### disease

Even a mild pandemic collapses the global economy and kills millions

**Osterholm 2005** – Director of the center for infectious Disease Research and Policy (Michael, Preparing for the next Pandemic, Foreign Affairs, Vol. 84, Iss. 4, July/August)

Summary: If an influenza pandemic struck today, borders would close, the global economy would shut down, international vaccine supplies and health-care systems would be overwhelmed, and panic would reign. To limit the fallout, the industrialized world must create a detailed response strategy involving the public and private sectors. FEAR ITSELF Dating back to antiquity, influenza pandemics have posed the greatest threat of a worldwide calamity caused by infectious disease. Over the past 300 years, ten influenza pandemics have occurred among humans. The most recent came in 1957-58 and 1968-69, and although several tens of thousands of Americans died in each one, these were considered mild compared to others. The 1918-19 pandemic was not. According to recent analysis, it killed 50 to 100 million people globally. Today, with a population of 6.5 billion, more than three times that of 1918, even a "mild" pandemic could kill many millions of people. A number of recent events and factors have significantly heightened concern that a specific near-term pandemic may be imminent. It could be caused by H5N1, the avian influenza strain currently circulating in Asia. At this juncture scientists cannot be certain. Nor can they know exactly when a pandemic will hit, or whether it will rival the experience of 1918-19 or be more muted like 1957-58 and 1968-69. The reality of a coming pandemic, however, cannot be avoided. Only its impact can be lessened. Some important preparatory efforts are under way, but much more needs to be done by institutions at many levels of society.

#### Antibiotic resistance means no D

**Collins, 98** (Columnist-Sunday Mirror (UK), “Doomsday fear as we over-use antibiotics,” 4/12, Lexis)

THE golden age of antibiotics, the 20th Century's wonder drug, is over. Scientists now fear a Doomsday scenario, where infection spreads rapidly across the globe. One in six prescriptions written out by GPs is for antibiotics, yet they no longer work on many extremely dangerous bacteria - or are only effective when used in amounts so high that they can cause serious side-effects. Some bugs like salmonella and TB have become resistant to the antibiotics used to destroy them because of over-use. And other bacteria, such as the deadly hospital superbug MRSA (right) which kills 5,000 patients a year, are actually the product of the microscopic war against germs. The more doctors have bombarded the bugs with antibiotics the faster they have mutated to produce resistant strains, like MRSA. Richard Young, head of The Soil Association's Antibiotics Group which is investigating the crisis, said: "The problem of antibiotic resistance is very worrying and could potentially lead to a public health problem of **apocalyptic proportions**. The misuse of antibiotics is threatening us all."

### cali

#### Cali econ brink now

Walters, 3-24-13

[Dan, “Dan Walters: California's economic challenge in a nutshell,” http://www.sacbee.com/2013/03/24/5288075/dan-walters-californias-economic.html#storylink=cpy]

Coincidentally, three otherwise unrelated events last week framed California's somewhat clouded economic situation. One was a revelation that the state now is tied with Rhode Island for the nation's highest unemployment rate, 9.8 percent. Although employment surged in California last year, with about a quarter-million new jobs, and the jobless rate had dropped by more than two percentage points from its high-water mark, more than 1.8 million workers are still without jobs. And outside the immediate Bay Area the picture is especially grim, with jobless rates hitting nearly 30 percent in some rural counties. The second event was release of a study by researchers at the University of Southern California on the state's potentially huge deposits of shale oil that, they said, could spark an economic boom in the state, as it has in other states. Exploiting shale oil could create from a half-million to more than 2 million jobs, increase personal income sharply and spark a multi-billion-dollar surge in tax revenues, the study said. The third was release of the latest annual update of the Tax Foundation's state-by-state comparisons of tax burdens, indicating that Californians are bearing some of the nation's highest taxation loads. We were fourth highest at 11.2 percent of personal income in 2010 and since then, we've hiked sales and income taxes that would add nearly another half a point to that rate. Yet, despite those heavy taxes, state and local governments continue to struggle with chronic budget deficits and long-term obligations for pensions, retiree health care and bonded debt. And there it is. After three booms (defense, technology and housing) and three busts in the last three decades, California's economy continues to sputter. Two new economic forecasts, one from UCLA's Anderson School and another from California Lutheran University, see only incremental and slow recovery from what had been the worst recession since the Great Depression, with relatively high joblessness for years to come. Meanwhile, we're seeing a strong outflow of job-seeking Californians to other states, especially those whose economies are humming, such as Texas, thus reducing our stock of educated and high-skill workers. It's not a pretty picture, and while Gov. Jerry Brown dismisses those who question the state's prospects as "declinists," he and other Capitol politicians pay nothing more than lip service to making the state a more attractive venue for job- creating investment.

### AT: T Natural Gas

#### Renewable natural gas, biomethane and regular natural gas are the same thing

**Jensen 11**—Senior Bioenergy and Alternative Fuels Specialist at the Washington State University Extension Energy Program

(Jim, “Biomethane for Transportation”, <http://www.energy.wsu.edu/Documents/Biomethane_For_Transportation_WWCleanCities.pdf>, dml)

Biomethane refers to the gas produced by cleaning and upgrading biogas produced through anaerobic digestion of organic by-products, such as wastewater solids, livestock manure, food wastes, and yard debris. After removing carbon dioxide (CO2 ) and other gases, the remaining methane is essentially the same as natural gas and can be used in all the ways natural gas is used. For this reason, biomethane is also called renewable natural gas or green gas.

#### Contextual evidence—definitionally it’s “natural gas”

**King no date**—independent researcher

(Davy, “An Ill Wind”, <http://www.davyking.com/fart.htm>, dml)

According to the latest scientific research on the matter, gas in the large intestines is produced by no less than 49 strains (cf Heinz 57 Varieties) of anaerobic microbes, dirty little buggers. Doctors warn that gasses should on no account be suppressed because, if held internally, they are converted into toxins such as cadaverine, putrescine, scatole & indole. Sounds ghastly & smells worse. It has been known for a long time that certain foods are particularly fart-making. No-one needs to be told about beans: ‘Pease and beans are flatulent meat’ (Blount Glossogr, 1674-81). What is less well known is that cooking beans with a herb called Savory helps to reduce flatulence. Other foods have a bad reputation: ‘Eaten in quantity it (beet-root) often proves flatulent’ (M.Donovan, Domestic Economy 1837). No doubt different foods (& combinations of foods) affect individuals differently. Considering the quantity & variety of comestibles that we stuff into our stomachs, it’s hardly surprising that explosive reactions occasionally occur. Perhaps this could explain the mysterious phenomenon of spontaneous combustion in human beings, for what else is a fart but natural gas? In the retort of the stomach unpredictable chemistry may take place.

#### Counter-interp—energy production must come from substances chemically equivalent to topical categories—we meet that

**Boisen 8—**Chairman of the Board for NGVA Europe

(Peter, “NATURAL GAS AND BIOMETHANE CONTRIBUTIONS TO SUSTAINABILITY”, <http://www.eurogas.org/green/Position%20paper%20NGVA%20Europe.pdf>, dml)

Supplies of natural gas can be progressively substituted by biomethane produced from various biomass sources. Chemically there is no difference between biomethane and natural gas. Biomethane can be readily blended with natural gas - the engine will run equally well on pure biomethane, pure natural gas, or any mix of the two fuels. In Sweden biomethane already accounts for more than half of the gas used in a fleet of some 15,000 NGVS.

### AT: T Tax Credit

#### Financial incentives include tax-incentives to leverage private sector resources

Clean and Secure Energy Action Report 10

[staff, 2010 update, “Financial Incentives - Loans, Rebates, Taxes, Bonds, Etc.”, p. <http://www.nga.org/files/live/sites/NGA/files/pdf/1008CLEANENERGYELECTRICITYINCENTIVES.PDF> //wyo-tjc]

Financial incentives can help states address market barriers and leverage private sector resources for greater investment in energy efficiency or renewable energy systems. Types of financial incentives state governments offer include: tax incentives, grants, loans, rebates, industry recruitment/support, bond programs, green building incentives, leasing/lease purchase programs, and production incentives.al

#### Counter-interpretation—only direct incentives—includes tax credits but excludes indirect mechanisms

Al-Juaied, 10 - Former Visiting Scholar, Energy Technology Innovation Policy Research Group, Belfer Center for Science and International Affairs, Harvard Kennedy School (Mohammed, “Analysis of Financial Incentives for Early CCS Deployment,” October, http://www.southwestcarbonpartnership.org/\_Resources/PDF/Al-Juaied\_Analysis\_of\_Financial\_Incentives\_web.pdf)

2. FINANCIAL INCENTIVES

Federal and state governments have frequently used direct and indirect incentives to mobilize private sector investment in projects and to advance policy objectives in numerous sectors of the economy. Types of direct incentives have included tax-based incentives, loan guarantees, and other forms of direct government participation such as grants. Indirect incentives can also be valuable tools for mobilizing private sector investment, such as permitting acceleration, and other indirect forms of risk sharing.

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### 2ac exports da

Production high now – supply isn’t the barrier to expanded LNG

ASP, 13 [Nick Cunningham is a policy analyst at the American Security Project, a non-profit, non partisan public policy American Security Project, march, <http://americansecurityproject.org/ASP%20Reports/Ref%200116%20-%20The%20Geopolitical%20Implications%20of%20U.S.%20Natural%20Gas%20Exports.pdf>]

Introduction In 2012, U.S. natural gas production surpassed 29 trillion cubic feet, an all-time record. 1 The combination of horizontal drilling and hydraulic fracturing, or “fracking,” has allowed American drillers to release natural gas from shale reserves that had previously been uneconomic to exploit. While the environmental effects of fracking are still under heavy debate, the effects are undeniable: the production of natural gas is booming. The enormous production has resulted in a glut of supply and rock-bottom prices. Producers hope to relieve the glut of natural gas in the U.S. by exporting surplus production, taking advantage of higher prices around the world. However, under the Natural Gas Act, first passed in 1938 and amended several times since, the export of natural gas is illegal without approval from the Secretary of Energy.

**Relations are impossible and won’t result in cooperation**

**LaFranchi, 3/3/12** [Christian Science Monitor, “A cold-war chill US-Russia relations falter over Libya and Syria”, http://www.csmonitor.com/USA/Foreign-Policy/2012/0303/A-cold-war-chill-US-Russia-relations-falter-over-Libya-and-Syria/%28page%29/2]

Secretary of State Hillary Rodham Clinton doffed her diplomatic gloves after Russia vetoed a United Nations Security Council resolution on Syria. Calling the February veto "despicable," she laid at Moscow's feet the "murders" of Syrian "women, children, [and] brave young men."

Not to be outdone, Russian Prime Minister Vladimir Putin railed against the United States for indulging its "bellicose itch" to get involved in other countries' internal affairs. And he vowed that Russia will thwart American designs in the Middle East.

Whatever happened to the "reset," President Obama's ballyhooed reorientation of US-Russia relations to a more cooperative path focused on common interests?

