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Academic Unfreedom at Cornell

By RANDY WAYNE AND T. COLIN CAMPBELL

Questioning authority is not something that one is likely to do, not something that one is likely to be encouraged to do, nor something that one is likely to be taught to do when studying the life sciences at Cornell. In fact, to question authority might hurt your GPA if you are a student, or result in the removal of your class from the course catalog if you are a faculty member (The Cornell Progressive, November 30, 2011). With academic freedom, students learn to assess the veracity of received wisdom and how to explore the assumptions upon which it is based. With academic freedom, students develop tools to build a factual, reasoned and ethical foundation upon which to make the decisions necessary to live a principled life. At Cornell, life science professors do not necessarily profess their beliefs based upon



Source: <http://onlinepharmacyreviews.biz/blog/choosing-the-right-payment-method-at-an-online-pharmacy/pills-and-money/>

evidence and critical thinking as our title implies; rather, all too often, professors market an unwritten and unspoken syllabus to promote, if not a brand name, then a way of looking

at the world that is sympathetic to corporate sponsors. Advertisements convince you to buy things that you neither want nor need. Must the same be said of a university education that has the depth of an infomercial?

This unwritten, unspoken curriculum emphasizes material that has been laundered by scientific authorities who we teach the students to have faith in. Have we gone mad to talk about faith and authority in scientific matters? No! Science funding, and with it, science itself has become very controlled. In an article

“Look at the life science classes still in the course catalog. Ask yourself whose interests they serve?”

in the February 2012 issue of APS News, a publication of the American Physical Society, Michael Lucibella wrote about the news coverage of the recent experimental result from CERN that was interpreted to show that the speed of light may not be a limiting speed for neutrinos, Lucibella pointed out that, “a big concern is whether members of the general public see a news item about scientific discovery seemingly overturning long-established theories, and start to lose faith in the authority of scientific results.”

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Why Mitt Romney is the Best Opponent for Obama

By TONY MONTGOMERY

Just a week ago, I was giddy with excitement over Rick Santorum's trifecta of primary victories in Missouri, Colorado and Minnesota. Although the contests were, to a certain degree, entirely masturbatory (in that Santorum was not awarded a single delegate), Santorum nonetheless picked up a full head of steam that he's currently channeling into potential breakthroughs in Michigan and Arizona.

I saw this as a good thing – the inevitable nominee in Romney being forced to slog out a twelve-round bout with the plucky conservative upstart was, in my eyes, nothing short of

great news for Barack Obama. With the economy improving a little bit too slowly and social issues becoming a bit too prevalent within the national dialogue; I figured Obama needed all the help he could muster from the infighting across the aisle.

But I've had some time to think over the course of the last few days...and I've come to the decision that as a Democrat, I believe that Mitt Romney would be the best possible opponent in November for Barack Obama.

Now I'm pretty sure that there are elements on both side of the aisle that disagree with me. Practical Republicans argue that Romney is the most electable candidate they can

put forward, and that his moderate nature will appeal to independents in the general election. Certain Democrats are also of the mindset that Rick Santorum is completely and utterly unelectable, and that Barack Obama would not only cruise to victory against such a weak opponent, but also that the myriad contests for Senate seats currently held by Democrats would stay safely blue. I hear both sides here, and I understand the sentiments behind their arguments.

In spite of these sentiments, I'm still firmly convinced that a Mitt Romney primary win is the best-case scenario here.

First, let's look at the character aspect. One of the most consistent

gripes I've heard from progressives over the years is that Obama isn't liberal enough, that he doesn't fight for anything, that he's too accommodating and eager to compromise. Each and every one of those critiques is rooted in some level of truth, to be sure. But Romney's approval rating among Republicans has been mired in the high 20's throughout the entire primary process – even as flavors of the month have come and gone.

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Comments and letters to the editor
are always welcome at:
CUPprogressive@gmail.com

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EDITORIAL

Our Contraception Dilemma

Throughout January of 2012, a number of Republican congressmen and Catholic leaders protested a mandate proposed by the department of Health and Human Services requiring employers to provide health insurance covering contraception and sterilization, both of which are medical procedures prohibited by the Catholic Church and many other religious institutions. According to Bishop Lori of Connecticut, many Catholic hospitals and charities have a long legacy of indiscriminately serving all members of their communities, and that "being a Catholic has never been a requirement to receive healing care. Now, according to [the Department of Health and Human Services], it will be. Or else the hospital will receive punishing fines for refusing to violate its own moral teaching."

To prevent infringements upon the religious values of Catholic universities, charities and hospitals and to allow them to continue to openly serve their communities, the Obama administration promptly and rightfully answered these concerns by finding "a way to move forward that both provides women with the preventative care that they need and respects the prerogatives of religious institutions." No organization should have to choose between going against its core beliefs and enduring financial penalties from the state.

However, this discourse has led many American right-wingers to publicly raise questions about whether abortion or family planning organizations, like Planned Parenthood, should receive government support at all. Rick Santorum, a hard-line "pro-life" advocate, even said in April 2011: "I can't imagine any other organization with its roots as poisonous as the roots of Planned Parenthood getting federal funding of any kind. This is an organization that was founded on the eugenics movement, founded on racism. Its origins are horrific." Santorum has favored completely overturning Roe-v-Wade and opposing abortion in cases of rape or incest. Most recently, he has publicly opposed the coverage of prenatal amniocenteses, as problems in test results could "tempt" people to abort fetuses. But do politicians like

Rick Santorum even understand the ramifications of their extreme stances against abortion and contraception on modern American society?

Even though abortions, especially those carried out during a second or third semester of pregnancy, are viewed by some as shameful and unnatural practices, it is extremely difficult to imagine what our society would look like if abortion were banned all together or if comprehensive sex-education and affordable contraception were eradicated. Many women would resort to underground abortions carried out by untrained providers, risking their own lives and their reproductive health. A society unequipped to support women who are unprepared financially, educationally or socially to handle motherhood would undoubtedly suffer from sky-rocketing poverty and crime rates in the future.

