

THE VOORHIS VOICE

Liberal Voice of the Pomona Valley

January, 2012

www.claremontdems.org

MEETINGS AND SPECIAL EVENTS

Thursday, January 5, 6:30 PM

City Council Open Meeting on Water Rates

Hughes Center, Claremont

Friday, January 6, 12–2 PM

Issues Committee Luncheon

Rabi's Café, 930 Central Avenue, Upland

No speaker: Bring your issue

Saturday, January 7, 3-6 PM

Meet Chris Holden, Candidate for new 41st AD

Napier Center, Pilgrim Place

660 Avery Rd., Claremont

Friday, January 13, 2012, 12-2 PM

Monthly Luncheon, LYL Gardens

Speaker: **Mel Boynton on Tar Sands Pipeline**

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

Friday, January 20, 12– 2 PM

Issues Committee Luncheon

Rabi's Café, 930 Central Avenue, Upland

No speaker: Bring your issue

Friday, January 27, 12– 2 PM

Issues Committee Luncheon

Rabi's Café, 930 Central Avenue, Upland

No speaker: Bring your issue

Have our Cake and Eat it too: Stimulus + Deficit Reduction

by Bob Gerecke

The Republicans in Congress fear anti-tax zealots. These include Grover Norquist, who has at his disposal a number of billionaires willing to bankroll the defeat of any Republican who dares to violate Norquist's anti-tax pledge. They also include the voters of the so-called Tea Party; their initial outrage over bank bailouts has been redirected into anti-government activism by professional operatives hired by Norquist's billionaires. It would be fair to say that Norquist's extremist billionaires own the Republican Party. As a result, Republicans in Congress demand deficit reduction without tax increases on wealthy individuals or businesses. If they get their way, the economy will spiral into Depression.

Why? As a result of high unemployment, shrinking benefits and wages which don't keep up with the cost of living, American consumers are unable to spend enough to create the demand which will drive businesses to hire more employees and will give banks the confidence to lend. In addition, \$500 billion every year is sent out of the country instead of being spent here because of our trade deficit; that's a further drag on our economy. State and local governments can't take up the slack; instead, they're cutting expenditures and jobs. Only economic stimulus by the national government can save the economy. That requires deficit spending until the recovery is solid and self-sustaining.

A reduction in government spending, as the Republicans demand, will reduce stimulus and be a drag on the economy. Unemployment will increase, business will stagnate, and government revenues will decrease, thereby undoing the deficit reduction. Further deficit reduction will simply extend the process in a vicious cycle as every reduction in government spending to reduce the deficit causes a further loss of private income and government revenue, followed by a demand to reduce spending again to avoid an increase in the deficit.

But can government spending which puts money into the hands of the many who are primarily consumers, and which thereby creates jobs, continue or even increase without increasing the deficit? It can, if taxes are increased enough on great wealth and high incomes. How much is enough? I don't possess the necessary data to calculate that, and it depends on how much stimulus spending will occur anyway. A minimum of \$500 billion per year in stimulus spending is needed merely to balance the loss from the trade deficit; more is needed if we are to recover economically. A number of economists have estimated that a \$1.2 billion increase in stimulus is needed.

Until now, all of the discussions on the revenue side have been about taxing incomes and maybe financial transactions, but none about taxing wealth. It shouldn't be off the table. When we tax real estate at the state and local level, we are taxing property. Other forms of property shouldn't be exempt. Real estate taxes pay for the services which presumably benefit the owners of those properties. Well, the owners of businesses and of financial assets benefit from many public services, too, such as national defense, law enforcement, education, infrastructure and laws which protect property ownership and contractual obligations. Therefore, it's perfectly legitimate to have a property tax on forms of wealth other than real estate. Actually, the fact that real property is taxed while most other forms of property aren't is a leftover from earlier times in which real property was the primary form of wealth. That ended with the industrial revolution. Now the ownership of businesses and

financial assets is the prime source of wealth. It's long past time for the system of taxation to catch up with economic realities.