Russia would say Libya happened – the conflict where the West and the US in particular demonstrated a zeal for intervention that struck at Russia's sense of sovereignty and of what the UN should and shouldn't do. The US would say Syria happened – revealing Russia's revived obstructionist tendencies on the Security Council and demonstrating Russia's determination to protect an old ally at the expense of the Syrian people.

Both countries might say that what happened is this: The common interests that the "reset" was meant to emphasize – arms control, counterterrorism, the global economy – have taken a back seat to awakened geopolitical rivalries and **diverging** international **visions**.

Add to this the fact that Mr. Putin is expected to return to Russia's presidency in elections Sunday, bringing with him a blame-the-west perspective for explaining many of Russia's ills.

The result is that stormy days lie ahead for US-Russia relations, many say. Progress on issues like missile defense and NATO-Russia relations is likely to remain stalled – and could suffer serious setbacks if the Syria and Iran crises deteriorate further.

"I foresee a tough year for US-Russia relations," says Andrew Weiss, a former director for Russian affairs on the National Security Council under President Clinton who is now a Russia analyst at the RAND Corp. in Arlington, Va. With little prospect for advances, he adds, the Obama administration is likely to focus on preventing backsliding. "The emphasis will be on ensuring that these fast-moving conflicts don't put the remaining areas of cooperation at risk," he says.

Others say the current frictions demonstrate how relations, despite the efforts of three administrations, have never overcome cold-war mistrusts to progress to a deeper level.

"Under both Clinton and Bush, the US made it look like things were moving forward with Russia by focusing on things that were easier to do and that didn't require sacrifice from either side," says Paul Saunders, executive director of the Center for the National Interest in Washington.

Three years ago this month, President Obama said he **hoped to promote** more **cooperation** between the U.S. and Russia. It would be hard to see how that may happen as Vladimir Putin approaches power once again. Host Scott Simon speaks with the U.S. ambassador to Russia, Michael McFaul, about Sunday's elections in Russia.

#### Exports impossible – DOE and economics

Crooks, 3/25/13 [Opposition mounts to US gas exports, <http://www.ft.com/intl/cms/s/0/1958a1e0-949d-11e2-b822-00144feabdc0.html#axzz2OluudOr5>]

The controversy is one reason why the impact of US shale gas in world markets is **likely to be less** than some of the most ambitious claims have suggested. The US Department of Energy has been sent applications from 21 proposed LNG projects for permits to export a total of 28.3bn cubic feet of gas per day: 41 per cent of the entire marketed gas production of the US last year. Only one – [Cheniere Energy](http://markets.ft.com/tearsheets/performance.asp?s=us:LNG)’s [Sabine Pass project in Louisiana](http://www.ft.com/intl/cms/s/0/e5079bfa-953a-11e2-a4fa-00144feabdc0.html) – has so far been licensed to export gas to countries with which the US does not have a free-trade agreement. A licence to export to countries with an FTA is much easier to obtain, and 19 projects have been awarded one, but South Korea is the only FTA country that is a large gas importer. Most of those projects have also applied to sell to non-FTA countries. The leaders in the race to export US LNG are [BG Group](http://markets.ft.com/tearsheets/performance.asp?s=uk:BG.) of the UK, [Kogas](http://markets.ft.com/tearsheets/performance.asp?s=kr:A036460) of South Korea, [Gas Natural Fenosa](http://markets.ft.com/tearsheets/performance.asp?s=es:GAS) of Spain and [Gail](http://markets.ft.com/tearsheets/performance.asp?s=in:GAIL) of India, which have signed contracts with Cheniere. Other companies, including [BP](http://markets.ft.com/tearsheets/performance.asp?s=uk:BP.), [Royal Dutch Shell](http://markets.ft.com/tearsheets/performance.asp?s=uk:RDSA), [Osaka Gas](http://markets.ft.com/tearsheets/performance.asp?s=jp:9532) and [Tokyo Electric Power](http://markets.ft.com/tearsheets/performance.asp?s=jp:9501), have been signing export deals, but have not yet secured permits for non-FTA countries. Bill Cooper, president of the Center for LNG, the industry lobby group, argues that awarding permits to the other projects ought to be a formality. Exports are governed by the 1938 Natural Gas Act, which puts the burden of proof on opponents to show foreign sales would hurt the US, he says. “We say the Department of Energy should follow the law,” he says. “It’s time to start approving these things.” Mr Huntsman, however, argues that the risk of harming US interests is already clear. Even though the benchmark price of US gas has doubled from its low point a year ago to about $4 per million British thermal units, that is still only about one-third the price of gas delivered as LNG to north-west Europe and one quarter of the price in Japan. That gives US manufacturing, and the petrochemical industry in particular, a significant competitive advantage. “Four or five years ago, 95 per cent of the growth in chemicals capacity – almost all the investment – was outside the North American market,” Mr Huntsman says. “Now every investment we consider worldwide has to prove that it can be competitive against an investment in North America.” If large-scale exports put pressure on US gas prices to rise to European or Asian levels, he adds, the outlook for manufacturing investment would be very different. “If we wake up tomorrow and find we have a flat gas price internationally . . . I don’t know how we’d be able to compete in world markets,” he says. Not every chemicals company operating in the US shares those views. James Gallogly, chief executive of [LyondellBasell](http://markets.ft.com/tearsheets/performance.asp?s=us:LYB), the Netherlands-based chemicals group with large US operations, told investors earlier this month he supported LNG exports, and believed they would be positive for his company. The business relies on supplies of natural gas liquids such as ethane and propane more than the “dry” gas that is turned into LNG. The two types of gas are found in the same fields, and if the price of dry gas rises it would encourage companies to drill more gas wells, increasing the supply of natural gas liquids. Nor is it plausible to expect gas exports to push US prices up to the $16 per mBTU that Argus, the research group, says is paid for LNG in Japan. Liquefaction and transport costs add about $6 to the US price, according to research cited by Ernst & Young, the professional services group. Even so, the controversy will encourage the energy department to think carefully about the export permit applications now waiting for approval. Mr Cooper says since it published a study last year arguing that unrestricted LNG exports would benefit the US economy, the department has given no indication of its thinking. Frank Harris of Wood Mackenzie, the energy research consultancy, adds that even if every export application were approved tomorrow, market factors would still constrain the growth of US LNG. Gas customers want diversity of supply, he argues, and no one will want to become too dependent on exports from one source, even the US. The combination of politics and market forces means that around the end of the decade the US might be exporting no more than 6bn cubic feet of gas per day, he suggests, That is less than 10 per cent of US gas production, and less than a quarter of the total LNG export capacity that has been applied for. US gas is already having an effect on world markets, helping customers drive down the cost of gas from other suppliers and shift away from supply contracts linked to the oil price. However, some of the more grandiose aspirations for US exports, such as the belief that they will break the oil linkage forever, are likely to be overstated.

#### **Qatar takes out the link – already out competing Russia**

Satanovsky 12 (E. , “Small, but very dangerous. Qatar could oust Russia from the global gas market”, 9/4, <http://therearenosunglasses.wordpress.com/2012/04/09/small-but-very-dangerous-qatar-could-oust-russia-from-the-global-gas-market/>, originally from http://www.centrasia.ru/newsA.php?st=1333724880)

Ironically, the tiny but ambitious and dynamic, Qatar is the main competitor of Russia in world energy markets.While Moscow, sinking into the international political and technical problems, build pipelines, which were to allow it to solve the problems with transit countries, Doha has created sweeping the entire world network of terminals for liquefied natural gas (LNG) and formed the largest specialized fleet of 54 vessels. About stuck at the stage of negotiations, “South Stream” keep silent, but the Russian gas that goes to Europe on the “Nord Stream”, and in China and other Asian countries on the ESPO under construction, will meet in those markets most serious competition from Qatar. In 2010, the emirate has put 55.7 million tons of LNG to 23 countries. In 2011 – 77 million tons by the end of 2012 plans to sell 120 million tons. 23% of EU gas consumption has Qatari origin. During the eight years of production and export of LNG in Qatar grew by six times, and five-year plan involves the development of its economy to invest more than $ 96 billion in deposits and the expansion of processing facilities, while maintaining a caretaker as a series of major gas fields. Isolated from the land of Saudi Arabia, which at one time cut off from his UAE, Qatar was forced to concentrate on the manufacture and export of LNG and is now independent of the neighbor-rival. And its partners Exxon Mobil and British Petroleum have the most advanced technology liquefaction. Growing market Qatari gas is Europe. In Asia, the number of his clients are India, China, Malaysia, Pakistan, South Korea and Japan. In North America – USA and Canada. In South America, from 2011 – Argentina and Brazil (Petrobras). Competing in the EU with the Algerian and Egyptian gas, the main pressure on the emirate has a Russian “Gazprom”, pushing it even on the traditional markets such as Italy and Poland, where the LNG will begin in 2013. Active negotiations on the export of Qatari gas to the Baltic countries, Ukraine and Belarus. In Asia Qatari liquefied natural gas – a competitor of Russian LNG produced on Sakhalin and the Far East. Russian politicians have believed in vain that the creation of the so-called ”Gas OPEC” (Forum countries – exporters of natural gas) will be the basis of alliance of gas producers, who will be able to dictate its conditions to consumers the benefit of all market players. For Qatar, the whole point of this organization limited to the location of its headquarters in Doha, and the possibility of imitation in its framework for collective action, which allows competitors to divert attention from its offensive against their interests. At a red herring like and discussion about the emirate’s investment in the project “Yamal LNG.” While the economic cooperation of Qatar and Russia costavlyaet less than $ 20 million per year. And if Russia is open for cooperation, the presence of Russian business in Qatar is extremely complicated. The rapid expansion of Qatar’s terminal network, dumping, and the transition from the spot to supply medium-and long-term contracts do not give a reason for the optimistic estimates of the possibilities for harmonizing Russian and Qatari gas strategy. Geography of Qatar LNG terminals covers the UK, continental Europe, the U.S. (only one Golden Pass terminal on the Gulf Coast has a capacity of 15.6 million tonnes of LNG per year), Latin America, the Middle East. Requirements of European companies that rely on the Qatari dumping, the decline in prices for Russian gas complicate the situation of “Gazprom”, especially since the transition to long-term transactions Qatar neutralized the main traditional advantage of Russia. A precedent was a three-year contract for $ 3.25 billion signed in 2011 between Qatargas and the British company Centrica, to supply the last 2.4 million tons of LNG annually.

