of prominent California Democrats. Rep. Loretta Sanchez (D-Garden Grove) and Sen. Dianne Feinstein (D-Los Angeles) both claim that Durkee wiped out all their campaign funds. Feinstein announced Friday that she plans to put \$5 million of her own money into her reelection campaign to make up for funds that may have been taken.

But well before the criminal complaint against Durkee was filed, multiple state audits had found major problems in campaign accounts controlled by Durkee. The Democratic Party took no corrective action at that time. In fact, Durkee remained one of California's top treasurers despite racking up more than \$185,000 in fines for campaign finance violations over the last decade and being the subject of criminal investigations by the Los Angeles County district attorney's office in 2008 and 2009.

At the time of her arrest, Durkee had control of more than 400 bank accounts, many of them campaign accounts, but, happily, not the funds belonging to the Democratic Club of Claremont. Durkee, who has not yet entered a plea, was released on \$200,000 bond and is scheduled to appear in court in October. The State Democratic Party has not yet apologized to the donor base for the slipshod accounting that permitted this fiasco, nor explained what measures will prevent a recurrence, nor identified any failures of responsibility in the Democratic Party's leadership structure. Apparently, no one in the Democratic Party leadership was responsible for overseeing the performance of treasurers like Durkee so there's no one in power who's to blame. But the Los Angeles County Democratic Party is requesting donors to give money to compensate the thefts.

More on Anthony Portantino

by Ivan Light

La Canada Valley Sun Sept 10, 2011 - - Assemblyman Anthony Portantino (D- La Cañada Flintridge) and a Stanford-based open government group alleged that recently disclosed Assembly member spending records are tainted by political posturing. Accounts of member spending released Friday by the Assembly Rules Committee at the direction of Assembly Speaker John Pérez (D- Los Angeles) conflict with state payroll data, according to student analysts with the group California Common Sense.

According to the group, the Rules Committee's expenditure records inflated Portantino's spending totals while artificially deflating other members' expenditures by listing the salaries of some personal

staff as committee, caucus or leadership expenses. This includes salaries of as many as 40 chiefs of staff.

Compared to payroll records, the Rules Committee underreported members' personal staff salaries by \$2.75 million but over-reported Democratic committee and leadership staff salaries by more than \$1.2 million, analysts concluded.

The Rules Committee records listed Portantino's member spending total as the highest of any Assembly member, including for personal staff. According to California Common Sense, 17 other Assembly members spend more on personal staff than Portantino.

Pérez's office accused Portantino of manufacturing political controversy. Portantino has said his budget was slashed inappropriately as punishment for his vote against the Democratic Party line on the state budget in June. Earlier this month the Los Angeles Times, parent newspaper of the Pasadena Sun, and McClatchy Newspapers filed a joint lawsuit demanding disclosure of Assembly budget records.

An Important Election

By Bob Gerecke

On November 8, we'll elect two Claremont School Board members and one Citrus College Trustee. For Claremont School Board there are two seats and three candidates.

Hilary LaConte is a current board member. She grew up in Claremont, attended our schools, taught at Vista del Valle elementary, taught other teachers at local colleges, is Associate Director of a program at Pomona College, and has been a board member or volunteer in a number of community organizations. Her two sons attend Claremont schools. She's a respected and liked member of the school board and a Democrat who has been guest speaker at our club. The school district faculty and employees endorse her. Her website is www.hilarylaconteforschools.org.

Sam Mowbray previously served three terms on our school board, having been re-elected twice. He's a scientist, with research and teaching experience at three universities, plus research and management experience at Johnson & Johnson and the Orange County Sanitation District. He was a founding member of the Claremont Education Foundation and has served on many other committees in our town. The school employees endorse him. His website is sam4schools.com.

Joe Farrell was born in New York City, obtained a law degree from Pepperdine University, and practiced law in Connecticut. He's a trial attorney specializing in financial matters and is still listed as a member of the Connecticut law firm. He served for 11 years on two school boards in CT. He moved to Claremont in 2010. His campaign website is www.electjoefarrell.com.

I will work for Hilary LaConte, and I will vote for her and Sam Mowbray. They both have earned respect during their service on our school board and have been heavily involved in and supportive of our community for many years; they know Claremont.