It's not necessary to have a property tax on the modest savings of the middle class. A tax on non-real estate wealth in excess of a couple million dollars will generate significant revenues, and it will chip away at the present drift toward a hereditary and entrenched plutocracy which corners both economic and political power.

The bottom line is that, by increasing taxes on the highest incomes and by initiating taxes on excess wealth which is not already taxed, it will be possible to have our cake and eat it too: reduce the national government's budget deficit while retaining and perhaps increasing those expenditures which enable consumer spending, generate jobs and rescue the economy. The increase in government revenues from a revitalized economy will further reduce the deficit.

The right-wing argument that today's deficit spending must stop because it is leaving a debt for our descendants fails to account for the damage our descendants will suffer from a collapsed national economy, with rampant unemployment, crumbling infrastructure, inferior education and health care, street begging and crime. The Republican approach is a lose-lose game: either run up our descendants' debt or leave them with a crippled country. A win-win game is a better alternative. We can have our cake and eat it too. We can reduce the debt we're leaving to our descendants while revitalizing the country which they will inherit.

Throttling our Thirst for Poison

by Charles Boyer

Bill McKibben is the world's most significant voice in confronting the crisis generated by global warming... Last month McKibben spoke ... in the prelude to a conference on the subject sponsored by Progressive Christians Uniting and held at the Presbyterian Church in Claremont. Several hundred religious activists from around the area met for two days to hear world authorities on the subject, to plan specific actions and to engage in services of worship. McKibben is an active Methodist layman and teaches a Sunday School class at his local Vermont congregation. He also preached Sunday morning at Claremont's largest protestant church.

James Hansen, a NASA scientist, recently wrote, "If humanity wishes to preserve a planet similar to that on which civilization developed and to which life on earth is adopted, paleoclimate evidence and ongoing climate change suggests that CO₂ will need to be reduced from its current 385 ppm to at most 350 ppm." In response, McKibben has generated a worldwide movement centered around the "350" focus, believing that the currently verified 410 ppm.. is deadly. The movement's short-term goal is the reduction of the use of fossil fuels, while forcing the producers to pay for the environmental degradation they generate. These atmospheric insults are simply part of the cost of doing business.

There is now all but a unanimous conclusion by the scientific community that the carbon spewed into the air has already raised the earth's temperature by more than a degree. While warmer air holds more moisture than cooler air, it falls to the ground unevenly. This means floods more severe than have ever been recorded, and droughts that disable entire nations. Vermont and Thailand have been

inundated, while Texas and Sub-Saharan Africa are increasingly parched.

One wonders why saving the planet from the inevitable destruction caused by global warming is not at the top of everyone's agenda. Yet there is a sturdy resistance to taking any of the steps necessary to halt our rush to the precipice. Among the several states, California has generated the greatest concern leading to legislative action. The State has its own version of "cap and trade." But there is opposition even to the small steps taken. What is the contrary argument? "It's bad for business."

The lead editorial in the *Wall Street Journal* of October 31 makes the negative case. It cites, among other things, that the Western States Petroleum Association calculates these new laws will cost ... stockholders \$540 million in the first two years. In that period Conoco-Phillips alone will earn 14 billion! While there is obviously a trade-off between climate change policies and economic competitiveness—that translates "profits"—the increasing corporate control of every aspect of American society makes it difficult to deal with what may be the most critical issue facing this planet. Most American politicians are now indebted to corporate money. That means keeping the cash coming trumps the need to reduce atmospheric pollution. One wonders if both corporations, and the politicians in their pockets, would rather have us go off the cliff into environmental oblivion, than to take the simplest steps in controlling global warming.