Services like Planned Parenthood were established during the Progressive era in the turn of the 20th Century to alleviate these public health and social problems caused by inadequate sexual education and scarce sources for safe and early term abortions. Planned Parenthood also gave women the choice to experiment with their sexuality without fear of getting pregnant and suffering the consequences of an unwanted pregnancy for the rest of their lives. Margaret Sanger, the founder of Planned Parenthood, was actually raised in a devout Catholic family, and abhorred abortion altogether. She founded Planned Parenthood so that women across socioeconomic classes had access to educational resources to help them learn about their reproductive health and to tools that would allow them to control their fertility without resorting to abortions.

Unlike what many social conservatives claim, Planned Parenthood is not a threat to family values, but rather helps preserve the well-being and stability of the nuclear family. When women and their male partners are given the tools to strategically plan the growth of their families so that they can start having children when they are best fit, society as a whole benefits and the ideal of the nuclear family can be safeguarded.

Plus, women who are most likely to consider abortions are those who live modestly or in poverty themselves and do not have the education or financial support to adequately sustain themselves, let alone another human life. Those who are not ready to become parents, but are socially and legally cornered into doing so, should be the last people in our society raising children. Of course the best way to prevent unwanted to pregnancies is to simply abstain from sex, but this practice will not prevail as our social norm anytime soon.

It is also important to remember that contraception, including birth control pills, can be used to treat various conditions that could preserve a woman's future reproductive health and fertility. Birth control pills alone can treat debilitating disorders like PMDD, a disorder where premenstrual hormonal shifts cause severe emotional and physical disturbances in a woman's body that disrupt her ability to carry on with her daily life. In fact, Sandra Fluke, a student at Georgetown University who was publicly called a "slut" by Rush Limbaugh on his radio talk show for trying to persuade her school health insurance plan to cover her birth control pills, reported that a fellow student had to remove her ovary due to the growth of ovarian cysts that could have been treated with hormonal contraception. It seems that many of the leaders in Washington and across the country lobbying against the coverage of contraception do not even understand the incredible medical need for these medications. If this apparent ignorance drives future contraception policy reforms, millions of American women will suffer from debilitating disorders and the fate of potential infertility.

Social conservatives cannot call themselves "pro-life" unless they are also willing to take the necessary financial steps to publicly equip future single mothers to raise their children on their own. A political platform that is staunchly "pro-life" and yet fiercely opposes delegating tax money for public services such as cheap and sustainable housing, affordable public healthcare, job-training and educational opportunities for young single mothers, and even adoption services, is short-sighted and hypocritical - certainly not "pro-life." It is one thing to personally oppose abortions for yourself and your family, but it is another to force your own religious and social beliefs on a society that is simply not ready for them.

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ON POVERTY Matthew Scognamiglio

A Hard-Headed, But not Hard-Hearted Society



Source: <http://ralphdeeds.hubpages.com/hub/Social-Security-Reform-by-Ralph-Deeds>

"If a free society cannot help the many who are poor, it cannot save the few who are rich."

Those words were spoken by John F. Kennedy. Last year, the U.S. Census Bureau released new poverty figures. The result of a new measurement system, these figures put the number of people in poverty in America at 50 million, a jump of three million people, about three times the population of Rhode Island. This is a disturbing development made even more troubling by the lack of media coverage and public outcry in its wake. The economy may be improving, but America is changing profoundly, and quite possibly, not for the better.

While the latest poverty figures can be looked at as just another consequence of the Great Recession, the fact is that this downturn has unmasked a grim economic reality for most Americans. The last decade was, at best, a chimera of "happy days are here again." The rich did get richer, but so many more lost ground. In terms of income growth, a squeezed and stressed Middle Class hung on for dear life by turning their homes into ATM machines as the poor remained mired at the bottom of the economic ladder. Yes, it's good to be the king. For the rest, not so much.

Yet, what are the solutions offered by conservatives now? Basically, it's all a variation on the theme of trickle-down economics - the notion that by cutting taxes for the rich, they'll hire more groundskeepers and buy more yachts, and that the rest will benefit from the increased job opportunities to collect lawn clippings and scrap barnacles off the hulls. Trickle-down theory is right in one respect - it does produce a rising

tide - of debt both for Americans and American government. And what is the Right's remedy for dealing with the federal debt their policies helped create? Shred the social safety net! As if Social Security, Medicare/Medicaid and Food Stamps by themselves got the U.S. into this mess. Let's save the argument that tax cuts for the rich, two wars and the expansion of the prescription drug benefit are the chief culprits for another time. The more urgent question today is how to preserve, if not strengthen, the safety net at a time of continued economic duress for many Americans? In other words, how can the U.S. be hard-headed without being hard-hearted?

Since the Reagan Administration, the Right has demonized poverty, pitted rich against poor and basically promoted an Ayn Randian philosophy of "I got mine. So, the heck with everyone else." How many of the Religious Right who spout this fantasy of the hard-working, wealth-producing elite versus undeserving, tax-dollar sapping underclass realize that Ayn Rand was an unabashed atheist!? The real and lasting way to reduce welfare costs is to reduce the number of people who need welfare in the first place - by providing a real hand up rather a swift kick to their supposedly couch-loving keisters!

In Brazil, for example, Bolsa Familia, a conditional cash transfer program, has been very successful in reducing poverty. If a family's income is below a threshold that can provide a minimum standard of living, they must follow the program's mandates - like regular doctor visits for the kids and looking for work - in exchange for assistance. The program is not a hand-out. It is a hand up so people can eventually make it

on their own and leave the welfare rolls behind.

I propose a couple of key initiatives to help individuals and families:

First, a program modeled off Bolsa Familia to help the poor. Conditional cash transfer programs have been very successful in other countries too, not just Brazil. It really is not a complicated matter. Give the poor and near-poor money and they spend it on food, shelter and other basics. This not only helps recipients but is a shot in the arm for the local community too. Give the rich tax cuts and they hoard it. Although, the yacht dealers might not agree. Remember, the key word here is conditional. There are strings attached to these payments and the expectation that self-sufficiency will be achieved.