I would be worried about the future of our school district if Joe Farrell were elected. He has repeatedly cast doubt on our school district's policy of filling its empty seats with voluntary transfer

students from nearby towns. The district recently obtained an independent analysis of this policy's effects, and of the alternatives to it:

http://www.cusd.claremont.edu/pdfs/blattner_report%209-15-11.pdf

The report makes it clear (1) that the inter-district transfer (IDT) students are just as well-behaved and perform as well as local kids and (2) that turning them away would be a financial disaster and would require closing campuses and reducing class and extracurricular offerings. At Active Claremont's candidate forum on September 22, Farrell refused to accept the report's findings and conclusions, although LaConte and Mowbray did. In a recent conversation with a scientist friend of mine, Farrell expressed doubt about global warming and offered a competing theory of global cooling. I don't want someone who denies facts making decisions about our schools.

We'll also vote on one seat for the Citrus Community College Board of Trustees. There are two candidates. Sue Keith has lived in Claremont for 38 years and has represented Claremont and neighboring cities on the Citrus College Board since 1999, having been re-elected twice; she twice served as its chair. Among other things, as chair she led the college in successfully completing a 6-year accreditation process, and she has obtained additional grants and other funds for the college. She has also had extensive involvement in Claremont community organizations, has directed fund-raising for two of them and has received several honors for her work in the community. She is a Democrat. Her campaign website is sue4citrus.com.

Tracy Rickman has been a Claremont resident for 20 years. He works as the Fire Technology Coordinator at Rio Hondo College and wants Citrus to increase emphasis on technical education; he's endorsed by firefighters. He's also been involved in the Boy Scouts. His website is rickman4trustee.com.

I'm supporting Sue, because of her success and experience on the Citrus College Board and her many years of dedicated involvement in our community. For the sake of Claremont's kids, please volunteer for and donate to good candidates. And be sure to vote on November 8. Put it on your calendar now. If there's any possibility that something may prevent you from going to the polls, request a vote-by-mail ballot ASAP by mailing in the form which follows this article. If you later want to vote in person, or if you neglect to mail your ballot in time to reach the Registrar by election day, you can just take your mail-in ballot to the polling place. I would urge you all to apply now; it's an insurance policy protecting your ability to vote.

APPLICATION FOR PERMANENT VOTE BY MAIL STATUS

Dear Registrar-Recorder/County Clerk:
 I am currently a registered voter in Los Angeles County and am applying for Permanent Vote By Mail status.

NAME: (PRINT) _____
 DATE OF BIRTH: _____
 REGISTERED ADDRESS: _____
 CITY: _____ ZIP CODE: _____

SIGNATURE AS REGISTERED X _____
 DATE: _____ TELEPHONE NUMBER: (____) _____
 EMAIL: _____

Address where ballot will be mailed (if different from registered address)

ADDRESS: (PRINT) _____
 CITY: _____ ZIP CODE: _____

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INPUT DATE	INTL	NOTIFICATION DATE	INTL	VID #
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Registrar-Recorder/County Clerk 12400 Imperial Hwy., Norwalk, Ca 90650 USA Rev. 8/10

Your Local Progressive Think Tank

By Merrill Ring

Three years ago, ten members of the Democratic Club of Claremont decided to form a progressive think tank located in Claremont. They called it *The American Institute for Progressive Democracy* (TAIPD). TAIPD is an educational non-profit organization, qualified for tax-deductible donations under sections 501(C)(3). The President is Andy Winnick. TAIPD presently undertakes two kinds of activity. TAIPD holds forums on major issues. In 2009 our forum was on health care reform; on September 30, 2011, a forum concerned the role of corporate money in the American political system. TAIPD's web site also publishes significant articles on political issues from a progressive point of view.

Claremont should be proud to have its own liberal think tank – and members of the Democratic Club are invited and encouraged to make use of its resources. New material is published on the web site every month (and the past work is in the site's archives.) The aim is not to write for a scholarly audience and not to put up so much material that a reader can't possibly follow everything. Please read what local progressive writers are contributing to the understanding of political life. Visit www.taipd.org regularly.

World Bank: Infrastructural Investment Strengthens Productivity

By Ivan Light

The World Bank has released an econometric study of the effects of infrastructural investment on labor productivity in 88 countries between 1960 and 2000. Results show that infrastructural investments in roads, highways, bridges, railroads, ports, subways, etc. improved subsequent labor productivity in these 88 countries, net of statistical controls.