Of course saving the planet will come at a cost. We will have to develop new sources of energy, which means, in the interim, some jobs will go out of style. We will be paying higher costs for the fuels we now consume. We may need a tax on all carbon generation to cover the costs involved in dealing with the destruction now caused in the air we breathe and the atmosphere which controls our weather. These costs are already build into our economy. The *Wall Street Journal* complains that even these simple steps now on California's books, are futile since the rest of the world is not taking similar measures. So California should do nothing at all. I am hardly compelled by the argument that I should continue to drink poison because everybody else is gulping it down. Paying \$6 a gallon for gasoline would be a bitter pill, but that is probably what it would take to throttle our thirst.

Americans Disagree with Tea Party

In the latest Pew Research Center survey, conducted November 9-14, more Americans say they disagree (27%) than agree (20%) with the Tea Party movement. A year ago, in the wake of the sweeping GOP gains in the midterm elections, the balance of opinion was just the opposite: 27% agreed and 22% disagreed with the Tea Party. At both points, more than half of Americans offered no opinion about the Tea Party.

Throughout the 2010 election cycle, agreement with the Tea Party far outweighed disagreement in the 60 House districts represented by members of the Congressional Tea Party Caucus. But as is the case nationwide, support has decreased significantly over the past year; now about as many people living in Tea Party districts disagree (23%) as agree (25%) with the Tea Party.

The Republican Party's image also has declined substantially among people who live in Tea Party districts. Currently, 41% say they have a favorable opinion of the GOP, while 48% say they have an unfavorable view. As recently as March of 2011, GOP favorability was 14 points higher (55%) in these districts, with just 39% offering an unfavorable opinion. Among the public, 36% now say they have a favorable opinion of the Republican Party, down from 42% in March, 2011.



Hey, Republicans!
Endangered by pollution

Abe Lincoln on Labor and Capital

"... There is one point ... to which I ask a brief attention. It is to place capital on an equal footing with, if not above, labor, in the structure of government. It is assumed that labor is available only in connection with capital; that nobody labors unless somebody else, owning capital, somehow by the use of it induces him to labor. This assumed, it is next considered whether it is best that capital shall hire laborers, and thus induce them to work by their own consent, or buy them, and drive them to it without their consent. Having proceeded thus far, it is naturally concluded that all laborers are either hired laborers or what we call slaves. And further, it is assumed that whoever is once a hired laborer is fixed in that condition for life.

“Now, there is no such relation between capital and labor as assumed, nor is there any such thing as a free man being fixed for life in the condition of a hired laborer. Both these assumptions are false, and all inferences from them are groundless.

“Labor is prior to, and independent of, capital. Capital is only the fruit of labor, and could never have existed if labor had not first existed. Labor is the superior of capital, and deserves much the higher consideration.”

Abraham Lincoln, Address to Congress, 1861

Air Force dumped Soldiers' Corpses in Landfill

The US Air Force dumped the cremated, partial remains of at least 274 dead soldiers in a landfill before halting the secretive practice in 2008, the Washington Post reported on December 8, 2011. Dumping was accomplished at Dover Air Base, which is the main point of reentry for US war dead. The Air Force did not disclose the dumping to families of deceased soldiers. Question: How much does the Air Force value the lives of our soldiers?

Republicans Finally Target Wealthy

Senate Republicans proposed to cut the federal budget by restricting access of millionaires to jobless benefits, food stamps, and Medicare.

Yes indeed, today's Republicans are seriously tough on the wealthy.

Source: Financial Times , December 4, 2011

Income Inequality Rising in California

by Alyssa Anderson and Jean Ross

The California Budget Project examined data from the Franchise Tax Board, and found that income gains accrued mainly to the wealthy. Between 1987 and 2009, more than 33% of income gains went to the top 1% of Californians, and almost 75% went to the top 10%. The bottom 90% received just over 25% of total income growth.

During the last two decades, the average income for the top 40% of Californians jumped by more than 20%, after adjusting for inflation, while incomes declined for Californians in the bottom 80% of the income distribution.

Over the last two decades, the average income of the top 1% of Californians increased by 50%, after adjusting for inflation, while the average income of the middle fifth fell by 15%. In 2009, the average income of the top 1% was \$1.2 million — more than 30 times that of Californians in the middle fifth.