#### Exports key to Japan and SOKO economy

ASP, 13 [Nick Cunningham is a policy analyst at the American Security Project, a non-profit, non partisan public policy American Security Project, march, <http://americansecurityproject.org/ASP%20Reports/Ref%200116%20-%20The%20Geopolitical%20Implications%20of%20U.S.%20Natural%20Gas%20Exports.pdf>]

Japan lacks substantial indigenous energy resources and is thus highly dependent on maritime imports for energy. It is the world’s third largest importer of crude oil, second largest importer of coal, and the top importer of LNG. 28 To generate electricity, Japan relies heavily on these imported sources of energy. The shuttering of nearly all of its nuclear power plants created a surge in energy imports to replace the lost capacity. This included a steep rise in LNG demand, pushing up prices. The high costs of LNG are sapping the Japanese economy, putting pressure on the government to return to nuclear power. Russia has already made preliminary moves to capitalize on Japan’s energy problems – it is considering building LNG export terminals in the Far East to service Japan. 29 Japan is in desperate need of energy and is actively lobbying the U.S. government to permit new LNG exports Japan is in desperate need of energy and is actively lobbying the U.S. government to permit new LNG exports. 30 South Korea **is in a similar situation** as Japan. With few energy resources to speak of, and a dysfunctional neighbor to its north, South Korea relies upon maritime imports to meet its energy needs. This dependence makes South Korea the second largest importer of LNG. 31 7 The U.S. has a free-trade agreement with South Korea, meaning permits for LNG exports to South Korea will likely not receive heavy scrutiny during the permitting process. However, allowing U.S. LNG exports to reach Japan would benefit South Korea just the same. This would create a more liquid Asian market for LNG, and U.S. LNG would relieve the supply crunch in Asia. More LNG would allow Japan and South Korea to find alternative sources of energy at lower prices. If the U.S. exports LNG to its Asian allies, it can help them improve their energy security and their economies in a time of stress.

**Japanese economic decline destroys the global economy and risks nationalism and nuclear war**

The Guardian 2/11/02 (lexis)

Even so, the west cannot afford to be complacent about what is happening in Japan, unless it intends to use the country as a test case to explore whether a full-scale depression is less painful now than it was 70 years ago. Action is needed, and quickly because this is an economy that could soak up some of the world's excess capacity if functioning properly. A strong Japan is not only essential for the long-term health of the global economy, it is also needed as a counter-weight to the growing power of China. A collapse in the Japanese economy, which looks ever more likely, would have profound ramifications; some experts believe it could even unleash a wave of extreme nationalism that would push the country into conflict with its bigger (and nuclear) neighbour.

### 2ac states

#### States can’t amend the IRS tax code – that is exclusively under federal authority – that’s key to enhanced regulatory certainty and stable investment climates = that’s Bilek – the CP can’t cause scale up

**Bilek 12**—2011 John J. McCloy Fellowship in Environmental Policy Energy Policy Specialist, Great Plains Institute

(Amanda, “The German Biogas Experience: Opportunities and Key Experiences for Future US Deployment”, http://acgusa.org/files/The\_German\_Biogas\_Experience\_final\_report-NEW.pdf, dml)

Although a feed‐in tariff might not be the exact right policy mechanism for deployment in the US, what is clear from the German energy experience is the need for a consistent and clear public policy mechanism. If the US and individual states decide that there are broader societal benefits to be gained (which I believe there are) to the scale‐up of biogas energy systems, public policy must be implemented to support project development. Especially in the US where renewable energy resources must complete against low prices for fossil natural gas and fossil fuel energy incentives, parity for renewable energy policy must be achieved. Due to the different characteristics of biogas production a different incentive or public policy mechanism might need to be implemented compared to mechanisms for wind and solar. The need for clear and consistent renewable energy policy cannot be overstated in its importance to achieve renewable energy scale‐up.

#### Private entities won’t get on board

**Bramley et al 11**—Department of Urban and Environmental Policy and Planning, Tufts

(Julia, with Lum Fobi, Cammy Peterson, Lydia Rainville, Jeff Cheng-Hao Shih, Axum Teferra, and Rose Yuan Wang, “AGRICULTURAL BIOGAS IN THE UNITED STATES”, <http://ase.tufts.edu/uep/degrees/field_project_reports/2011/Team_6_Final_Report.pdf>, dml)

FERC sets rates and implements regulations through independent system operators (ISOs) and regional transmission organizations (RTOs). An ISO coordinates, controls, and monitors the operation of the electrical power system, usually within a single state, or a small collection of states. An RTO generally performs the same function as an ISO, but over a larger region. At the state level, state public utility commissions (PUCs) set rates. Thus, much like the interconnection grid itself, interconnection regulations are comprised of regulations established by a network of regulators with varying, yet overlapping, jurisdictions that any connecting generator must learn to navigate. State policies vary greatly regarding interconnection options with utilities, retail electricity rates, and distributed power pricing (Lazarus, 2008). Utilities do not view relationships with smaller electricity generators enthusiastically since their operations are more efficient and profits more readily realized with utility-sized generators (Wright, 2004). Requirements for insurance and safeguards that the utility requires if the generator fails or is turned off further complicate that relationship. The AgSTAR Handbook explains that contractual agreements between farms with digesters and utilities typically fall into three categories of buy all-sell all, surplus sale, and net metering (Roos, Martin,Jr., and Moser, 2006). The Handbook outlines the information that a digester developer should have to initiate the utility contracting process.

#### NY campaign finance reform now

Karen **Rubin 3-28-**13 http://www.theislandnow.com/opinions/article\_4320853e-97df-11e2-88ed-001a4bcf887a.html

New York State has the **best chance in decades** of passing a Fair Elections Law and the **greatest urgency** since the U.S. Supreme Court unleashed the era of Citizens United. During the next 100 days until the New York State Legislature adjourns in June, advocates for campaign finance reform in New York State are marshaling **a massive push** for reforms that include a public financing mechanism (similar to what New York City already has in place), reducing contribution limits and tightening loopholes that corporate donors use to vastly exceed what individuals are allowed to contribute, tightening disclosure requirements, and putting teeth in enforcement which has been virtually nonexistent. There have been fair elections proposals for decades, but advocates are hoping the **“stars are aligned**” for passage this year: Governor Andrew Cuomo has stated he is in favor, the public has become aware and concerned that Citizens United has poisoned the political process; New Yorkers’ progressive mo-jo may have been reawakened by the state’s adoption of gay marriage and gun control. What is more, even the most idealistic elected representatives have become jaded when they realize that the intense need to appease big money interests conflicts with their dream of accomplishing great things for their communities. There are signs that even lobbyists and corporations have reached a tipping point because they are just tired of being shaken down for ever-higher donations, as the cost of mounting campaigns rises ever higher. The advantages of publicly financed elections are huge – by incentivizing candidates to seek small donations (under $250 which would be eligible for a match, perhaps $6 for every $1), they will actually go out to the people rather than spend all their time in big-donor fundraisers. And if individual voters feel they have a connection to a campaign, they will participate more fully.

Cuomo’s PC is finite

LARRY J. OBHOF J.D., Yale Law School, 2003; B.A., Ohio State University, 2000. Harvard Journal of Law & Public Policy Spring 04

For their part, governors are accountable to the entire state and are therefore less likely to be constrained by local interests. Governors have a limited amount of political capital, however, and are generally reluctant to expend it on a single issue. [**19**](http://www.lexis.com/research/retrieve?_m=37c002fdfd6b8c66349f420e2e283682&docnum=11&_fmtstr=FULL&_startdoc=1&wchp=dGLbVlb-zSkAA&_md5=ee0c6f61a7de8b92a2b93b1e6e68cb11&focBudTerms=governors%20w/20%20political%20capital&focBudSel=all#n19) Like legislators, they must also be careful not to spend too much of a state's resources only on education. Thus, while governors are often more willing than legislators to support education reform, they are unlikely to do so without an outside catalyst such as pressure from the courts. [**20**](http://www.lexis.com/research/retrieve?_m=37c002fdfd6b8c66349f420e2e283682&docnum=11&_fmtstr=FULL&_startdoc=1&wchp=dGLbVlb-zSkAA&_md5=ee0c6f61a7de8b92a2b93b1e6e68cb11&focBudTerms=governors%20w/20%20political%20capital&focBudSel=all#n20)

#### PC key

Jimmy **Vielkind,** Capitol bureau **3-26**-13 http://blog.timesunion.com/capitol/archives/183215/obama-offshoot-joins-campfin-push/

Organizing for Action, the derivative group of President Barack Obama’s campaign organization, is joining the push for publicly financed elections in New York. (H/T Maggie Haberman) OFA has 744,000 members on its New York roster, and plans to ask members for money as well as prompt them to action. It joins a broad coalition of labor and progressive groups that have long been agitating for campaign finance reform, and expects to do more in coming months. Gov. Andrew Cuomo, a Democrat, supports the policy and has **lent it some political capital —** he addressed a conference call of activists and spoke on the issue at a luncheon in the New York Times building. OFA is planning another call for Wednesday night. Attorney General Eric Schneiderman, also a Democrat, is expected to participate.

#### Modeled nationally

THOMAS **KAPLAN** 4-11-**12** http://www.nytimes.com/2012/04/12/nyregion/coalition-urges-public-financing-in-new-york-state-elections.html?pagewanted=print

ALBANY — An unusual and well-heeled coalition, trying to tap public anger over the flood of money into politics, is pushing to enact a public financing system for elections in New York State. The backers include media moguls — Barry Diller and Chris Hughes, a founder of Facebook — as well as investment bankers, unions, MoveOn.org, the restaurateur Danny Meyer and the philanthropist David Rockefeller Sr. They say New York, which they call a **symbol of institutionalized corruption,** could **become a national model** for the effort to free elections from the grip of big money. The campaign will start next week with mailings to the constituents of four state senators. For years, government watchdog groups have pressed unsuccessfully for public financing of elections. Leaders of the coalition say the Citizens United ruling and the role of “super PACs” in the presidential race have made campaign finance a more broadly understood and urgent issue. “Right now people are feeling a little bit helpless about super PACs and how to get money out of the system at the federal level,” said Sean Eldridge, Mr. Hughes’s fiancé, who runs an investment fund and is a leader of the effort. “An opportunity to pass campaign finance reform in New York is an opportunity for people to do something — to actually be able to pass a bill, to make progress.” The coalition, called New York Leadership for Accountable Government, is notable for its diversity and its well-known names: its roster includes Jonathan Soros, the son of the philanthropist George Soros; Jerome Kohlberg, a co-founder of Kohlberg Kravis Roberts & Company; and several former elected officials, including Mayor Edward I. Koch. The group is also supported by the Committee for Economic Development, a nonpartisan public-policy group backed by executives from dozens of Fortune 500 companies. The committee is holding meetings in New York this month to encourage business leaders to join the coalition. Many of the executives involved have given generously to candidates in the past. “With this effort, you have people who are big donors, who are involved with the campaign system, saying: ‘You know what, this doesn’t make sense. This isn’t what democracy is supposed to be about,’ ” said David L. Calone, a venture capitalist based on Long Island who has raised money for Democratic candidates. New York’s campaign finance system is among the least restrictive in the nation, with individuals permitted to give up to $60,800 to candidates running for statewide office. The median cap among states that limit contributions is $5,000 for candidates for governor, according to the National Conference of State Legislatures. The proposal the coalition is pushing would be modeled after the system that New York City adopted in 1988: in return for abiding by limits on their spending, city candidates can receive $6 in public funds for each of the first $175 city residents donate. The group sees the successful campaign to pass same-sex marriage in New York as a blueprint for its effort. Like same-sex marriage, public financing has been embraced in the past by the Democratic-led State Assembly, but blocked by the Republican State Senate. Gov. Andrew M. **Cuomo’s response will be pivotal:** Mr. Cuomo ran for governor on a platform that included enacting public financing, and in his State of the State address in January, **he promised to push for it in the legislative session this year**. But he has not pressed the issue since then, and he has raised prodigious amounts of money under the existing rules. Asked at a news conference last month if he still planned to pursue public financing, Mr. Cuomo responded, “Yes.” He did not elaborate, and a spokesman declined to comment on Wednesday. Coalition leaders said they were prepared to spend more than $1 million promoting public financing, but they acknowledged that it could take beyond this legislative session to persuade lawmakers to embrace their proposal. The issue could be sensitive for Mr. Cuomo. Some liberal leaders and government reform groups are unhappy that Mr. Cuomo broke his promise to veto redistricting maps drawn by incumbent lawmakers, and they are hoping that the governor will make campaign finance his next big cause. National groups are also getting involved. MoveOn.org, for instance, is planning to e-mail its members next week to rally them in support of the cause. “Our New York members will be watching to see if Governor Cuomo shows leadership on the issue,” said Justin Ruben, MoveOn’s executive director. The campaign will get under way as lawmakers return from a two-week recess next Tuesday. At the outset, the Public Campaign Action Fund, a group based in Washington that supports public financing, is paying for direct mail advertising to target four Republican senators who some advocates believe could be receptive to the proposal: Martin J. Golden of Brooklyn, Gregory R. Ball of Putnam County, Roy J. McDonald of Saratoga County and Mark J. Grisanti of Buffalo. Voters in each senator’s district will soon receive a mailer featuring a photograph of the State Capitol awash in $100 bills and declaring, “It’s time Albany put voters before big-monied corporate lobbyists.” Asked about the irony of wealthy donors pledging money to an effort to get big money out of elections, Mr. Eldridge responded: “Creating legislative reform is expensive, particularly on an issue like this where the resistance we’d get from special interest groups would be tremendous.” Educating the public and organizing voters, he said, “requires resources, and that requires money, and there’s no shame in that.” Advocates of public financing say the system frees politicians to spend more time focusing on the issues and interacting with constituents, rather than dialing for contributions from special interests. They also believe it encourages competition for electoral offices. “It’s a double victory,” said Frederick A. O. Schwarz Jr., chief counsel at the Brennan Center for Justice at New York University School of Law. “You have lower amounts of money that can be given, and No. 2, ordinary people become engaged in political campaigns and candidates change their approach to campaigning.” Given the state’s shaky finances, however, anything that requires new spending of taxpayer dollars also tends to draw scrutiny. “The taxpayers have enough on their backs as it is,” said Michael R. Long, chairman of the state’s Conservative Party. “If Mike Long wants to run for office, why should the taxpayer have to pay for my campaign?” Mr. Long asked. “Let the taxpayers donate their own personal money to candidates they want to donate to.”