Secondly, while the elderly on the whole have fared better than most through the Great Recession, poorer Social Security recipients are hurting very badly. Poverty rates among the elderly are increasing. Congress has not authorized any cost of living adjustments since before 2009 and is now planning only a token increase this year. Yet, costs for medical care, food, gas and other staples continue to escalate. For many senior citizens, Social Security is their primary, if not only, source of income. FDR proposed Social Security so we could guarantee our grandparents a decent standard of living. It would be a national disgrace to backpedal on that promise now.

Lastly, we should have unemployment benefits people can actually live on. With the economy only now showing a few sparks of life and still on the precipice of falling back into recession, we must provide a

standard of support that keeps people in their homes and food on their table when they experience prolonged unemployment. Again, benefits must be conditional, but our current system is inadequate to the demands of a society still hobbled by economic adversity.

The United States, despite

"FDR proposed Social Security so we could guarantee our grandparents a decent standard of living. It would be a national disgrace to backpedal on that promise now."

its current condition, is far from a society where the haves should fear the have not's. It's much too early to speculate when we are likely to arrive at such a state. But, it is time to ask why we aren't moving decidedly towards a truly just and equitable economic system. This is not about punishing the rich or begrudging them their success. Rather, the interests of the rich are well-served by a system that gives people hope and a real shot to climb the economic ladder. When you are busy building your own home, you are too busy to notice the other guy's mansion.

Let's save the rich - we need them to pay more taxes anyway, but can't we save the poor too?

Tony Montgomery ON GOP CANDIDATES

Continued from page 1

Although optimists might be attempted to spin this as a testament to Romney's resiliency as a candidate, the fact of the matter is that Republicans – and in particular, conservatives – are just not eager about getting behind Romney. And with due reason – he comes across as disconnected and distant, his rhetoric is stuffy, his gesticulations robotic, and his policy stances are liable to shift at the drop of a hat.

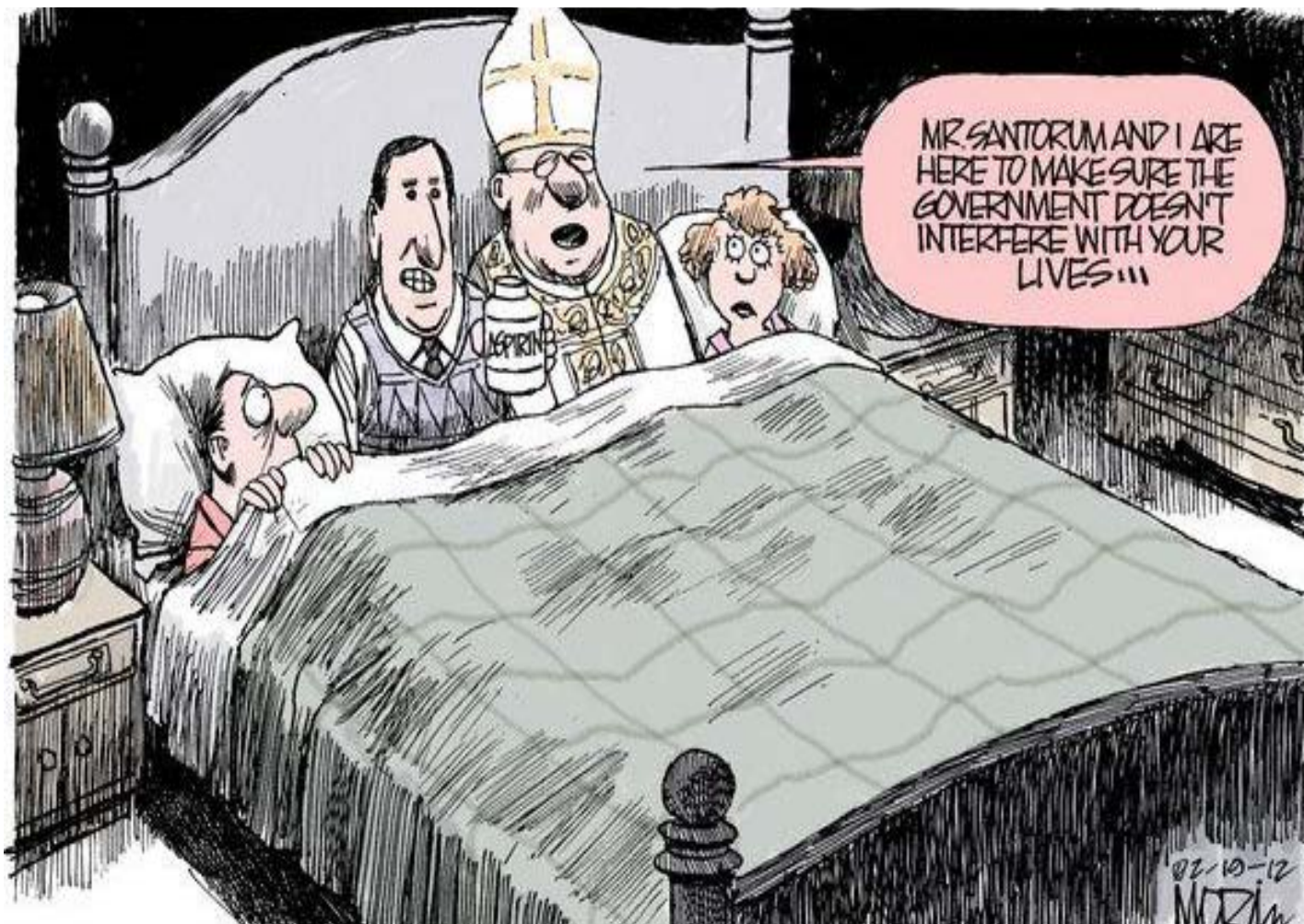
Let us not forget that in 2008, John McCain was seen as the moderate while Mike Huckabee was portrayed as the authentic conservative Washington outsider that could be counted on to stay true to his convictions if elected to higher office. However, given the panicked state that the Republican establishment found itself in following two hideous terms of He-Who-Must-Not-Be-Named, they quickly pivoted their support to the perceived moderate in McCain in hopes of fielding a candidate that could compete with Barack Obama for the independent vote.

