

# OPINION

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## Raising Taxes Could Actually be a Good Deal

### Investing in our prosperity

BY ISAAH J. POOLE

This time of year, a whole lot of Americans are feeling taxed enough already.

But the astonishing momentum of Bernie Sanders's presidential candidacy reveals something else: Millions of taxpayers are willing to entertain the idea that some of us aren't taxed enough, and that it's hurting the rest of us.

Sanders has propelled his race against Hillary Clinton on a platform that would ramp up government investment — in infrastructure, education, health care, research, and social services — while boosting taxes on the wealthiest Americans and big business to cover the cost.

Clinton's own vision is less ambitious, but it's also a far cry



from "the era of big government is over" days of her husband's administration.

The old conservative epithet against "tax-and-spend liberals" hasn't completely lost its sting, says Jacob Hacker, a political science professor at Yale University who pushed the idea of a public option for health insurance during the Affordable Care Act debate. But "we are moving toward the point where we can have an active discussion" about why "you need an activist government to secure prosperity."

Hacker's latest book, with Paul Pierson of the University of California at Berkeley, is *American Amnesia: How the War on Government Led Us to Forget What Made America Prosper*.

Hacker and Pierson argue that it was "the strong thumb" of a largely progressive-oriented government, in tandem with "the nimble fingers of the market,"

that created the broad prosperity of the post-World War II era. Conservative ideologues and corporate leaders then severed that partnership.

Anti-government activism replaced the virtuous cycle of shared prosperity that existed into the 1970s with a new cycle that's reached its apogee in today's radical Republican-run Congress: Make government unworkable. Attack government as unworkable. Win over angry voters. Repeat.

But in today's mad politics, growing numbers of voters seem to have gotten wise to the routine and how it's been rigged against them. Some are gravitating toward Donald Trump, as Hacker puts it, out of "the need to put a strong man who you know is not with the program in Washington in charge."

Sanders has the opposite vision. He's looking to spark a people-powered reordering of what

government can do, with the biggest wealth-holders paying the share of taxes that they did when America's thriving middle class and thriving corporate sector were, together, the envy of the world.

That vision is embodied in the People's Budget, a document produced by the Congressional Progressive Caucus as an alternative to the House Republican budget.

It's based on the premise that America can break out of its slow-growth economic malaise through a \$1 trillion infrastructure spending plan that would create more than 3 million jobs, increased spending on green energy research and development, and universal access to quality education from preschool through college.

"There are two messages that come out of the progressive budget," Hacker said. One is that "we can actually increase investment if we don't cut taxes further on

the wealthy." The other is that "if we got tougher with the modern robber barons in the health care and finance and energy industries, we could actually achieve substantial savings without cutting necessary spending."

Unfortunately, the People's Budget won't get close to a majority vote in Congress — and that's if it gets a vote at all in the dysfunctional Republican House.

Yet together with the debate provoked by the Sanders campaign, Hacker says, it shows that now "we have a little bit more of an opening for the kind of conversation we should've had 20 or 30 years ago, when we were trashing government and abandoning all of these long-term investments that are essential to our prosperity."

Isaiah J. Poole is the online communications director at *Campaign for America's Future. OurFuture.org*. Distributed by *OtherWords.org*.

## Contributions by Women Past and Present

### Her place is simply where she makes it

BY MARC H. MORIAL

There is no arena in American life, or beyond the borders of this country, where a woman's presence can neither be noted nor celebrated. Women have played—and continue to play—a major role in our nation's culture, politics and economy.

The traditionally held belief of a "woman's place" has long created obstacles for women who have ventured into the business arena. It was a notion that dictated that a woman's natural place was in the home, and when women worked outside of the home, it largely dictated what kind of work was appropriate for her. From the late 1800s and its initial boom of female workers and entrepreneurs in America, to Maria Contreras-Sweet, the founder of ProAmerica Bank and current head of the Small Business Association, and Oprah Winfrey's media empire, we know that a woman's place is quite simply where she makes it.

My own respect for strong, accomplished women was instilled by my mother, a highly-respected

educator and civil rights activist who recently published a memoir, "Witness to Change," about her own remarkable life.

Despite issues of gender parity and gender equity that continue to plague our boardrooms, conference rooms and banks, women have long contributed to the economic vitality of our country. Yesterday's entrepreneur laid the groundwork for today's businesswoman, who continues to defy odds,



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break glass ceilings and produce much-needed jobs and revenue. This is especially true in the case of women of color, who are the fastest growing group of entrepreneurs in the United States.

Women own nearly 10 million of the businesses in America—making up 36 percent of the nation's businesses. These businesses generate more than \$1.4 trillion in annual revenue and employ 8 million people. Women are starting businesses at record rates, exceeding the national average, and there has been remarkable spike in small business ownership by women of color.

In 2002, there were fewer than one million businesses owned by women of color, representing 14

percent of women-owned firms. As of 2012, there are nearly 3.8 million firms owned by women of color, comprising 38 percent of women-owned businesses. Today, women of color own 4 in 10 busi-

nesses and their businesses can be found in any conceivable industry. There are many factors that can be attributed to this historic growth. The gender pay gap, and the glass ceiling above the ladder of success that is littered with cracks but has yet to be shattered, surely plays a motivating role for many women who have decided to invest in themselves and their talent. The Great Recession and the slow start, especially for communities of color to recover from the immense loss of capital and

The growth in businesses owned by women of color belies the ugly reality that African American and Latina business owners struggle to fund their startups. Women tend to start their businesses with half as much money as men, they are more likely to use their personal savings, and are less likely to access bank loans, funding and venture capital. To foster the growth and long-term survivability of businesses owned by people of color, the National Urban League has created Entrepreneurship Centers that provide management counseling, mentoring and training services geared toward the development of management skills that enable minority entrepreneurs to obtain financing that support job creation and preservation.

Entrepreneurship plays a vital role in our economy and the National Urban League will continue to play a vital role in shoring up the efforts and success of all businesses that create the jobs that save our cities. The small businesses owned by women of color are helping to bring jobs to struggling neighborhoods, creating new economic pathways in underserved communities and deserve their fair share of recognition—every month of the year.

Marc H. Morial is president and chief executive officer of the National Urban League.