#### Impact is the econ

David Levine is co-founder and CEO of the New York-based American Sustainable Business Council. Read more: http://www.timesunion.com/opinion/article/Publicly-financed-elections-good-business-4247596.php#ixzz2P0ArTWZ8 2-3-13

In 2012, corporations and businesses spent hundreds of millions of dollars to influence elections across America, thanks to new freedoms granted by the Supreme Court. Some businesses went even further, telling their employees directly how to vote. Given the advantages of this system, you would think most in the business community would support the status quo. But you would be wrong. Underneath the headlines, many business owners still believe that success should come from hard work, safe and quality products, and good customer service—not spending on elections. A poll commissioned by the American Sustainable Business Council and other business groups found 88 percent of small business leaders view the role money plays in politics negatively and 66 percent consider the Supreme Court's 2009 Citizens United decision bad for small business. Their opinion is clear: Unlimited corporate political spending in elections hurts the interests of small businesses, **America's jobs engine.** Another poll commissioned by the Committee for Economic Development found similar views among New York business leaders: 62 percent believe corporate donations are bad for the political process, while 72 percent support creating a public financing system that would match low-dollar contributions and give average citizens more incentive to contribute to campaigns, along the lines of reforms proposed by Gov. Andrew Cuomo. Businesses and their owners want to profit and thrive. But most of us also **want to build a vibrant and** sustainable **economy that benefits our communities**. An essential principle is that **a strong economy requires a strong democracy**. Transparency is another important business value. Decisions should be made in the open. Donations from corporations and the wealthy cannot be thinly veiled bribery that allows legislators to collect secret donations for which they then owe secret favors. "Pay to play" destroys the public's faith in government. The problem centers on which deep pockets will dominate the spending, and whether the ideas they will promote are good for our businesses and the state. The resulting policies often benefit those special interests at the expense of small and midsize businesses, our local economies and our communities. **Campaign finance reform is a** crucial step **toward building a** strong **and fair** economy**. This is essential to create the economy we need**. It's time to put the concerns of responsible business owners, our employees, and our customers back on the table so we can compete, create jobs, and support our local economies by putting our elections back in the hands of the electorate. That's why we and many other business leaders support a plan for public financing of our state elections.

### 2ac neolib

#### No alt – the system is sustainable –

Jones 11 [Owen, Masters at Oxford, named one of the Daily Telegraph's 'Top 100 Most Influential People on the Left' for 2011, author of "Chavs: The Demonization of the Working Class", The Independent, UK, "Owen Jones: Protest without politics will change nothing", 2011, [www.independent.co.uk/opinion/commentators/owen-jones-protest-without-politics-will-change-nothing-2373612.html](http://www.independent.co.uk/opinion/commentators/owen-jones-protest-without-politics-will-change-nothing-2373612.html)]

My first experience of police kettling was aged 16. It was May Day 2001, and the anti-globalisation movement was at its peak. The turn-of-the-century anti-capitalist movement feels largely forgotten today, but it was a big deal at the time. To a left-wing teenager growing up in an age of unchallenged neo-liberal triumphalism, just to have "anti-capitalism" flash up in the headlines was thrilling. Thousands of apparently unstoppable protesters chased the world's rulers from IMF to World Bank summits – from Seattle to Prague to Genoa – and the authorities were rattled.¶ Today, as protesters in nearly a thousand cities across the world follow the example set by the Occupy Wall Street protests, it's worth pondering what happened to the anti-globalisation movement. Its activists did not lack passion or determination. But they did lack a coherent alternative to the neo-liberal project. With no clear political direction, the movement was easily swept away by the jingoism and turmoil that followed 9/11, just two months after Genoa.¶ Don't get me wrong: the Occupy movement is a glimmer of sanity amid today's economic madness. By descending on the West's financial epicentres, it reminds us of how a crisis caused by the banks (a sentence that needs to be repeated until it becomes a cliché) has been cynically transformed into a crisis of public spending. The founding statement of Occupy London puts it succinctly: "We refuse to pay for the banks' crisis." The Occupiers direct their fire at the top 1 per cent, and rightly so – as US billionaire Warren Buffett confessed: "There's class warfare, all right, but it's my class, the rich class, that's making war, and we're winning."¶ The Occupy movement has provoked fury from senior US Republicans such as Presidential contender Herman Cain who – predictably – labelled it "anti-American". They're right to be worried: those camping outside banks threaten to refocus attention on the real villains, and to act as a catalyst for wider dissent. But **a coherent alternative** to the tottering global economic order **remains**, it seems, as distant as ever. **¶** Neo-liberalism crashes around, half-dead, with no-one to administer the killer blow.**¶** There's always a presumption that a crisis of capitalism is good news for the left. Yet in the Great Depression, fascism consumed much of Europe. The economic crisis of the 1970s did lead to a resurgence of radicalism on both left and right. But, spearheaded by Thatcherism and Reaganism, the New Right definitively crushed its opposition in the 1980s.This time round, there doesn't even seem to be an alternative for the right to defeat. That's not the fault of the protesters. In truth, the left has never recovered from being virtually smothered out of existence. It was the victim of a perfect storm: the rise of the New Right; neo-liberal globalisation; and the repeated defeats suffered by the trade union movement.¶ But, above all, it was the aftermath of the collapse of Communism that did for the left. As US neo-conservative Midge Decter triumphantly put it: "It's time to say: We've won. Goodbye." From the British Labour Party to the African National Congress, left-wing movements across the world hurtled to the right in an almost synchronised fashion. It was as though the left wing of the global political spectrum had been sliced off. That's why, although we live in an age of revolt, there remains no left to give it direction and purpose.

#### Alt doesn’t solve the case – institutional focus key

Doran and Barry 6 – worked at all levels in the environment and sustainable development policy arena - at the United Nations, at the Northern Ireland Assembly and Dáil Éireann, and in the Irish NGO sector. PhD--AND-- Reader in Politics, Queen's University School of Politics, International Studies, and Philosophy. PhD Glasgow (Peter and John, Refining Green Political Economy: From Ecological Modernisation to Economic Security and Sufficiency, Analyse & Kritik 28/2006, p. 250–275, http://www.analyse-und-kritik.net/2006-2/AK\_Barry\_Doran\_2006.pdf)