More importantly, however, is the tremendous amount of personality overlap between Romney and Obama. Both come across as intellectual wonkish types, both prefer to adopt the tone of a lecturing professor over that of the fire-breathing activist when making speeches or participating in debates, and both are altogether too eager to paint themselves as moderates capable of crossing the aisle and getting things done. Although Rick Santorum is something of a running joke in progressive circles, the enthusiasm and excitement that he's generating within the conservative evangelical base is



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real - and should he snatch victories



in Michigan and/or Arizona, social conservatives will begin to smell blood in the water. He is the political nadir to Obama's zenith - I'd much rather see the President run against a battered Romney as opposed to a streaking Santorum. To be fair, Romney isn't painting himself as a moderate at the moment – Rick Santorum's 13th Century Crusade Extravaganza is seeing to it that Mittens is forced to veer right during primary season – but mark my words, if and when Mitt Romney seals up the nomination (and it's really starting to look like he will – thank you, Citizens United) he will immediately sprint back to the center.

This current GOP field of candidates is historically terrible – and that's according to Republican voters, by the way. Levels of dissatisfaction within the party are at an historic high; making it impossible for the party to coalesce around a singular candidate early in order to focus their sights on Obama. The longer this primary draws on, the worse shape the Republican Party will be in come November. God forbid we end up with a brokered convention – that sort of unease and uncertainty within the party would almost certainly spell victory for Obama in November.

You can bet your bottom dollar on the 2016 GOP field being immensely more composed and electable than the clown car of candidates that have been trotted forth over the

course of the last year. Marco Rubio, Chris Christie, Tim Pawlenty, Mitch Daniels, Jeb Bush, and Jon Huntsman are virtual locks to compete; and almost all of them are more qualified and personable than any candidate in the current Republican field right now. I also think it's safe to say that whomever the Democrats decide to nominate as their successor to Obama (knock on wood) will not be nearly the statesman, politician or public speaker that Mr. 44 is.

So I'm thinking to myself... why waste the crazy lunatic nominee right now? (With all due respect to the former Senator; anyone running on a social issues platform that makes Leave it to Beaver look like RuPaul's Drag Race is worthy of derision at any and all opportunities.) If Romney wins the nomination but loses the general; that would make two consecutive elections in which the GOP put forth the "best" candidate instead of the "right" or "genuine" candidate and lost. Does anyone really think that the furious right wing of the Grand Old Party is just going to shut it down and go home for that election? Consider the implications that a twelve-year ownership of the White

House could have in terms of permanently changing the dialogue of our country toward a more progressive tilt. Or, more practically, think about how the balance of the Supreme Court

could be tilted based on the nominees put forth by a different president. We're immensely fortunate (in my opinion) that we had a Democrat in President Obama to nominate two relatively liberal judges in Sotomayor and Kagan – and even so, the balance of the court is still 5-4.

I love everyone within the progressive community; particularly at Cornell: ecofeminists and equal rights activists, labor advocates and law students, DREAMers and social democrats. For all our sakes, I believe it is vitally important that we continue to elect local politicians, state Representatives and ultimately Presidents that will either fight for our causes or – at the very least – contribute toward the creation of a more liberal political climate under which our issues and concerns can be more effectively and thoroughly addressed.

So until the GOP primary ends, you can consider me...ugh...smitten for Mittens.

CP

ON THE 2012 ELECTIONS Ian Cohen

A Bit of Truth for a Primary Season Already Drowning

What you may know implicitly but what I want to tell you explicitly is something very important for all of us to understand: Just about everything politicians say or promise is crap.

I'm going to repeat that so you can all soak it in. Everything politicians say is grade A crap. Now I don't mean to put down what I, and many other government majors, will insist is the noble human endeavor of governing. On this subject, conservative commentator Charles Krauthammer said, "Politics — in all its grubby, grasping, corrupt, contemptible manifestations — is sovereign in human affairs. Everything ultimately rests upon it" ("Are we all alone in the Universe?" - Washington Post). And though I may find Krauthammer's views often somewhat repugnant, on this point he remains brilliantly succinct. When I say that our politicians are bullshit artists, I do not mean to put down politics in general. It is, nevertheless, true and therefore we must remember

to take every bit of rhetoric with a rather large grain of salt, regardless of party. That bit is important.

Given our present condition as a country/world, a present condition that no doubt will affect us all in ways we may not entirely conceive now, there is precious little a Republican or Democrat can offer you that will solve a damn thing, especially as long as they won't work together. Liberal Democrats are trying to get the base fired up with talk of ever-increasing social inequality (which of course can be magically fixed by getting the rich to pay their "fair" share of taxes). Conservative Republicans are firing up their base with talk of President Obama's wars on business, free enterprise, Jesus, marriage, apple pie, and anything else that can best be described as "AMERICAN!"

But let's face the truth that I'm sure we've all known all along but that needs to be said. Democrats are lying when they insinuate that taxing the wealthy a little extra will solve the budget deficit crisis. Taxing

the wealthy a little extra might indeed add some (and considering the magnitude of our national debt/deficits, "some" is the operative word) federal revenue, might make the income gap between the wealthy and the working class a bit smaller, but it will not overnight solve our problems and in the meantime might just create more political unrest and tension in the American public. In addition, the Democrats want to increase spending on or somehow reform programs that we all believe matter (education, infrastructure, etc), while simultaneously not attacking systemic problems in the federal budget that were originally their creations (Social Security and Medicare). To say that these programs do not require any changes... is bullshit. But that's just the democrats' problem.

Anyone intelligent knows that Obama isn't actually waging a war on capitalism or Christianity; the Republicans' more-intricate policy arguments, however, are equally as ridiculous. Romney

and Santorum both are tout- n g a relatively Reaganesque Supply Side economic plan for the country: cut taxes disproportionately for the wealthy, more money is saved and invested, jobs spring up out of the ground through the fertilizer of low-taxes and the seeds of job-creators.



What seems to be the overarching theme in politics today is...our parties and politicians don't want to admit the truth of our situation.