Nearly 1 in 6 Californians now lives in poverty, the largest share in over a decade. California's millionaires, who account for a fraction of a percent of the population, had combined incomes of more than \$100 billion in 2009 — 11 times the income needed to lift every Californian out of poverty. In other words, redistributing 1/11th of the income of the top 1% would end poverty in California.

California is home to some of the widest income gaps in the nation. At the state level, California has the seventh-widest income gap among the 50 states, ranking between Alabama and Texas. In addition, the income gaps in the Los Angeles and San Francisco metropolitan areas rank third and seventh, respectively, among large U.S. cities.

Source: LA Times, December 6

The Most Important News Story of the Millennium

by Bill McKibben

The most important piece of news this year was a new set of statistics released last month by the Global Carbon Project. It showed that carbon emissions from our planet had increased 5.9 percent between 2009 and 2010. In fact, it was arguably among the most important pieces of data in the last three centuries, almost certainly the largest absolute jump in any year since the Industrial Revolution .

It means that we've all but lost the battle to reduce the damage from global warming. The planet has already warmed about a degree Celsius; it's clearly going to go well past two degrees. It means, in political terms, that the fossil fuel industry has delayed effective action for the 12 years since the Kyoto treaty was signed. It means, in diplomatic terms, that the endless talks underway in Durban should be more important than ever--they should be the focus of a planetary population desperate to figure out how it's going to survive the century.

But instead, almost no one is paying attention to the proceedings . . . One of our political parties has decided that global warming is a hoax--it's two leading candidates are busily apologizing for anything they said in the past that might possibly have been construed as backing science. President Obama hasn't yet spoken on the Durban talks.

Who are the 99%? In this country, they're those of us who aren't making any of these deadly decisions. In this world, they're the vast majority of people who didn't contribute to those soaring emissions. In this biosphere they're every other species now living on a disorienting earth.

You think OWS is radical? You think 350.org was radical for helping organize mass civil disobedience in DC in August against the Keystone Pipeline? We're not radical. Radicals work for oil companies. The CEO of Exxon gets up every morning and goes to work changing the chemical composition of the atmosphere. No one has ever done anything as radical as that, not in all of human history. And he and his ilk spend heavily on campaigns to make sure no one stops them--the US Chamber of Commerce gave more money than the DNC and the RNC last cycle, and 94% of it went to climate deniers.

Corporate power has occupied the atmosphere. 2011 showed we could fight back. 2012 would be a good year to step up the pressure. Because this time next year the Global Carbon Project will release another number. And I'm betting it will be grim.

Bill McKibben is Schumann Distinguished Scholar at Middlebury College and co-founder of 350.org. His most recent book is [Eaarth: Making a Life on a Tough New Planet](#).

California Assembly Must Open Spending Records to Public

December 2, 2011-- A judge ruled that individual office budgets for California's 80 Assembly members are public records and must be released. It was unclear, however, when/whether the State Assembly planned to do so.

The court ruling could lead to the disclosure of information previously deemed secret under the Assembly's narrow interpretation of its own open records law.

In his ruling, Superior Court Judge Tim Frawley declared existing law "reflects a strong presumption in favor of public access to legislative records." The judge sided with *The Sacramento Bee* and *LA Times* lawsuit claiming that Assembly leaders (John Burton) were shielding spending documents from the public by relying too heavily on exemptions in the Legislative Open Records Act.

source: AP

DCC Memo on Golden State Water

On behalf of the Democratic Club of Claremont, Ivan Light presented the following memo to the California Public Utilities Commission at their hearing on Golden State Water's request for rate increase in Claremont on December 6.

The Democratic Club of Claremont wishes to bring the following facts to the PUC's attention in regards to the proposed rate hike for Claremont that is requested by Golden State Water.

1. GSW's rates are already much higher than those prevailing in neighboring towns.
2. GSW overpays its executives in the opinion of industry sources.
3. GSW's dividend of 12% to stockholders vastly exceeds industry means.
4. GSW's proposal penalizes customers who have conserved water.