The aim of this article is to offer a draft of a realistic, but critical, version of green political economy to underpin the economic dimensions of radical views of sustainable development. It is written explicitly with a view to encouraging others to respond to it in the necessary collaborative effort to think through this aspect of sustainable development. Our position is informed by two important observations. As a sign of our times, the crises that we are addressing under the banner of sustainable development (however inadequately) render the distinction between what is ‘realistic’ and ‘radical’ problematic. It seems to us that the only realistic course is to revisit the most basic assumptions embedded within the dominant model of development and economics. Realistically the only longterm option available is radical. Secondly, we cannot build or seek to create a sustainable economy ab nihilo, but must begin—in an agonistic fashion—**from where we are, with the structures, institutions, modes of production, laws, regulations and so on that we have**. We make this point in Ireland with a story about the motorist who stops at the side of the road to ask directions, only to be told: “Now Ma’m, I wouldn’t start from here if I were you.” ¶ This does not mean simply accepting these as immutable or set in stone— after all, some of the current institutions, principles and structures underpinning the dominant economic model are the very causes of unsustainable development— but we do need to recognise that we must work with (and ‘through’—in the terms of the original German Green Party’s slogan of “marching through the institutions”) these existing structures as well as changing and reforming and in some cases abandoning them as either unnecessary or positively harmful to the creation and maintenance of a sustainable economy and society. Moreover, we have a particular responsibility under the current dominant economic trends to name the neo-liberal project as the hegemonic influence on economic thinking and practice. In the words of Bourdieu/Wacquant (2001), neoliberalism is the new ‘planetary vulgate’, which provides the global context for much of the contemporary political and academic debate on sustainable development. For example, there is a clear hierarchy of trade (WTO) over the environment (Multilateral Environmental Agreements) in the international rules-based systems. At the boundaries or limits of the sustainable development debate in both the UK and the European Union it is also evident that the objectives of competitiveness and trade policy are sacrosanct. As Tim Luke (1999) has observed, the relative success or failure of national economies in head-to-head global competition is taken by ‘geo-economics’ as the definitive register of any one nation-state’s waxing or waning international power, as well as its rising or falling industrial competitiveness, technological vitality and economic prowess. In this context, many believe ecological considerations can, at best, be given only meaningless symbolic responses, in the continuing quest to mobilise the Earth’s material resources. ¶ Our realism is rooted in the demos. The realism with which this paper is concerned to promote recognises that the path to an alternative economy and society must begin with a recognition of the reality that most people (in the West) will not democratically vote (or be given the opportunity to vote) for a completely different type of society and economy overnight. This is true even as the merits of a ‘green economy’ are increasingly recognised and accepted by most people as the logical basis for safeguards and guarantees for their basic needs and aspirations (within limits). The realistic character of the thinking behind this article accepts that **consumption and materialistic lifestyles are here to stay**. (The most we can probably aspire to is a widening and deepening of popular movements towards **ethical consumption, responsible investment**, and fair trade.) And indeed **there is little to be gained by proposing alternative economic systems which start from a** complete rejection of consumption **and materialism.** The appeal to realism is in part an attempt to correct the common misperception (and self-perception) of green politics and economics requiring an excessive degree of self-denial and a puritanical asceticism (see Goodin 1992, 18; Allison 1991, 170– 78). While rejecting the claim that green political theory calls for the complete disavowal of materialistic lifestyles, it is true that green politics does require the collective re-assessment of such lifestyles, and does require new economic signals and pedagogical attempts to encourage a delinking—in the minds of the general populus—of the ‘good life’ and the ‘goods life’. This does not mean that we need necessarily require the complete and across the board rejection of materialistic lifestyles. It must be the case that there is room and tolerance in a green economy for people to choose to live diverse lifestyles—some more sustainable than others—so long as these do not ‘harm’ others, threaten long-term ecological sustainability or create unjust levels of socio-economic inequalities. Thus, realism in this context is in part another name for the acceptance of a broadly ‘liberal’ or ‘post-liberal’ (but certainly not anti-liberal) green perspective.2¶ 1. Setting Out¶ At the same time, while critical of the ‘abstract’ and ‘unrealistic’ utopianism that peppers green and radical thinking in this area, we do not intend to reject utopianism. Indeed, with Oscar Wilde we agree that a map of the world that does not have utopia on it, isn’t worth looking at. The spirit in which this article is written is more in keeping with framing green and sustainability concerns within a **‘concrete utopian’ perspective** or what the Marxist geographer David Harvey (1996, 433–435) calls a “utopianism of process”, to be distinguished from “closed”, blueprint-like and abstract utopian visions. Accordingly, the model of green political economy outlined here is in keeping with Steven Lukes’ suggestion that a concrete utopianism depends on the ‘knowledge of a self-transforming present, not an ideal future’ (Lukes 1984, 158).¶ It accepts the current dominance of one particular model of green political economy—namely ‘ecological modernisation’ (hereafter referred to EM)—as the preferred ‘political economy’ underpinning contemporary state and market forms of sustainable development, and further **accepts the necessity for green politics to positively engage in the** debates **and policies around EM** from a strategic (as well as a normative) point of view. However, it is also conscious of the limits and problems with ecological modernisation, particularly in terms of its technocratic, supply-side and reformist ‘business as usual’ approach, and seeks to explore the potential to radicalise EM or use it as a ‘jumping off’ point for more radical views of greening the economy. **Ecological modernisation is a work in progress; and that’s the point**. ¶ The article begins by outlining EM in theory and practice, specifically in relation to the British state’s ‘sustainable development’ policy agenda under New Labour.3 While EM as currently practised by the British state is ‘weak’ and largely turns on the centrality of ‘innovation’ and ‘eco-efficiency’, the paper then goes on to investigate in more detail the role of the market within current conceptualisations of EM and other models of green political economy. In particular, a potentially powerful distinction (both conceptually and in policy debates) between ‘the market’ and ‘capitalism’ has yet to be sufficiently explored and exploited as a starting point for the development of radical, viable and attractive conceptions of green political economy as alternatives to both EM and the orthodox economic paradigm. We contend that **there is a role for the market in innovation and as part of the ‘governance’ for sustainable development** in which eco-efficiency and EM of the economy is linked to non-ecological demands of green politics and sustainable development such as social and global justice, egalitarianism, democratic regulation of the market and the conceptual (and policy) expansion of the ‘economy’ to include social, informal and noncash economic activity and a progressive role for the state (especially at the local/municipal level). Here we suggest that the ‘environmental’ argument or basis of green political economy in terms of the need for the economy to become more resource efficient, minimise pollution and waste and so on, has largely been won. What that means is that no one is disputing the need for greater resource productivity, energy and eco-efficiency. Both state and corporate/business actors have accepted the environmental ‘bottom line’ (often rhetorically, but nonetheless important) as a conditioning factor in the pursuit of the economic ‘bottom line’

#### No impact – every credible measure proves the world is getting better now

Ridley, visiting professor at Cold Spring Harbor Laboratory, former science editor of *The Economist*, and award-winning science writer, 2010

(Matt, *The Rational Optimist*, pg. 13-15)

If my fictional family is not to your taste, perhaps you prefer statistics. Since 1800, the population of the world has multiplied six times, yet **average life expectancy has more than doubled and real income has risen more than nine times**. Taking a shorter perspective, in 2005, compared with 1955, the average human being on Planet Earth earned nearly three times as much money (corrected for inflation), ate one-third more calories of food, buried one-third as many of her children and could expect to live one-third longer. She was less likely to die as a result of war, murder, childbirth, accidents, tornadoes, flooding, famine, whooping cough, tuberculosis, malaria, diphtheria, typhus, typhoid, measles, smallpox, scurvy or polio. She was less likely, at any given age, to get cancer, heart disease or stroke. She was more likely to be literate and to have finished school. She was more likely to own a telephone, a flush toilet, a refrigerator and a bicycle. All this during a half-century when the world population has more than doubled, so that far from being rationed by population pressure, the goods and services available to the people of the world have expanded. It is, by any standard, an astonishing human achievement. Averages conceal a lot. **But even if you break down the world into bits**, **it is hard to find any region that was worse off in 2005 than it was in 1955**. Over that half-century, real income per head ended a little lower in only six countries (Afghanistan, Haiti, Congo, Liberia, Sierra Leone and Somalia), life expectancy in three (Russia, Swaziland and Zimbabwe), and infant survival in none. In the rest they have rocketed upward. Africa’s rate of improvement has been distressingly slow and patchy compared with the rest of the world, and many southern African countries saw life expectancy plunge in the 1990s as the AIDS epidemic took hold (before recovering in recent years). There were also moments in the half-century when you could have caught countries in episodes of dreadful deterioration of living standards or life chances – China in the 1960s, Cambodia in the 1970s, Ethiopia in the 1980s, Rwanda in the 1990s, Congo in the 2000s, North Korea throughout. Argentina had a disappointingly stagnant twentieth century. But overall, after fifty years, **the outcome for the world is** remarkably, astonishingly, **dramatically positive**. The average South Korean lives twenty-six more years and earns fifteen times as much income each year as he did in 1955 (and earns fifteen times as much as his North Korean counter part). The average Mexican lives longer now than the average Briton did in 1955. The average Botswanan earns more than the average Finn did in 1955. **Infant mortality is lower today in Nepal than it was in Italy in 1951**. The proportion of Vietnamese living on less than $2 a day has dropped from 90 per cent to 30 per cent in twenty years. The rich have got richer, but the poor have done even better. **The poor in the developing world grew their consumption twice as fast as the world as a whole between 1980 and 2000**. The Chinese are ten times as rich, one-third as fecund and twenty-eight years longer-lived than they were fifty years ago. Even Nigerians are twice as rich, 25 per cent less fecund and nine years longer-lived than they were in 1955. **Despite a doubling of the world population**, even **the raw number of people living in absolute poverty** (defined as less than a 1985 dollar a day) **has fallen since the 1950s**. The percentage living in such absolute poverty has dropped by more than half – to less than 18 per cent. That number is, of course, still all too horribly high, but the trend is hardly a cause for despair: at the current rate of decline, it would hit zero around 2035 – though it probably won’t. The United Nations estimates that poverty was reduced more in the last fifty years than in the previous 500.

#### Alt causes transition wars

Kothari, 82 [Professor of political science at University of Delhi, “Towards a Just Social Order”, p. 571]

Attempts at global economic reform could also lead to a world racked by increasing turbulence, a greater sense of insecurity among the major centres of power -- and hence to a further tightening of the structures of domination and domestic repression – producing in their wake **an intensification of** the old arms race and militarization of regimes, encouraging regional conflagrations and setting the stage for eventual **global holocaust**.

### 2ac tax da

#### No corporate tax impact

**Gandel 2012**

Why lower corporate tax rates won't help the U.S.

By Stephen Gandel, senior editor February 23, 2012: 10:31 AM ET

http://finance.fortune.cnn.com/2012/02/23/why-lower-corporate-tax-rates-wont-help-the-u-s/

Studies suggest that lower tax rates won't boost corporate investment or the economy.

On Wednesday, when Obama announced his plan to revise the corporate tax code and lower the top rate companies pay, he cited the fact that in many other developed nations corporations pay less. It's a familiar point. Republicans make it all the time. The buzz word is competitiveness. And people on both sides of the political isle seem to be making the case that our tax rate no longer is, and needs to be lowered. But lost in this agreement over the fact that our tax rates are higher than other countries is whether this matters. It may not.

There appears to be little evidence that the U.S.'s relatively high corporate tax rate is holding the economy back. Dean Baker, co-director of the liberal leaning think tank Center for Economic and Policy Research, points out that the stated corporate tax rate has mostly been the same as it was since the early 1990s. In fact, due to recent temporary tax cuts, the effective corporate U.S. rate is considerably lower today than it was in the late 1990s, when the economy was growing much faster.

One common argument is that high tax rates cause companies, both U.S. and foreign, to invest elsewhere. But in a 2010 study Steve Fazzari of Washington University looked at thousands of companies and **found that taxes really don't have that much impact on corporate investment**. What matters most to companies is the cost of capital, which dictates how large a return companies will make when they, for example, open up a new plant. Taxes make up a very small portion of that. "GE would be happy, but whether it actually does more investing, I don't think so," says Fazzari. He says having a lower tax rate than other countries might drive some companies to invest in the U.S. rather than elsewhere, but Fazzari thinks even that effect would be small.

[The corporate tax 'shell game](http://money.cnn.com/2012/02/23/news/economy/corporate_tax_rate_reduction/index.htm?iid=HP_LN)'

Even some companies think the emphasis on taxes is misplaced. Alan Tonelson, a research fellow at the U.S. Business and Industry Council, says that while the members of his organization would welcome a tax cut, there are other things that are more important to boosting American business. He thinks a better trade policy with China, for one, would help U.S. companies more than lower taxes. "Tax law changes are often seen as a panacea for manufacturing and indeed the entire economy, but there are many more factors that have a much larger affect," says Tonelson.

[The Corporate Tax Myth](http://money.cnn.com/2012/02/23/news/international/corporate_taxes/index.htm?iid=SF_BN_LN)

The one argument for lowering the tax rate, and removing loopholes, is that it may lower economic waste. Companies spend tens of billions of dollars a year putting together their returns, and trying to pay the least they can. Even Baker agrees, as do many liberals, that having a top rate that no company actually pays is silly. For that reason alone, he thinks lowering the top tax rate makes sense. But the question remains whether companies would actually fire all their accountants and tax consultants if the government were to revise the tax code. Companies are always going try to pay as little as possible. In fact, trying to hack away at less permeable tax code might create more waste not less.