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ON LIFE SCIENCES Randy Wayne and T. Colin Campbell

For-Profit Science Affecting Cornell

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If we teach students to think critically, to explore assumptions, and in so doing, they lose faith in the authority of scientific results, especially those paid for by various industries or by acts of Congress whose members were lobbied by various industries, we may not churn out the type of consumers our corporate sponsors expect. Look at the life science classes still in the course catalog. Ask yourself whose interests they serve? Do they serve the interests of the monocultural pharmaceutical, agrochemical, and agricultural giants like Pfizer, Monsanto, and those represented by the American Dairy Council? Do they serve the interests of the students in their quest to design and build their future, to learn about themselves, their place in the world, the value and limitations of science and technology, or how to live an ethical life? While corporations and the organizations mentioned above have

their value, the life sciences curriculum at a tax-exempt university must not be limited by their priorities.

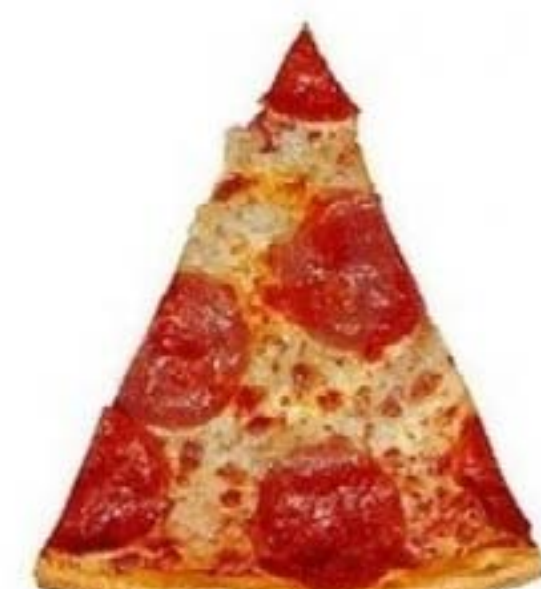
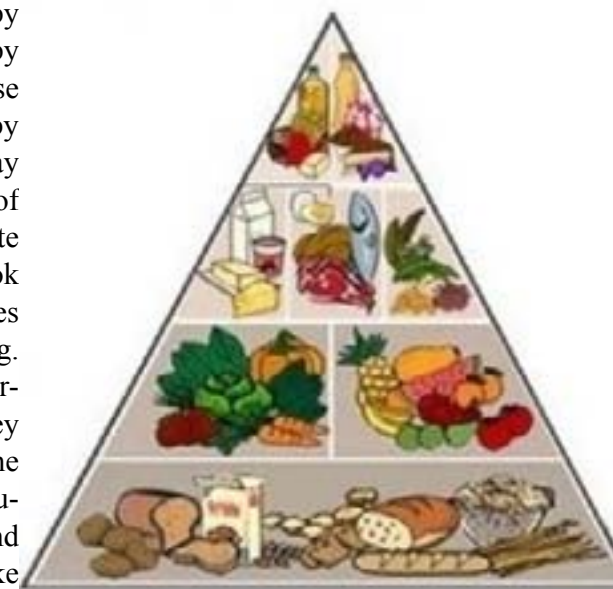
Richard Levins and Richard Lewontin assert that "The commoditization of science... is the dominant

of our unfreedom." By adopting the "DNA to Dinner" and "Bench to Bedside" approach to quickly translate marketable research to the general public, universities not only develop commodities in the form of

cal and critical thinking must not be marginalized by corporate thinking. According to Carl Leopold, "Concerns about ethics traditionally have been in the realm of the humanities, not in science. And as science has

grown almost to the point of dominating academic communities, discussions of ethical matters have become increasingly rare."

We shall continue to fight for a science that is indifferent to profit as it serves mankind, to fight for a science that reveals the nature of the world, and to fight for a university true to its tax-exempt status. We are speaking truth to power at many levels. Do you honestly believe, along with a majority of the members of congress who fund life science research that the presence of tomato paste allows pizza to be classified as a vegetable? We, as a botanist and a nutritionist, cannot go along with this one either.



CLOSE ENOUGH

http://4.bp.blogspot.com/-VeenLGOu-tk/TsrpQq2NirI/AAAAAAAAAAG49UIHCwRZ-UI/s1600/small_pizza-is-a-vegetable.jpg

fact of life for scientific activity and a pervasive influence on the thinking of scientists. To deny its relevance is to remain subject to its power, while the first step toward freedom is to acknowledge the dimensions

products but commoditize their students. Students come to Cornell to develop skills in critical thinking in order to become wise and responsible leaders, not mere consumers. At least this is what we think. Ethical

classified as a vegetable? We, as a botanist and a nutritionist, cannot go along with this one either.

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Andrew Martins ON LIBERTARIANISM

The Appeal of Libertarianism

Lately, when I speak to my friends about American politics the word libertarianism time and time again has sprung up. Libertarianism, as defined by Wikipedia, “is generally used to describe political philosophies which emphasize freedom, individual liberty, and voluntary association. Libertarians generally advocate a society with small or no government power.” In a consumer society such as the one we find ourselves in, it is understandable that people are beginning to notice the coercive pressures that exist all around them; humans tend towards freedom and in many subtle, yet meaningful ways our society is very far from free. In my opinion, libertarianism is arguably American conservatism’s best hope with younger generations precisely because it allows a way of expressing many of the social and cultural aspects of our society within a conservative, individualist framework. This is not to say that I am a libertarian, but simply that I understand its appeal and anticipate its future prominence in American conservatism.

of individual liberty i.e. the freedom from something as opposed to the freedom to do something) as opposed to an outright talking point. That transitional period is either already upon us or fast approaching. The reason why I believe libertarianism can make inroads within younger generations is due to the incompatibility of 20th century American conservatism with the social and cultural inclinations of our generation.

Twentieth-century American conservatism emphasized much on cultural and social issues and continues to do so to this very day. The talk of values and morals still resonates with much of America, but the story is a bit different for our generation. What is and is not socially acceptable in our society is quite different than that of our parents or grandparents; think of the performances of a Madonna/Britney Spears or Nicki Minaj if you need an example. The permissive, damn-near-anything goes culture

of today simply does not gel with the value set of a Nixon or Reagan Republican; therefore, unless conservatism dies with the baby boomers where then will conservatism come from in our generation and beyond? The answer lies with the marriage of libertarian ideals with laissez-faire capitalism; a veritable ideological match made in heaven.