For these reasons, the Democratic Club of Claremont believes the proposed rate increase is unwarranted, and should be rejected.

Americans Spent \$448 billion on gasoline in 2011

December 9, 2011 -- American drivers spent more than \$448 billion on gasoline since the beginning of the year, according to the Oil Price Information Service. This sum broke the previous record for gas expenditure that was set in 2008, and there are still two weeks of driving yet to go in 2011.

It's also a huge jump over 2010 when U.S. drivers spent more than \$100 billion less on gasoline, mainly because gasoline was cheaper in 2010 than in 2011. The Organization of the Petroleum Exporting Countries will top \$1 trillion in net oil exports for the first time, or 29% more than last year. The money Americans spent on gasoline in 2011 is approximately what it would have cost to build an electrical grid that would meet the entire energy need of the United States from wind power in Nebraska alone. It is also approximately one sixth of the cost of the Iraq War, 2003-2011.

source: LA Times

Why We Occupy D.C.

The following was approved by consensus by the General Assembly of Occupy D.C. on November 30, 2011.

We have been captives of corrupt economic and political systems for far too long. The concentration of wealth and the purchase of political power stifle the voices of the increasingly disenfranchised 99

percent. Corporate dominance subverts democracy, intentionally sows division, destroys the environment, obstructs the just and equitable pursuit of happiness, and violates the rights and dignity of all life.

Occupy D.C. is an open community of diverse individuals, facing different forms of oppression and impacted by economic exploitation to differing degrees, but united by a shared vision of equality for the common good. The harsh economic conditions that have plagued the poor, working class, and communities of color for generations have begun to affect the previously financially secure. This acute awareness of our common fate has united us in our struggle for a better future. We recognize that inequality and injustice systemically affect every aspect of our society: our communities, homes, and hearts. To build the world we envision, we commit ourselves to overcoming our personal biases so we can successfully challenge systems of oppression in solidarity.

We are peaceably assembled at McPherson Square, practicing direct democracy on the doorstep of K Street, the epicenter of destructive corporate and governmental relationships. Recognizing that the term 'occupy' is associated with exploitation, violence, and imperialism, we are reclaiming it to mean the peaceful liberation of public space. In this disenfranchised city, we are insisting that our economic and political systems serve the people's interests. Now is the time to advance and complete the struggles of the many who came before us.

We are assembled because...

- **It is absurd that the 1 percent has taken 40 percent** of the nation's wealth through exploiting labor, outsourcing jobs, and manipulating the tax code to their benefit through special capital tax rates and loopholes. The system is rigged in their favor, yet they cry foul when anyone even dares to question their relentless class warfare.
- **Candidates in our electoral system require huge sums** of money to be competitive. These contributions from multinational corporations and wealthy individuals destroy responsive representative governance. A system of backroom deals, kickbacks, bribes, and dirty politics overrides the will of the people. The rotation of decision makers between the public and private sectors cultivates a network of public officials, lobbyists, and executives whose aligned interests do not serve the American people.
- **The entrenched two-party system overlooks public interests** by pursuing narrow political goals. This climate encourages candidates to polarize voters for individual power and personal gain. Citizens' meaningful input has been compromised by gerrymandering, voter disenfranchisement, and unresponsive politicians. Residents of Washington, D.C., continue to lack autonomy and legislative representation.
- **The 1 percent benefits from economic, political, and legal structures** that oppress communities long targeted by displacement, denial of sovereignty, slavery, and other injustices. These persecuted but resilient communities continue to suffer through generations of disproportionately higher rates of unemployment, poverty, criminalization, and homelessness. Facets of the 1 percent campaign to blame these groups for these problems while obstructing healing and restoration.
- **Those with power have divided us** from working in solidarity by perpetuating historical prejudices and discrimination based on perceived race, religion, immigrant or indigenous status, income, age, gender, gender identity, sexual orientation, and disability, among other things. These divisions have inhibited our ability to work in solidarity, though today we recognize the

power of uniting as the 99 percent.

