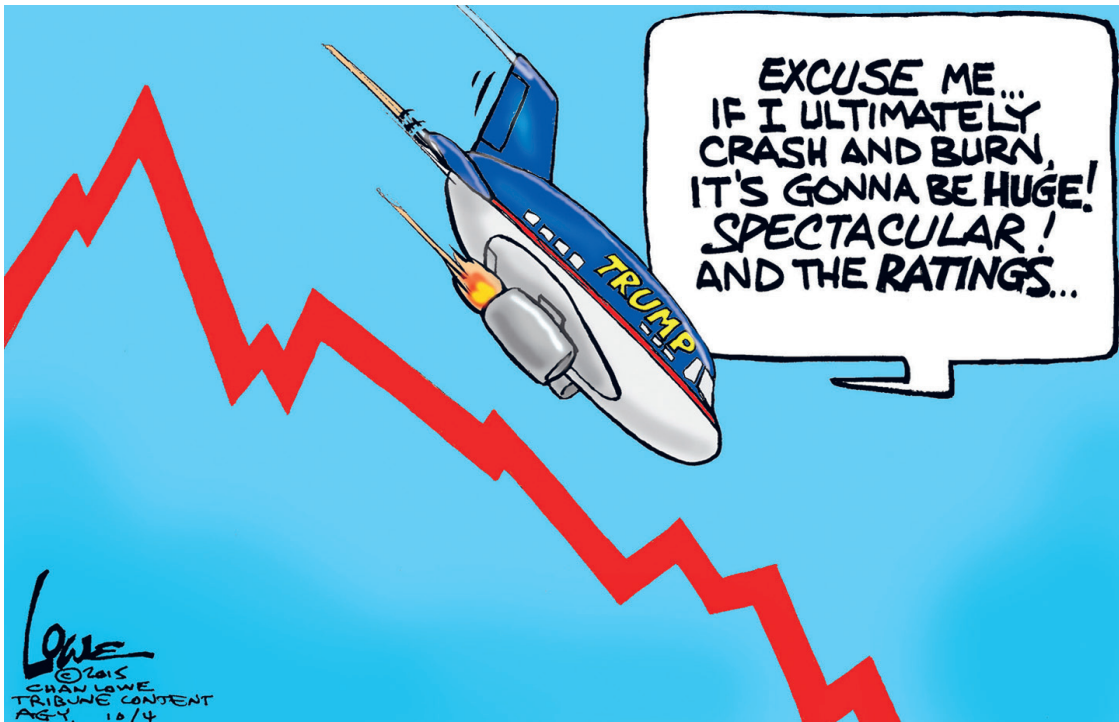


O P I N I O N



Robert B. Reich

American Voices

Crass distortions of the choices facing the nation sometimes come masked in the media as “political analysis.” But whatever they’re called, they can’t be allowed to stand.

Such was the *Washington Post’s* front-page piece last week, ostensibly an analysis of the policies proposed by Sen. Bernie Sanders of Vermont.

Sanders, wrote the *Post’s* David Fahrenthold, “is not just a big-spending liberal. His agenda is not just about money. It’s also about control.”

Fahrenthold claims Sanders’ plan for paying for students’ college tuition at public universities with a tax on Wall Street trades would mean “colleges would run by government rules.”

Apparently Fahrenthold is unaware that three-quarters of college students today attend public universities financed largely by state governments.

And even those who attend elite private universities benefit from federal tax subsidies flowing to wealthy donors. Meg Whitman’s recent \$30 million donation to Princeton, for example, is really \$20 million from her plus an estimated \$10 million she deducted from her taxable income.

Notwithstanding all this government largesse, colleges aren’t “run by government rules.”

The real problem is that too many young people still can’t afford a college education.

The move toward free public higher education that began after World War II with the G.I. Bill and was extended in the 1960s by leading public universities was reversed starting in the 1980s because of shrinking state budgets. Tuition has skyrocketed in recent years as states slashed education spending. It’s time to resurrect that earlier goal.

Besides, the biggest threats to academic freedom these days aren’t coming from government. They’re coming as conditions attached to funding from billionaires and big corporations that is increasing as public funding drops.

When the Charles G. Koch Charitable Foundation

pledged \$1.5 million to Florida State University’s economics department, for example, it stipulated that a Koch-appointed advisory committee would select professors and undertake annual evaluations.

Fahrenthold similarly claims that Sanders’ plan for a single-payer system would put health care under the “control” of government.

But health care is already largely financed through government subsidies — only they’re flowing to private for-profit health insurers that are now busily consolidating into corporate leviathans.

What we do know is that they’re far more expensive than a single-payer system.