Although much attention is paid to the Republican party’s emphasis on social issues because of their evangelical constituency, the true hallmark of the party is that of business, specifically and laissez-faire capitalism in a general sense. Whether directly or indirectly most conservative platforms rest upon either the motto of self-reliance or the belief that less market regulation will solve all the problems that we face as a country; whether or not that is right is another story all together. These two things are all that are necessary to keep conservatism alive in America

because they are at the heart of the worldview that guides the conservative philosophy. Libertarianism provides such a combination because it rejects the intrusion on personal liberty that many social and religious issues routinely commit while keeping the individualist ethos that is featured so prominently in American culture/history. It is here that I believe libertarianism has its shining moment because it is precisely this facet of it that will help to re-brand conservatism to younger generations. This is not a reason to disregard the role of religion and social norms in the current Republican electorate, but as these things become less and less prominent in our cultural and social experiences I believe that conservatives need to find a way to make their worldview compatible with that of younger generations. The question that progressives should be asking of themselves at this moment is not “how do we stop this?” but rather “how do we provide a better, alternate framework for this generation?” It is only by providing a coherent socio-economic/political framework can the American Left hope to cement its place within the consciousness of this generation and in the governance of the world of the future.

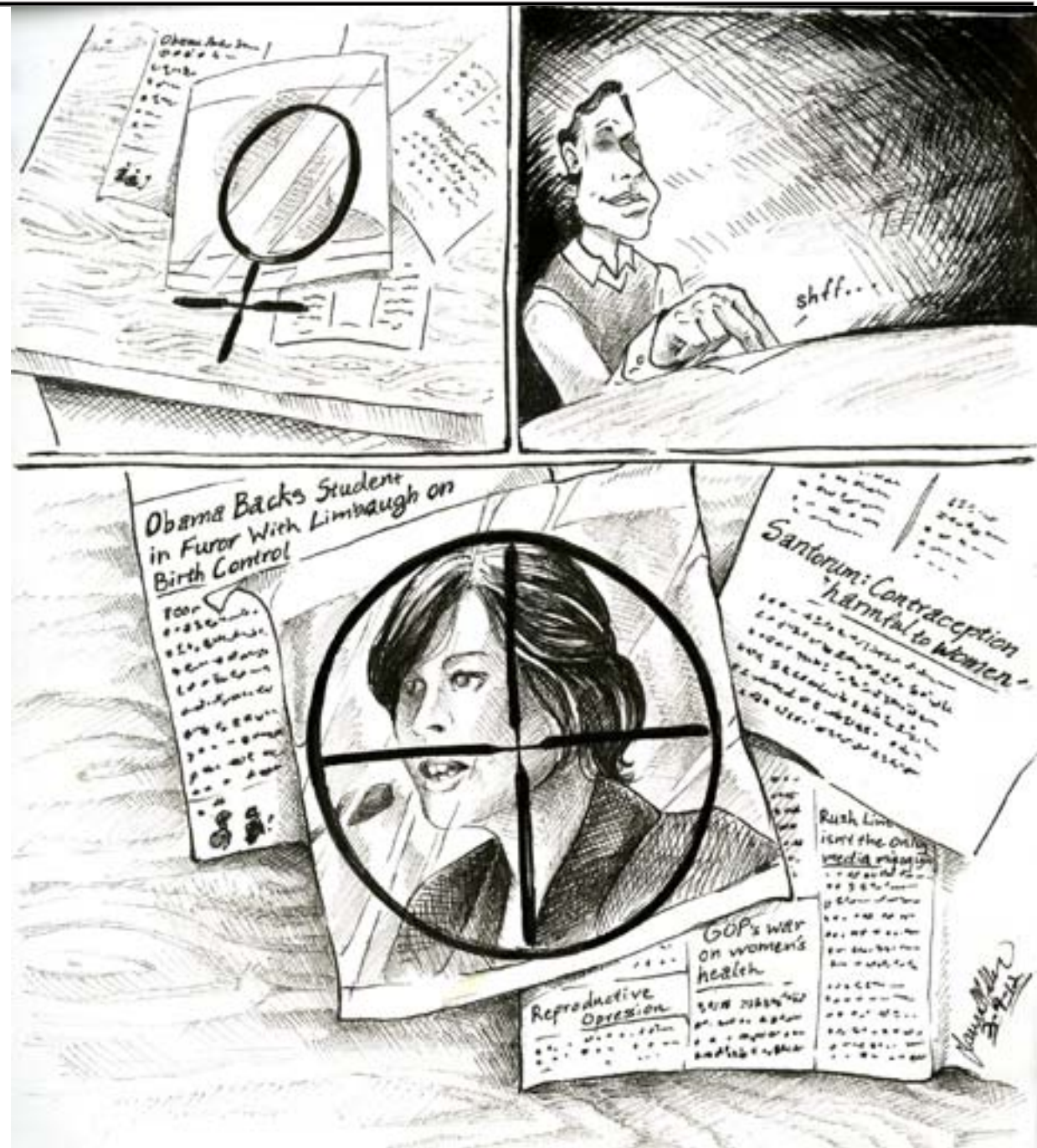
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“The reason why I believe libertarianism can make inroads within younger generations is due to the incompatibility of 20th century American conservatism with the social and cultural inclinations of our generation.”

It is obvious from the aforementioned Wiki definition of libertarianism that it is already one of the metaphysical underpinnings of American conservatism; however, it has always been a matter of principle (emphasis on small government, the heavy stress on a negative conception

The War on Women

By Laura Miller



Myanmar’s Suddenly Reforming Political Landscape

By JONATHAN YUAN

The mere sight of Aung San Suu Kyi speaking to supporters would have been unimaginable a mere year ago; now, it has become reality in Myanmar again. Myanmar’s military junta-controlled government, led under new President Thein Sein, has announced its decision to hold by-elections on April 1st, and even more astonishingly, has allowed Ms. Suu Kyi’s party, the National League for Democracy, to participate.