- **Financial institutions gambled** with our savings, homes, and economy. They collapsed the financial system and needed the public to bail them out of their failures yet deny any responsibility and continue to fight oversight. Corporations loot from those whose labor creates society's prosperity, while the government allows them to privatize profits and socialize risk.
- **Corporate interests threaten life on Earth** by extracting and burning fossil fuels and resisting the necessary transition to renewable energy. Their drilling, mining, clear-cutting, overfishing, and factory farming destroys the land, jeopardizes our food and water, and poisons the soil with near impunity. They privilege polluters over people by subsidizing fossil fuels, blocking investments in clean energy and efficient transportation, and hiding environmental destruction from public oversight.
- **Private corporations, with the government's support, use common resources** and infrastructure for short-term personal profit, while stifling efforts to invest in public goods.
- **The U.S. government engages in drawn-out, costly conflicts abroad.** Numerous acts of conquest have been, and continue to be, pursued to control resources, overthrow foreign governments, and install subservient regimes. These wars destroy the lives of innocent civilians and American soldiers, many of whom suffer adverse effects throughout life. These operations are a blank check to divert money from domestic priorities.
- **Government authorities cultivate a culture of fear** to invade our privacy, limit assembly, restrict speech, and deny due process. They have failed in their duty to protect our rights. Exacerbated by profiteering interests, the criminal justice system has unfairly targeted underprivileged communities and outspoken groups for prosecution rather than protection.
- **Corporatized culture warps our perception of reality.** It cheapens and mocks the beauty of human thought and experience while promoting excessive materialism as the path to happiness. The corporate news media furthers the interests of the very wealthy, distorts and disregards the truth, and confines our imagination of what is possible for ourselves and society.
- **Leaders are trading our access to basic needs** in exchange for handouts to the ultra-wealthy. Our rights to healthcare, education, food, water, and housing are sacrificed to profit-driven market forces. They are attacking unemployment insurance, Medicare, Medicaid, and Social Security, creating an uncertain future for us all.*

Lay-Offs Enrich Romney

During his political career, Mitt Romney has bragged about his experience as a businessman while deflecting criticism of layoffs caused by his company's private equity deals. He claims that he left Bain Capital in 1999 so he's not responsible for their subsequent depredations. But in the years since, thanks to a generous retirement arrangement, Romney has financially gained from Bain deals that resulted in layoffs, job loss, and upheaval for companies, workers and communities.

One lucrative deal for Bain involved KB Toys, a company based in Pittsfield, Mass., which one of the Bain's partnerships bought in 2000. Three years later, when Mr. Romney was the governor of Massachusetts, KB began closing stores and laying off thousands of employees. Romney made money on these layoffs. More recently, Bain Capital led the private equity purchase of Clear Channel Communications, the nation's largest radio station operator, which resulted in the loss of 2,500 jobs.

Source: NY Times December. 18, 2011

Our Bill of Rights

By Bob Gerecke

The participants in Occupy Wall Street and its offshoots throughout the USA have often been evicted forcibly from the public spaces which they've occupied. The Claremont city government, however, made the constitutionally correct decision to allow them to exercise their rights undisturbed.

The US Constitution guarantees our rights to exercise free speech, assemble peacefully and petition our representatives. That's what the Occupiers are doing. Furthermore, the speech which they are exercising is political speech; the Supreme Court has always protected that above other kinds of speech, because protecting political speech is the primary purpose of the First Amendment to our Constitution.

Local authorities have evicted or arrested Occupiers for violating curfews, sleeping in public places, erecting tents or not having latrines. I'm not aware that our Constitution conditions the exercise of the rights to speech, assembly and petition upon avoiding any of these conditions.