#### The effective rate is already too low

**Garofalo 2013**

http://thinkprogress.org/economy/2013/02/06/1552251/corporate-tax-45-years/

 By Pat Garofalo on Feb 6, 2013 at 5:35 pm

In 2011, U.S. corporations paid a 12.1 percent effective corporate income tax rate, a 40-year low. The statutory corporate tax rate is 35 percent, but companies drive their rates fare lower due to the proliferation of loopholes and deductions and the growing use of offshore tax havens.

This isn’t a new problem, as Goldman Sachs’ David Kostin shows. In fact, corporations have been paying below the statutory rate for 45 years (the chart uses 39 percent due to its inclusion of state corporate taxes):

For the last 45 years, the median S&P 500 firm has paid an effective tax rate averaging more than 5 percentage points below the statutory rate. Despite statutory rates hovering near 39% for the last 25 years, effective tax rates have been gradually decreasing (see Exhibit 2). At 30%, the current S&P 500 median effective tax rate is almost 10 percentage points below the statutory level, and close to the global statutory average.

### 2ac immigration da

#### Deal was reached right before this debate

NYT, 38 Minutes Ago [http://www.nytimes.com/2013/03/31/us/politics/deal-said-to-be-reached-on-guest-worker-program-in-immigration.html?\_r=0]

WASHINGTON — The nation’s top business and labor groups have reached an agreement **on a guest worker program** for low-skilled immigrants, a person with knowledge of the negotiations said on Saturday. The deal clears the path for broad [immigration](http://topics.nytimes.com/top/reference/timestopics/subjects/i/immigration_and_refugees/index.html?inline=nyt-classifier) legislation to be introduced when Congress returns from its two-week recess in mid-April. ¶ [Guest Workers Are at Crux of Groups’ Deal on Immigration](http://www.nytimes.com/2013/03/30/us/politics/guest-worker-program-low-skilled-immigrants.html?ref=politics) (March 30, 2013) ¶ Senator Charles E. Schumer, a New York Democrat and one of eight senators from both parties who have been negotiating an overhaul of the nation’s immigration laws, convened a conference call on Friday night with Thomas J. Donohue, the president of the U.S. Chamber of Commerce, and Richard L. Trumka, the president of the A.F.L.-C.I.O., the nation’s main federation of labor unions, in which they agreed in principle on a guest worker program for low-skilled, year-round temporary workers. ¶ Pay for guest workers was one of the final sticking points on a broad immigration deal, and one that had stalled the Senate negotiations just before the break. The eight Senate negotiators still need to formally sign off on the deal between the business and labor groups, but they are expected to do so by the end of the weekend, the person with knowledge of the talks said. ¶ The agreement resolved what the pay level should be for low-skilled immigrants — often employed at hotels and restaurants or on construction projects — who could be brought in during labor shortages. ¶ Labor groups wanted to ensure that guest workers would not be paid any less than the median wage in their respective industries, and the two sides compromised by agreeing that guest workers would be paid the higher of the prevailing industry wage as determined by the labor department or the actual employer wage. ¶ Under the deal, guest workers would be allowed to pursue a path to citizenship and to change jobs after they arrived in the United States. ¶ Labor groups wanted to ensure that guest workers would not be paid less than the median wage in their respective industries, and the two sides compromised by agreeing that guest workers would be paid either the prevailing industry wage or the actual employer wage used previously in the guest worker program, whichever was higher. ¶ Another sticking point, involving the specific type of jobs that would be included in the guest worker program, has also been resolved. Though low-skilled construction workers will be included in the visa program, the nation’s construction unions persuaded the negotiators to exclude certain types of more skilled jobs — like crane operators and electricians — from the program, officials involved in the talks said. ¶ The guest worker program, which will start at 20,000 new visas each year, could eventually grant up to 200,000 new visas annually for low-skilled workers. Business groups had long been pushing to allow in 400,000 of such guest workers each year. ¶ Mr. Schumer also spoke on Saturday with Denis McDonough, the White House chief of staff, to update him on the agreement. President Obama is eager for an overhaul of the nation’s immigration system and has threatened to step in with his own plan if Congress does not move quickly with legislation of its own. ¶ Shortly before the conference call on Friday night between Mr. Schumer, Mr. Donohue and Mr. Trumka ended, one of the men suggested that the three of them get together soon for dinner; it had been, they all agreed, a long few weeks.

#### Alternative causalities are mentioned in their article – drug policy and Cuba

**Shifter 2012 –** Michael, President of the Sol M. Linowitz Forum Intern-American Dialogue (Remaking the Relationship: The United States and Latin America, An Inter-American Dialogue Policy Report, April, http://www.thedialogue.org/PublicationFiles/IAD2012PolicyReportFINAL.pdf)

In part as a result of these shifts, US-Latin American relations have grown more distant . The quality and intensity of ties have diminished . Most countries of the region view the United States as less and less relevant to their needs—and with declining capacity to propose and carry out strategies to deal with the issues that most concern them .In the main, hemispheric relations are amicable . Open conflict is rare and, happily, the sharp antagonisms that marred relations in the past have subsided . But the US-Latin America relationship would profit from more vitality and direction . Shared interests are not pursued as vigorously as they should be, and opportunities for more fruitful engagement are being missed . Well developed ideas for reversing these disappointing trends are scarce. Some enduring problems stand squarely in the way of partnership and effective cooperation . The inability of Washington to reform its broken immigration system is a constant source of friction between the United States and nearly every other country in the Americas . Yet US officials rarely refer to immigration as a foreign policy issue . Domestic policy debates on this issue disregard the United States’ hemispheric agenda as well as the interests of other nations .Another chronic irritant is US drug policy, which most Latin Americans now believe makes their drug and crime problems worse . Secretary of State Hillary Clinton, while visiting Mexico, acknowledged that US anti-drug programs have not worked . Yet, despite growing calls and pressure from the region, the United States has shown little interest in exploring alternative approaches .Similarly, Washington’s more than half-century embargo on Cuba, as well as other elements of United States’ Cuba policy, is strongly opposed by all other countries in the hemisphere . Indeed, the US position on these troublesome issues—immigration, drug policy, and Cuba—has set Washington against the consensus view of the hemisphere’s other 34 governments .These issues stand as obstacles to further cooperation in the Americas . The United States and the nations of Latin America and the Caribbean need to resolve them in order to build more productive partnerships.

#### Gun control thumps

Murray 3-28 (Mark, “First Thoughts: Obama jumps back into the gun debate,” NBC News, <http://firstread.nbcnews.com/_news/2013/03/28/17501341-first-thoughts-obama-jumps-back-into-the-gun-debate?lite>)

Obama jumps back into the gun debate: With some GOP senators vowing to filibuster the legislation coming to the floor next month and with some analysts saying that reformers have already lost, President Obama today steps back into the gun debate with an event at the White House at 11:40 am ET. Per the White House, Obama will stand with mothers, law-enforcement officials, and Vice President Biden in urging Congress to take action on the upcoming Senate legislation, which includes universal background checks. As we have written before, those checks -- supported overwhelmingly in public opinion polls -- will ultimately define success or failure for gun-control advocates. Democrats, led by Sen. Chuck Schumer, are trying to get Republicans to back some type of compromise on background checks, given that the filibuster threat means 60 votes will be needed to even begin considering the legislation. That’s why Michael Bloomberg’s Mayors Against Illegal Guns is airing TV ads in key states to also apply pressure. Meanwhile, Politico reports that Sen. Chuck Grassley, the top GOP lawmaker on the Senate Judiciary Committee, is drafting his own Republican gun bill (without background checks), which “could further complicate what will already be a difficult lift for Democrats and the White House.” \*\*\* Obama, bipartisan group still optimistic on immigration reform: While Obama uses the bully pulpit today on guns, yesterday he used it on immigration by granting interviews to the top Spanish-language TV news outlets. “If we have a bill introduced at the beginning of next month -- as these senators indicate it will be -- then I'm confident that we can get it done certainly before the end of the summer,” Obama told Telemundo regarding the Senate bipartisan activity on immigration, per NBC’s Carrie Dann. “I'm optimistic,” he added. “I've always said that if I see a breakdown in the process, that I've got my own legislation. I'm prepared to step in. But I don't think that's going to be necessary. I think there's a commitment among this group of Democratic and Republican senators to get this done.” Speaking of that bipartisan group senators, four of them (Schumer, John McCain, Jeff Flake, and Michael Bennet) held a press conference yesterday in Arizona, where they also expressed optimism. “I’d say we are 90 percent there,” Schumer said, according to Roll Call. “We have a few little problems to work on; we’ve been on the phone all day talking to our other four colleagues who aren’t here. McCain chimed in: “Nobody is going to be totally happy with this legislation -- no one will be because we are having to make compromises, and that’s what makes for good legislation. It’s compromise that brings everybody together.”

#### So does Perez

NPR 3-27-13, Carrie Johnson, “Obama's Labor Nominee Faces GOP Opposition Over His Role In A Supreme Court Case”, http://www.npr.org/blogs/thetwo-way/2013/03/27/175513560/obamas-labor-nominee-faces-gop-opposition-over-his-role-in-a-supreme-court-case

Thomas Perez, the president's nominee to lead the Department of Labor and a high-profile Latino advocate for civil rights, is scheduled for a Senate confirmation hearing April 18. **But behind-the-scenes wrangling over his nomination, and his controversial role in a Supreme Court case, is already well under way.**¶ House Oversight and Government Reform Committee Chairman Darrell Issa, R-Calif., and the ranking GOP member on the Senate Judiciary Committee, Charles Grassley, are investigating what they call a quid pro quo deal that may have cost the federal Treasury as much as $180 million.¶ The GOP lawmakers are upset by the appearance that the Justice Department used inappropriate reasons to stay out of a whistle-blower lawsuit that claimed the city of St. Paul, Minn., had misused funds it got from the Department of Housing and Urban Development. Under the False Claims Act, the Justice Department can intervene in such cases and support whistle-blowers, which often leads to victories or settlements that return millions of dollars to the U.S. Treasury.¶ Under the GOP theory, the Justice Department declined to throw its weight into that whistle-blower case as part of an improper deal with St. Paul, Minn. What's the other end of the alleged quid pro quo? That would be St. Paul agreeing to withdraw its bid for Supreme Court review in a separate case that put at risk a major legal tool the federal government uses in civil rights and housing discrimination cases.¶ In the case, Magner v. Gallagher, St. Paul asked the Supreme Court to consider the government's use of the so-called disparate impact theory, which allows lawsuits to proceed under the Fair Housing Act if people can prove a practice has a statistically significant negative impact on minorities, rather than specific bad acts involving individual landlords. That theory has been a frequent target of political conservatives and some members of Congress, and its supporters fear if the issue gets to the Supreme Court, it could be invalidated there.¶ Republican lawmakers have demanded more answers from Perez, the assistant attorney general for civil rights, and others in the Justice Department who may have played a role in that decision, which they consider a "dubious bargain."¶ Grassley told reporters earlier this month, "It's hard to believe that the president would nominate somebody at the heart of a congressional investigation and so deeply involved in a controversial decision to make a shady deal with the city of St. Paul, Minn."¶ New documents indicate Perez and other top DOJ officials have spent hours talking to members of Congress behind closed doors this month about that arrangement.¶ Perez told investigators in an eight-hour session on March 22 that the St. Paul case heading to the Supreme Court last year "caught my attention and was a source of concern."¶ In the first explanation of his role in the case, Perez said the dispute headed toward the Supreme Court presented some bad facts, and "because bad facts make bad law, this could have resulted in a decision that undermined our ability...to protect victims of housing and lending discrimination." He told lawmakers he reached out to people in Minnesota and found out they were interested in getting the Justice Department to stay out of a separate whistle-blower case that could cost the state money.¶ Perez said he reached out inside the Justice Department for ethics advice and told lawmakers he learned "there would be no concerns so long as I had permission" from counterparts in the civil unit handling the whistle-blower case and that "there was no prohibition on linking matters."¶ He added that he learned former Vice President Walter Mondale, who played a role in sponsoring the Fair Housing Act in Congress, and who had close ties to the mayor of St. Paul, was going to reach out regarding the Supreme Court case and its effects on civil rights enforcement as well.¶ "I believe then, and I believe now, that the result achieved here was in the best interests of the United States," he said.¶ Justice Department officials have turned over 1,500 pages of documents about the controversy, **but that's unlikely to satisfy Republicans on Capitol Hill.**