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This surprising decision is one of several recent Burmese governmental decisions to reform its political system and more broadly, its political image to the rest of the world. Based on the military junta’s (officially recognized as the Union Solidarity and Development Party, previously as the State Peace and Development Council) repressive and oftentimes violent past, it can be safely concluded that there must be some underlying reasoning

behind its sudden turn to political reformation – it simply cannot rest wholly in a change-of-heart. Ultimately, the political reformations may be the government’s desperate final attempts at restoring its stagnant economy to its once-vibrant state.

According to the World Factbook, Myanmar has been growing at a rate of around two-three percent annually, much lower than many of its Southeast Asian counterparts. The percentage of its economy dedicated to both industry and agriculture has remained virtually unchanged since the late 1930’s. Apart from the poor leadership of the Burmese government, some of the biggest contributors to this economic stagnation are the economic sanctions that many European nations, the United States, and Canada have imposed onto the country due to its human rights injustices. Myanmar’s main goal with its political liberalization could be to garner the respects of the Western democratized world and ultimately have these economic sanctions lifted.

In doing so, the Burmese government recognizes that it holds perhaps the most politically resonating pawn in terms of its relations with the democratic world – Nobel Peace Prize winner Aung San Suu Kyi. Her significance in Burmese democratic efforts have resulted in her multiple house arrests, which have totaled around 15 years of the past two decades. Any mention of her name was banned in the press and in society until very recently in November 2010 when she was released from house arrest. This seemingly sudden political decision was not without a logical ba-

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sis though – the Burmese government believed that now could finally be the time to use Ms. Suu Kyi’s political influence for its own economic benefit.

Although he has not been able to get the Western-imposed economic sanctions on Myanmar lifted yet, President Thein Sein’s reforms have indicated to the world that politically, Myanmar is changing. By liberalizing Burmese politics and legitimizing Aung San Suu Kyi and her National League for Democracy, Thein Sein hopes to ultimately reconnect Myanmar to the IMF, the World Bank or other sources of international finance. The real concern of whether or not these democratic re-

forms will be lasting is still anyone’s guess. Even Suu Kyi herself has recently said, “I would like the military to cooperate with us in building democracy in Burma – It’s not a matter of relinquishing anything, but of joining in our efforts.” In doing so, she inherently acknowledges the lasting political influence of the military.

Myanmar desperately hopes to reach the economic levels of at least its Southeast Asian counterparts and as *The Economist* states, “If prisoners must be freed to get sanctions lifted, so be it.”

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Source: <http://www.thefamouspeople.com/profiles/aung-san-suu-kyi-11.php>

Everything Politicians Say is Bulls***

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The problem with this logic is the economic reality that every new problem requires a new solution. We aren’t living in the year 1980 and we are most definitely not experiencing a crisis of supply – we know corporations are doing just fine (just look at the Dow Jones Industrial Average). Supply Side economic policies will have little effect on a country experiencing a lack of demand on the side of consumers. This is just another example of Republicans making conservatism a religion rather than a basic view of governing. It used to be about fiscal discipline, using government to do things that worked and were necessary, and leaving everything else to free enterprise. Now, if you aren’t for tax cuts in any situation no matter what, you are a “Republican in Name Only.” If you aren’t for spending cuts to solve any prob-

lem, you aren’t even a Republican, let alone a conservative (someone should have told that to Mitt Romney before he recently went off spouting basic macroeconomic orthodoxy on the potential detriments of massive government spending cuts).

Professor Uri Possen, former Chair of the Economics Department, said, “They don’t want to raise taxes. So therefore, if we have increasing government expenditures we will have increasing deficits, even though if we raised taxes AND government expenditures, we could expand the economy and not have the negative effect [of increasing deficits].” The truth remains that under Obama’s deficits (due to increases in government spending and much larger decreases in tax revenue), we have seen the unemployment rate drop to 8.3% from 10%, which is fairly good considering the condition of the economy post-financial crisis. To

keep things in perspective, in 1982, during the second year of Reagan’s administration, unemployment was 10.8%. By the end of his administration, unemployment was 5% ... and the public debt had ballooned to 40% of GDP due to government stimulus.