Fahrenthold repeats the charge that Sanders’ health-care plan would cost \$15 trillion over 10 years. But single-payer systems in other rich nations have proven cheaper than private for-profit health insurers because they don’t spend huge sums on advertising, marketing, executive pay and billing. So even if the Sanders single-payer plan would cost \$15 trillion over 10 years, Americans as a whole would save more than that.

Fahrenthold trusts the “market” more than he does the government, but he overlooks the fact that government sets the rules by which the market runs.

The real choice isn’t between government and the “market.” It’s between a system responsive to the needs of most Americans and one more responsive to the demands of the super-rich, big business and Wall Street — whose economic and political power have grown dramatically over the last three decades.

This is why the logic of Sanders’ ideas depends on the political changes he seeks.

Fahrenthold says a President Sanders couldn’t get any of his ideas implemented anyway because Congress would reject them. But if Bernie Sanders is elected president, American politics will have been altered, reducing the moneyed interests’ chokehold over the public agenda.

© 2015 By Robert Reich

Opinions expressed in this column are solely those of the writer and are not necessarily shared by the Editor or The Nugget Newspaper.

Letters to the Editor...

The *Nugget* welcomes contributions from its readers, which must include the writer’s name, address and phone number. Letters to the Editor is an open forum for the community and contains unsolicited opinions not necessarily shared by the Editor. The *Nugget* reserves the right to edit, omit, respond or ask for a response to letters submitted to the Editor. Letters should be no longer than 300 words. Unpublished items are not acknowledged or returned. The deadline for all letters is noon Monday.

To the Editor:

Thank you for your very thoughtful piece last week about not accepting repeated horrific killings in America as just another day at the office. Your comment about ours not being a very caring society as being an element of the problem particularly rings true. A cultural shift in our attitude toward the possession of weapons similar to what has happened with our no longer accepting excessive drinking of alcohol and the use of tobacco, needs to occur.

Unfortunately, the misconception that we all have a right to own guns only exacerbates the problem. The notion that the Constitution bestows a right upon all of us to “keep and bear arms” just isn’t so. We are not all part of a “well-regulated militia” as stated in the Second Amendment. One thing we can do is to clarify what the authors of the amendment intended. The suggestion by former Justice of the Supreme Court John Paul Douglas that the Amendment be changed to read, “A well-regulated Militia, being necessary to the security of a free State, the right of the people to keep and

bear Arms when serving in the Militia shall not be infringed” would be a good beginning.
Roger Detweiler



To the Editor:

I applaud Jim Cornelius’ editorial on gun rights and gun responsibilities (*The Nugget*, October 7, page 2).

His editorial provides compelling insights about this national tragedy. The USA has the Constitutional right to bear arms. The USA has a responsibility for a safe society. These can be bridged together.

I endorse Jim’s quote: “We gun-owners seem to have forgotten that our right comes with a very serious responsibility — and that includes participating in the crafting of EFFECTIVE regulations that keep weapons out of the hands of people who are liable to use them to terrible purpose.”

Dave Johnson

See LETTERS on page 8

Sisters Weather Forecast

Courtesy of the National Weather Service, Pendleton, Oregon

Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday	Sunday	Monday
Sunny 76/34	Sunny 73/37	Mostly sunny 73/38	Rain likely 68/38	Partly sunny 66/35	Chance showers 69/na

The Nugget Newspaper, Inc.

Website: www.nuggetnews.com

442 E. Main Ave., P.O. Box 698, Sisters, Oregon 97759

Tel: 541-549-9941 | Fax: 541-549-9940 | editor@nuggetnews.com



Member

Postmaster: Send address changes to
The Nugget Newspaper,
P.O. Box 698, Sisters, OR 97759.
Third Class Postage Paid at Sisters, Oregon.

Publisher - Editor: Kiki Dolson
News Editor: Jim Cornelius
Production Manager: Leith Williver
Classifieds & Circulation: Teresa Mahnken
Advertising: Lisa Buckley
Graphic Design: Jess Draper
Proofreader: Pete Rathbun
Accounting: Erin Bordonaro

The *Nugget* is mailed to residents within the Sisters School District; subscriptions are available outside delivery area. Third-class postage: one year, \$45; six months (or less), \$25. First-class postage: one year, \$85; six months, \$55.

Published Weekly. ©2014 The Nugget Newspaper, Inc. All rights reserved. Reproduction in whole or in part without written permission is prohibited. All advertising which appears in The Nugget is the property of The Nugget and may not be used without explicit permission. The Nugget Newspaper, Inc. assumes no liability or responsibility for information contained in advertisements, articles, stories, lists, calendar etc. within this publication. All submissions to The Nugget Newspaper will be treated as unconditionally assigned for publication and copyrighting purposes and subject to The Nugget Newspaper’s unrestricted right to edit and comment editorially, that all rights are currently available, and that the material in no way infringes upon the rights of any person. The publisher assumes no responsibility for return or safety of artwork, photos, or manuscripts.