If the Occupiers were interfering with others' rights, that would be a different matter. If an exercise of free speech or assembly harms someone or infringes on someone's rights, judges may decide, under the circumstances, that speech or assembly may only be exercised in other ways which do not violate other rights. However, here in Claremont, the Occupiers aren't blocking access to City Hall, nor to the sidewalk or street. They aren't harassing pedestrians or drivers, and they aren't shouting down anyone else who expresses a different opinion. The small area between City Hall's steps and doors isn't normally used by anyone for any other purpose, and it's easy to walk past the Occupy on either side to enter City Hall. In fact, the Occupy encampment seems to have been positioned for the purpose of allowing anyone to pass by conveniently. In short, they are assembled peacefully as an act of political speech, and they are not interfering with anyone else's rights. Apparently, Claremont's city attorney agrees, since she has stated that, since they aren't interfering with any other use, they aren't violating the intent of the city's ordinance against camping on public property, which specifies that its purpose is to prevent obstacles to public use. Even if they were, I would argue that their and our constitutional rights to free speech, assembly and petition outweigh the right to relax in a park or even to pass through one of many sidewalks and streets which we can use to reach a destination. Sure, they can exercise constitutional rights somewhere and somehow else, but that doesn't justify making them do so, because the rest of us have options to exercise lesser rights in other ways, too.

If our city government had decided to evict the Occupiers, it may have gotten away with it, because they don't have the resources to fight back in court. However, the American Civil Liberties Union and volunteer attorneys have represented persons across the political spectrum – including neo-Nazis – whose rights have been violated by government, and they have prevailed, collecting damages and legal costs. It could turn out to be expensive for the city to evict peaceful practitioners of constitutional rights.

GOP Attacks Judiciary, Constitution

By Erwin Chemerinsky

The attack on the federal judiciary by Republican candidates for president has reached a new low and should be denounced by everyone. In November, Texas Gov Rick Petty announced that if elected president, his "appointees to the federal bench will not receive a lifetime appointment." Now [Eye of] Newt Gingrich pledged that if elected President, he would defy Supreme Court rulings with which he disagreed, and that judicial review to ensure that the government complies with the Constitution has been "grossly overstated."

In Thursday's debate in Iowa and in a media conference call on Saturday, Gingrich declared that courts are forcing us into a constitutional crisis because of their "arrogant overreach." He repeatedly blasted federal judges for imposing "elitist opinions" on the rest of the country. He has called for impeaching judges, abolishing judgeships and even eliminating courts whose rulings he dislikes.

In recent years, the high court has handed George W. Bush the presidency by 5-4 vote, greatly expanded the rights of gun owners under the 2nd Amendment, limited abortion rights and authorized corporations to spend unlimited money in election campaigns. And most of the federal district court and court of appeals judges today were appointed by Republican presidents.

Source: LA Times, December 20

Does the US Need Foreign Oil?

By Ivan Light

The opinion is frequently encountered that the US needs foreign oil because of dwindling domestic supplies; that's the sovereign explanation offered for imperialist wars such as Iraq. "We wanted their oil" or "we wanted their pipeline." This opinion does not hold water. Consider that for the war in Iraq a trillion dollars was expended, and that for only half that money, the US might have forever solved its energy problems with wind power from the great state of Nebraska. The expenditure would have built the national grid that is needed to distribute the wind power to users.

We spent a trillion dollars, and did not get the eternal energy security that half the money would have obtained for us. Would someone have done this who just wanted energy independence and security?

Arguably, the oil companies wanted access to Middle oil Eastern oil, and they sent the US military to get it for them. The oil companies, after all, want to protract and prolong our national dependence on their product. But this lamentable situation is not the same as the US needing the oil that the oil companies sent us to fetch. In fact, putting it that way wrongly sends the message that the constant imperialist wars are in our national interest.

The problem is not that the US needs oil for energy. That problem is easily solved. Rather, the problem is that oil companies call the foreign policy shots in Washington DC, and the American people unwisely foot their bill in treasure and blood. We are paying for our own enslavement.

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.

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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