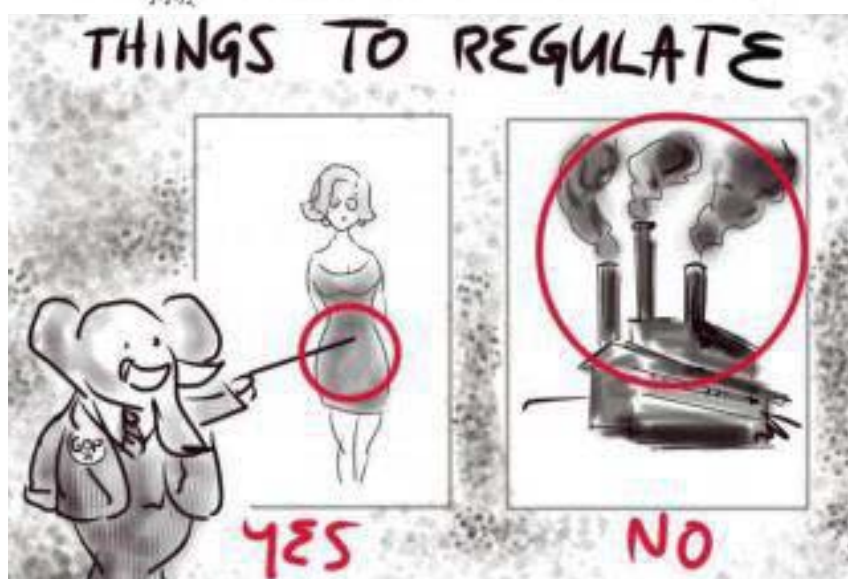
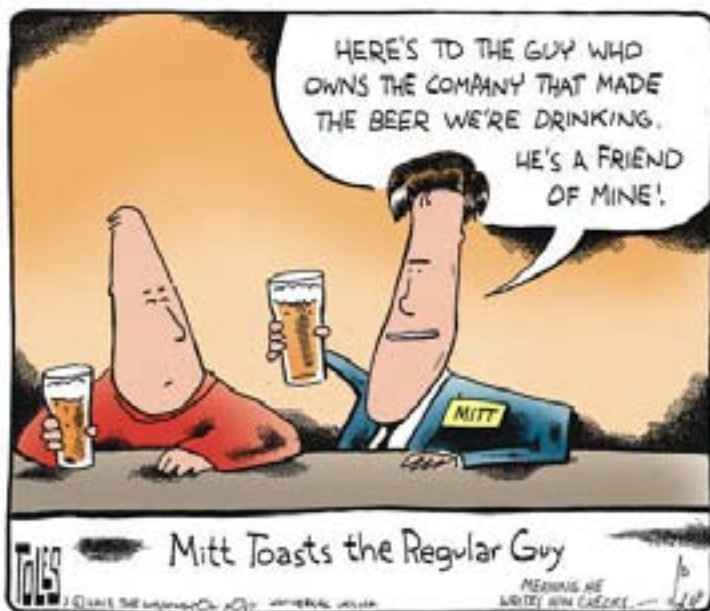
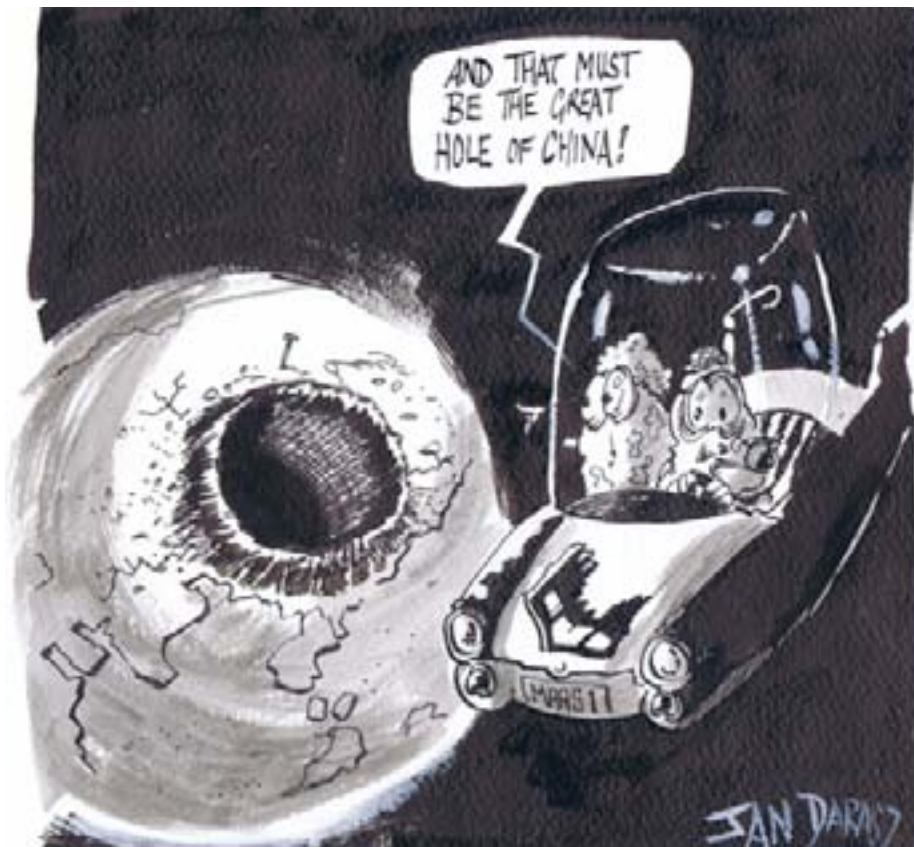
I don’t know what the answers are to our particular economic problem. What I can say for sure is cutting enormous amounts of spending out of the economy while cutting taxes on people that don’t spend their money will not encourage corporations to invest in jobs in the US of A. Neither will encouraging people not to attend college, as Rick Santorum did on Saturday, referring to colleges as “indoctrination mills,” or defending unsustainable entitlement programs, as the Democrats have through the last four years.

What seems to be the overarching theme in our politics today, as has likely always been the case,

is our parties and politicians don’t want to admit the truth of our situation. Either they are clinging to old party lines or outdated ideological beliefs that simply do not fit today, or they purposely spread lies because the truth wouldn’t garner votes. In either case, it’s a load of crap and I suggest we don’t listen to them. If we could, I’d suggest not voting for them – although that doesn’t usually get anywhere far. If we do nothing, however, and allow them to continue propagating myths while we eat it up and vote, we are consigning ourselves to stagnation in the face of problems we already knew existed and never wanted to solve. We might just have to deal with consistent 8% inflation or worse. We might have to deal with a crisis of public finance when China decides to finally stop lending to us (and trust me, friends, that will not be a pretty day).

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The LAST LAUGH



According to exit polls, Mitt Romney is struggling with voters who call themselves very conservative. However, Mitt is doing great with voters who describe themselves as being 'totally freaked out by Rick-Santorum'

-Conan O'Brien

Evidently, voters really responded to his campaign slogan: 'Putin 2012 -- Or He'll Shoot Your Family!'

-Stephen Colbert

I thought the election was gonna be all about the economy. But the economy started doing better. So Republicans went to plan b: calling women whores.

-Bill Maher

Mitt Romney's been out on the campaign trail even though he's suffering from a terrible cold. I'm not surprised he's sick. It's very unsanitary to keep putting your foot in your mouth like that.

-Craig Ferguson

Rick Santorum 'slipped the knockout punch!' 'Knockout punch,' by the way, is what Rush Limbaugh slips his dates.

-Stephen Colbert

Mitt Romney just barely won the Republican primary in Ohio by 1%. ...Then Romney made the mistake of saying, 'Ladies and gentlemen, tonight is a victory for the 1%!'

-Conan O'Brien

Rick Santorum is saying the kids that go to college are snobs. Rick Santorum has a new program for children. It's called Every Child Left Behind.

-David Letterman