#### Obama pushing infrastructure alongside the rest of his agenda – causing massive GOP backlash

#### The Guardian 3/29

(“Obama unveils plans to pump billions into US infrastructure in Miami speech,” pg online @ http://www.guardian.co.uk/business/2013/mar/29/obama-us-infrastructure-spending-miami-speech//um-ef)

Barack **Obama unveiled new plans to pump billions into US infrastructure on Friday** as he moved to return the focus back to the economy and jobs. Calling it his "partnership to rebuild America," Obama outlined proposals to revamp the nation's ailing highways, bridges and other public projects at Port Miami, which is undergoing a $2bn (£1.3bn) upgrade. The president, having shed his suit jacket, stood on a platform overlooking the tunnel project on Dodge Island to outline plans officials said would put the emphasis on private financing for public projects. "In a time of tight budgets we have got to do it in a way that will ensure taxpayers' money is spent wisely," he said during a short speech which lasted only a few minutes. He said investment of infrastructure had repaired 20,000 bridges, thousands of miles of roads and put tens of thousands of workers back in work. But he added that the American Society of Civil Engineers (ASCE) gave US infrastructure a D+ in a report earlier this month and warned the country had serious problems with its bridges, dams, drinking water, energy, hazardous waste disposal, ports, rail, roads and schools among other areas. **Among his proposals were renewed calls for a $10bn "infrastructure bank."** He also mentioned new plans for $4bn in loans and grants for infrastructure projects and tax breaks for foreign pension funds to encourage investment. The president addressed America's "ageing infrastructure badly in need of repair" during his state of the union speech in February. The "fix it first" policy called for investing $50bn in transportation infrastructure, subject to Congressional approval. **Those proposals drew immediate fire from Republican rivals**. House speaker John **Boehner said: "It's easy to go out there and be Santa Claus and talk about all these things you want to give away, but at some point, somebody's got to pay the bill."** Obama's new emphasis on private funding appears to be driven in part by Republican opposition to increased government spending. It comes as he used the Easter recess to put pressure on lawmakers to take action on immigration reform and to enact gun-control measures. **A White House official said the president would press for infrastructure spending even as he continues his calls for other reforms**. "**As president you need to be able to do a lot of things at once," he said.**

#### PC is academically bankrupt, not key to immigration and winners win

Michael Hirsch (chief correspondent for National Journal, previously served as the senior editor and national economics correspondent for Newsweek, based in its Washington bureau) February 7, 2013 “There’s No Such Thing as Political Capital” <http://www.nationaljournal.com/magazine/there-s-no-such-thing-as-political-capital-20130207>