Summarizing their results, the authors propose a hypothetical situation in which a country raised its level of infrastructural investment upward from the international median to the 75th percentile in the year 2000. On average, this investment would have translated into an eight percent improvement in annual productivity per worker. Effects were stronger in richer countries. Raising the level of infrastructural provision from the level of the average upper-middle income country to that of the average high-income country would increase worker productivity 8.7 percent annually. The advantageous effects reported were all long-term consequences of infrastructural investment.

Increasing labor productivity in an economy raises average wages. Employers can pay workers more if the workers are more productive. If employees produce \$5 worth of value per hour, employers can pay up to \$5.00; but if employees produce \$100 of value, employers can pay up to \$100. By implication, infrastructural investment now in the US economy would increase the average long-term wages of jobs in the private sector, and the short term effects of infrastructural investments would create immediate employment. But infrastructural investment is typically paid for by bonded indebtedness. Government debt rises when governments upgrade public infrastructure by borrowing money. So maybe we should not borrow now for this purpose? The good news is, according to the World Bank, that the long-term effects of infrastructural investment are well worth the upfront cost. Consider Highway 110 between downtown Los Angeles and Pasadena. It was constructed in 1937 by the WPA using borrowed money. At the time it was constructed it created employment. Highway 110 is still in use. Was it also a good long-term investment by the United States government?

See: César Calderón, Enrique Moral-Benito, and Luis Servén. 2011. "Is Infrastructure Capital Productive? A Dynamic Heterogeneous Approach." Policy Research Working Paper 5682 The World Bank, Development Research Group.



Needed: Infrastructural Investment in the Civilian Economy

Editorial

By Ivan Light

Rick Perry's vague call for reduction in the cost of higher education is politically motivated, insincere, and improbable of effectiveness given its auspices, but for all that, it's a step in the right direction! The United States does need to reduce the costs of college, four year and two year. As pointed out last month in this column, President Clinton intended to raise the average level of education from 12 to 14 years back in 1994, but it never happened. Meanwhile, other countries are raising the average level of education of their labor force, and providing their students with enhanced ability to compete in the international marketplace for labor. The United States is losing the advantage it held in worker productivity since the middle of the nineteenth century, and with it the high-wage jobs our workers'

super productivity assured.

Why does Rick Perry suddenly care about higher education? Perry realizes that Obama's reelection depends upon energizing the youth in 2012 as they were energized in 2008. Perry hopes to steal Obama's thunder and steal the youth vote by proposing to reduce the crushing costs of higher education without specifying any realistic means. He has no intention of follow through if elected, nor, indeed, any way to do so without federal action, a method he deprecates. How could this objective be assured in fact? If Obama were to undertake an infrastructural rehabilitation project along New Deal lines, he'd only energize the construction industry. Franklin D. Roosevelt did that. But, the world is more skilled now, and the USA needs to put money behind higher education. If building human capital were targeted along with infrastructural development, the USA could invest in the education of the next generation just as it invests in roads, bridges, railroads, harbors, etc. The federal government could pick up part of the tuition bill for students in targeted fields such as engineering, health sciences, and mathematics. The federal government already pays the tuition for students in ROTC; it's time to acknowledge the national defense implications of science and technology.

Here's a real program for reducing the costs of higher education that charts a policy path the GOP cannot follow. It will bring out the youth vote, assure Obama's reelection, and enhance the US economy in the rest of this century. As a step to putting this item on the 2012 campaign agenda, let's send some Claremont High School Young Democrats to the Democratic National Convention next year.

The Voorhis Voice is published by the Democratic Club of Claremont, PO Box 1201, Claremont CA 91711. The newsletter's name commemorates the late Jerry Voorhis, a talented and courageous Congress member from Claremont.

Newsletter Editor

Ivan Light: Email him at claremontdemocrats@yahoo.com

Any registered Democrat may join the Democratic Club of Claremont on our web site!

Access our website: <http://www.claremontdems.org>

Select: Get Involved > Join Us (Complete the form. Then...)

Select: Get Involved > Donate to the Club This will take you to the Act Blue website where you can pay your annual dues online.

P.S. – Part of your dues and contributions may be contributed to Federal and State candidates. Individual contributions will be deposited into the club's Federal account, subject to the Federal Elections Campaign Act. Non-individual contributions and contributions of individuals who so request will be deposited into the club's State account. Contributions are limited under State law. No anonymous contributions of more than \$50 will be accepted. Federal law requires us to use our best efforts to collect and report the name, address, occupation and employer of each individual contributor. Political contributions are not tax-deductible. FPPC #841491. FEC #C00404319