On Tuesday, in his State of the Union address, President Obama will do what every president does this time of year. For about 60 minutes, he will lay out a sprawling and ambitious wish list highlighted by gun control and immigration reform, climate change and debt reduction. In response, the pundits will do what they always do this time of year: They will talk about how unrealistic most of the proposals are, discussions often informed by sagacious reckonings of how much “political capital” Obama possesses to push his program through.¶ Most of this talk will have no bearing on what actually happens over the next four years.¶ Consider this: Three months ago, just before the November election, if someone had talked seriously about Obama having enough political capital to oversee passage of both immigration reform and gun-control legislation at the beginning of his second term—even after winning the election by 4 percentage points and 5 million votes (the actual final tally)—this person would have been called crazy and stripped of his pundit’s license. (It doesn’t exist, but it ought to.) In his first term, in a starkly polarized country, the president had been so frustrated by GOP resistance that he finally issued a limited executive order last August permitting immigrants who entered the country illegally as children to work without fear of deportation for at least two years. Obama didn’t dare to even bring up gun control, a Democratic “third rail” that has cost the party elections and that actually might have been even less popular on the right than the president’s health care law. And yet, for reasons that have very little to do with Obama’s personal prestige or popularity—variously put in terms of a “mandate” or “political capital”—chances are fair that both will now happen.¶ What changed? In the case of gun control, of course, it wasn’t the election. It was the horror of the 20 first-graders who were slaughtered in Newtown, Conn., in mid-December. The sickening reality of little girls and boys riddled with bullets from a high-capacity assault weapon seemed to precipitate a sudden tipping point in the national conscience. One thing changed after another. Wayne LaPierre of the National Rifle Association marginalized himself with poorly chosen comments soon after the massacre. The pro-gun lobby, once a phalanx of opposition, began to fissure into reasonables and crazies. Former Rep. Gabrielle Giffords, D-Ariz., who was shot in the head two years ago and is still struggling to speak and walk, started a PAC with her husband to appeal to the moderate middle of gun owners. Then she gave riveting and poignant testimony to the Senate, challenging lawmakers: “Be bold.”¶ As a result, momentum has appeared to build around some kind of a plan to curtail sales of the most dangerous weapons and ammunition and the way people are permitted to buy them. It’s impossible to say now whether such a bill will pass and, if it does, whether it will make anything more than cosmetic changes to gun laws. But one thing is clear: The political tectonics have shifted dramatically in very little time. Whole new possibilities exist now that didn’t a few weeks ago.¶ Meanwhile, the Republican members of the Senate’s so-called Gang of Eight are pushing hard for a new spirit of compromise on immigration reform, a sharp change after an election year in which the GOP standard-bearer declared he would make life so miserable for the 11 million illegal immigrants in the U.S. that they would “self-deport.” But this turnaround has very little to do with Obama’s personal influence—his political mandate, as it were. It has almost entirely to do with just two numbers: 71 and 27. That’s 71 percent for Obama, 27 percent for Mitt Romney, the breakdown of the Hispanic vote in the 2012 presidential election. Obama drove home his advantage by giving a speech on immigration reform on Jan. 29 at a Hispanic-dominated high school in Nevada, a swing state he won by a surprising 8 percentage points in November. But the movement on immigration has mainly come out of the Republican Party’s recent introspection, and the realization by its more thoughtful members, such as Sen. Marco Rubio of Florida and Gov. Bobby Jindal of Louisiana, that without such a shift the party may be facing demographic death in a country where the 2010 census showed, for the first time, that white births have fallen into the minority. It’s got nothing to do with Obama’s political capital or, indeed, Obama at all.¶ The point is not that “political capital” is a meaningless term. Often it is a synonym for “mandate” or “momentum” in the aftermath of a decisive election—and just about every politician ever elected has tried to claim more of a mandate than he actually has. Certainly, Obama can say that because he was elected and Romney wasn’t, he has a better claim on the country’s mood and direction. Many pundits still defend political capital as a useful metaphor at least. “It’s an unquantifiable but meaningful concept,” says Norman Ornstein of the American Enterprise Institute. “You can’t really look at a president and say he’s got 37 ounces of political capital. But the fact is, it’s a concept that matters, if you have popularity and some momentum on your side.”¶ The real problem is that the idea of political capital—or mandates, or momentum—is so poorly defined that presidents and pundits often get it wrong. “Presidents usually over-estimate it,” says George Edwards, a presidential scholar at Texas A&M University. “The best kind of political capital—some sense of an electoral mandate to do something—is very rare. It almost never happens. In 1964, maybe. And to some degree in 1980.” For that reason, political capital is a concept that misleads far more than it enlightens. It is distortionary. It conveys the idea that we know more than we really do about the ever-elusive concept of political power, and it discounts the way unforeseen events can suddenly change everything. Instead, it suggests, erroneously, that a political figure has a concrete amount of political capital to invest, just as someone might have real investment capital—that a particular leader can bank his gains, and the size of his account determines what he can do at any given moment in history.¶ Naturally, any president has practical and electoral limits. Does he have a majority in both chambers of Congress and a cohesive coalition behind him? Obama has neither at present. And unless a surge in the economy—at the moment, still stuck—or some other great victory gives him more momentum, it is inevitable that the closer Obama gets to the 2014 election, the less he will be able to get done. Going into the midterms, Republicans will increasingly avoid any concessions that make him (and the Democrats) stronger.¶ But the abrupt emergence of the immigration and gun-control issues illustrates how suddenly shifts in mood can occur and how political interests can align in new ways just as suddenly. Indeed, the pseudo-concept of political capital masks a larger truth about Washington that is kindergarten simple: You just don’t know what you can do until you try. Or as Ornstein himself once wrote years ago, “Winning wins.” In theory, and in practice, depending on Obama’s handling of any particular issue, even in a polarized time, he could still deliver on a lot of his second-term goals, depending on his skill and the breaks. Unforeseen catalysts can appear, like Newtown. Epiphanies can dawn, such as when many Republican Party leaders suddenly woke up in panic to the huge disparity in the Hispanic vote.¶ Some political scientists who study the elusive calculus of how to pass legislation and run successful presidencies say that political capital is, at best, an empty concept, and that almost nothing in the academic literature successfully quantifies or even defines it. “It can refer to a very abstract thing, like a president’s popularity, but there’s no mechanism there. That makes it kind of useless,” says Richard Bensel, a government professor at Cornell University. Even Ornstein concedes that the calculus is far more complex than the term suggests. **Winning on one issue** often **changes the calculation for the next issue**; there is never any known amount of capital. “The idea here is, if an issue comes up where the conventional wisdom is that president is not going to get what he wants, and he gets it, then each time that happens, it changes the calculus of the other actors” Ornstein says. “If they think he’s going to win, they may change positions to get on the winning side. It’s a bandwagon effect.”¶ ALL THE WAY WITH LBJ¶ Sometimes, a clever practitioner of power can get more done just because he’s aggressive and knows the hallways of Congress well. Texas A&M’s Edwards is right to say that the outcome of the 1964 election, Lyndon Johnson’s landslide victory over Barry Goldwater, was one of the few that conveyed a mandate. But one of the main reasons for that mandate (in addition to Goldwater’s ineptitude as a candidate) was President Johnson’s masterful use of power leading up to that election, and his ability to get far more done than anyone thought possible, given his limited political capital. In the newest volume in his exhaustive study of LBJ, The Passage of Power, historian Robert Caro recalls Johnson getting cautionary advice after he assumed the presidency from the assassinated John F. Kennedy in late 1963. Don’t focus on a long-stalled civil-rights bill, advisers told him, because it might jeopardize Southern lawmakers’ support for a tax cut and appropriations bills the president needed. “One of the wise, practical people around the table [said that] the presidency has only a certain amount of coinage to expend, and you oughtn’t to expend it on this,” Caro writes. (Coinage, of course, was what political capital was called in those days.) Johnson replied, “Well, what the hell’s the presidency for?”¶ Johnson didn’t worry about coinage, and he got the Civil Rights Act enacted, along with much else: Medicare, a tax cut, antipoverty programs. He appeared to understand not just the ways of Congress but also the way to maximize the momentum he possessed in the lingering mood of national grief and determination by picking the right issues, as Caro records. “Momentum is not a mysterious mistress,” LBJ said. “It is a controllable fact of political life.” Johnson had the skill and wherewithal to realize that, at that moment of history, he could have unlimited coinage if he handled the politics right. He did. (At least until Vietnam, that is.)¶ And then there are the presidents who get the politics, and the issues, wrong. It was the last president before Obama who was just starting a second term, George W. Bush, who really revived the claim of political capital, which he was very fond of wielding. Then Bush promptly demonstrated that he didn’t fully understand the concept either.¶ At his first news conference after his 2004 victory, a confident-sounding Bush declared, “I earned capital in the campaign, political capital, and now I intend to spend it. That’s my style.” The 43rd president threw all of his political capital at an overriding passion: the partial privatization of Social Security. He mounted a full-bore public-relations campaign that included town-hall meetings across the country.¶ Bush failed utterly, of course. But the problem was not that he didn’t have enough political capital. Yes, he may have overestimated his standing. Bush’s margin over John Kerry was thin—helped along by a bumbling Kerry campaign that was almost the mirror image of Romney’s gaffe-filled failure this time—but that was not the real mistake. The problem was that whatever credibility or stature Bush thought he had earned as a newly reelected president did nothing to make Social Security privatization a better idea in most people’s eyes. Voters didn’t trust the plan, and four years later, at the end of Bush’s term, the stock-market collapse bore out the public’s skepticism. Privatization just didn’t have any momentum behind it, no matter who was pushing it or how much capital Bush spent to sell it.¶ The mistake that Bush made with Social Security, says John Sides, an associate professor of political science at George Washington University and a well-followed political blogger, “was that just because he won an election, he thought he had a green light. But there was no sense of any kind of public urgency on Social Security reform. It’s like he went into the garage where various Republican policy ideas were hanging up and picked one. I don’t think Obama’s going to make that mistake.… Bush decided he wanted to push a rock up a hill. He didn’t understand how steep the hill was. I think Obama has more momentum on his side because of the Republican Party’s concerns about the Latino vote and the shooting at Newtown.” Obama may also get his way on the debt ceiling, not because of his reelection, Sides says, “but because Republicans are beginning to doubt whether taking a hard line on fiscal policy is a good idea,” as the party suffers in the polls.¶ THE REAL LIMITS ON POWER¶ Presidents are limited in what they can do by time and attention span, of course, just as much as they are by electoral balances in the House and Senate. But this, too, has nothing to do with political capital. Another well-worn meme of recent years was that Obama used up too much political capital passing the health care law in his first term. But the real problem was that the plan was unpopular, the economy was bad, and the president didn’t realize that the national mood (yes, again, the national mood) was at a tipping point against big-government intervention, with the tea-party revolt about to burst on the scene. For Americans in 2009 and 2010—haunted by too many rounds of layoffs, appalled by the Wall Street bailout, aghast at the amount of federal spending that never seemed to find its way into their pockets—government-imposed health care coverage was simply an intervention too far. So was the idea of another economic stimulus. Cue the tea party and what ensued: two titanic fights over the debt ceiling. Obama, like Bush, had settled on pushing an issue that was out of sync with the country’s mood.¶ Unlike Bush, Obama did ultimately get his idea passed. But the bigger political problem with health care reform was that it distracted the government’s attention from other issues that people cared about more urgently, such as the need to jump-start the economy and financial reform. Various congressional staffers told me at the time that their bosses didn’t really have the time to understand how the Wall Street lobby was riddling the Dodd-Frank financial-reform legislation with loopholes. Health care was sucking all the oxygen out of the room, the aides said.¶ Weighing the imponderables of momentum, the often-mystical calculations about when the historic moment is ripe for an issue, will never be a science. It is mainly intuition, and its best practitioners have a long history in American politics. This is a tale told well in Steven Spielberg’s hit movie Lincoln. Daniel Day-Lewis’s Abraham Lincoln attempts a lot of behind-the-scenes vote-buying to win passage of the 13th Amendment, banning slavery, along with eloquent attempts to move people’s hearts and minds. He appears to be using the political capital of his reelection and the turning of the tide in the Civil War. But it’s clear that a surge of conscience, a sense of the changing times, has as much to do with the final vote as all the backroom horse-trading. “The reason I think the idea of political capital is kind of distorting is that it implies you have chits you can give out to people. It really oversimplifies why you elect politicians, or why they can do what Lincoln did,” says Tommy Bruce, a former political consultant in Washington.¶ Consider, as another example, the storied political career of President Franklin Roosevelt. Because the mood was ripe for dramatic change in the depths of the Great Depression, FDR was able to push an astonishing array of New Deal programs through a largely compliant Congress, assuming what some described as near-dictatorial powers. But in his second term, full of confidence because of a landslide victory in 1936 that brought in unprecedented Democratic majorities in the House and Senate, Roosevelt overreached with his infamous Court-packing proposal. All of a sudden, the political capital that experts thought was limitless disappeared. FDR’s plan to expand the Supreme Court by putting in his judicial allies abruptly created an unanticipated wall of opposition from newly reunited Republicans and conservative Southern Democrats. FDR thus inadvertently handed back to Congress, especially to the Senate, the power and influence he had seized in his first term. Sure, Roosevelt had loads of popularity and momentum in 1937. He seemed to have a bank vault full of political capital. But, once again, a president simply chose to take on the wrong issue at the wrong time; this time, instead of most of the political interests in the country aligning his way, they opposed him. Roosevelt didn’t fully recover until World War II, despite two more election victories.¶ In terms of Obama’s second-term agenda, what all these shifting tides of momentum and political calculation mean is this: Anything goes. Obama has no more elections to win, and he needs to worry only about the support he will have in the House and Senate after 2014. But if he picks issues that the country’s mood will support—such as, perhaps, immigration reform and gun control—there is no reason to think he can’t win far more victories than any of the careful calculators of political capital now believe is possible, including battles over tax reform and deficit reduction.¶ Amid today’s atmosphere of Republican self-doubt, a new, more mature Obama seems to be emerging, one who has his agenda clearly in mind and will ride the mood of the country more adroitly. If he can get some early wins—as he already has, apparently, on the fiscal cliff and the upper-income tax increase—that will create momentum, and one win may well lead to others. “Winning wins.”

#### Obama’s energy policy disproves the link and the plan’s popular

**Coons 12**—Republican Senator from Delaware

(Christopher, “Bipartisan group of legislators urge President Obama to work with Congress on tax code changes reflective of an all-of-the-above energy strategy”, <http://www.coons.senate.gov/newsroom/releases/release/bipartisan-group-of-legislators-urge-president-obama-to-work-with-congress-on-tax-code-changes-reflective-of-an-all-of-the-above-energy-strategy>, dml)

WASHINGTON – A bipartisan group of 29 Senators and Representatives sent a letter to President Obama Wednesday calling for Master Limited Partnerships and Real Estate Investment Trusts to be a priority in the federal government’s “all of the above” energy strategy. “Minor changes to the federal tax code could provide the renewable energy industry access to large pools of low-cost private capital,” the lawmakers wrote. “Already, oil, gas, and coal infrastructure projects raise cheap capital by selling shares of Master Limited Partnerships (MLPs), as do energy transmission projects using Real Estate Investment Trusts (REITs). Wind, solar, and other renewable energy projects cannot use these investment tools and, therefore, suffer from high costs of capital.” “Opening MLPs and REITs to renewable energy would level the playing field by giving renewables the same access to low-cost capital enjoyed by oil, gas, coal and transmission infrastructure projects,” the letter continues. “Small tweaks to the tax code could attract billions of dollars in private sector investment to renewable energy deployment, reduce the cost of renewable electricity by up to one third, and dramatically broaden the base of eligible investors. In fact, bipartisan legislation has already been introduced in both the House and the Senate (H.R. 6437 and S. 3275 respectively) to allow renewable energy projects to raise low-cost capital through the MLP structure. In the case of REITs, a straightforward ruling by the Treasury Department would allow access to this investment vehicle for renewable energy projects.” The letter, whose full text is included below, was led by the sponsors of the Master Limited Partnerships Parity Act: U.S. Senators Chris Coons (D-Del.) and Jerry Moran (R-Kan.), and U.S. Representatives Ted Poe (R-TX-02), Mike Thompson (D-CA-01) and Peter Welch (D-VT-AL). The legislation is a straightforward, powerful tweak to the federal tax code that could unleash significant private capital by helping additional energy-generation and renewable fuels companies form master limited partnerships, which combine the funding advantages of corporations and the tax advantages of partnerships. A master limited partnership is a business structure that is taxed as a partnership, but whose ownership interests are traded like corporate stock on a market. By statute, MLPs have only been available to investors in energy portfolios for oil, natural gas, coal extraction, and pipeline projects. These projects get access to capital at a lower cost and are more liquid than traditional financing approaches to energy projects, making them highly effective at attracting private investment. Investors in renewable energy projects, however, have been explicitly prevented from forming MLPs, starving a growing portion of America’s domestic energy sector of the capital it needs to build and grow. A more detailed white paper on the MLP Parity Act can be found here: http://coons.senate.gov/mlp Senators Jon Tester (D-Mont.), Al Franken (D-Minn.), Amy Klobuchar (D-Minn.), Sheldon Whitehouse (D-R.I.), Jeanne Shaheen (D-N.H.), Debbie Stabenow (D-Mich.), Lisa Murkowski (R-Alaska), Michael Bennet (D-Colo.), Scott Brown (R-Mass.), Tom Harkin (D-Iowa), Mark Begich (D-Alaska) and Mary Landrieu (D-La.) have cosponsored the Senate version of the legislation. The MLP Parity Act has been endorsed by the American Wind Energy Association, Third Way, Solar Energy Industries Association, Biomass Power Association, Biotechnology Industry Organization, Ocean Renewable Energy Coalition, American Council on Renewable Energy, Natural Resources Defense Council, Advanced Biofuels Association, Offshore Wind Development Coalition, the Advanced Ethanol Council, Silicon Valley Leadership Group, International District Energy Association, and Environmental Entrepreneurs.