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The Real Contest Begins

BY ROBERT B. REICH

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Tribune Media Services

'Our biggest problems over the next 10 years are not deficits," President Obama told House Republicans last week, according to those who attended the meeting

The president needs to deliver the same message to the public, loudly and clearly. The biggest problems we face are unemployment, stagnant wages, slow growth and widening inequality - not deficits. The major goal must be to get jobs and wages back, not balance the budget.

Rep. Paul Ryan's budget plan is designed to lure the White House and Democrats, and the American public, into a debate over how to balance the federal budget in 10 years, not over whether it's worth doing.

'This is an invitation," Ryan explained when he unveiled the plan last week. "Show us how to balance the budget. If you don't like the way we're proposing to balance our budget, how do you propose to balance the budget?

Until now, the president has seemed all too willing to engage in that debate. His ongoing talk of a "grand bargain" to reduce the budget deficit has played directly into Republican hands. As has his repeated use of the Republican analogy comparing the government's fi-nances to a household's. "Just as families and businesses must tighten their belts to live within their means," he said of his 2013 budget, "so must the federal government."

Hopefully, he's now shifting the debate. The government's finances are not at all like a household's. In fact, it's when American families can't spend enough to keep the economy going, because too many of them are unemployed or underemployed and have run out of money, that government has to step in as spender of last resort — even if that means taking on more debt.

If government doesn't fill the spending gap, an economy can collapse into deeper recession or depression, pushing unemployment far higher. Look at what austerity economics has done to Europe.

In addition, it's perfectly fine for government to borrow and continue to borrow in order to invest in new

roads or other infrastructure, or education, or basic research - when those investments pay off in higher rates of economic growth.

The notion that government spending "crowds out" private investment, keeping interest rates higher than otherwise, is obsolete in a global economy

where capital sloshes across national borders. seeking the highest returns from anywhere.

Societies that invest in the productivity of their people attract global capital and create high-paying jobs. And since most big corporations are no longer dependent on the productivity of any one nation, the responsibility for making such investments increasingly falls to government.

Not that we should disregard the debt altogether, but the best way to deal with it is to do so gradually, through economic growth. That's how we reduced the giant debt Franklin D. Roosevelt bequeathed America, and it's how the Clinton administration (of which I am proud to have been a member) achieved a balanced budget in 1996.

Republicans want Americans to believe government budgets are like family budgets that must be balanced, because the analogy helps their ideological aim to "drown (the government) in the bathtub," in the memorable words of their guru, Grover Norquist.

As long as there's a debt and balance is the goal, shrinkage is the only option — if tax increases are ruled

out At last the president wants to change the debate and focus on the real economic problem. In an interview last week with George Stephanopoulos that got less attention than it deserved, he said, "My goal is not to chase a balanced budget just for the sake of balance. My goal is how do we grow the economy, put people back to work, and if we do that we are going to be bringing in more revenue.

Let the real contest begin.

Robert Reich, former U.S. Secretary of Labor, is professor of public policy at the University of California at Berkeley and the author of "Aftershock: The Next Economy and America's Future." He blogs at www.robertreich.org.

THE PRESS DAKOTAN

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OPINION | OUR VIEW

Lessons On The Qualities Of Courage

e've been thinking a lot lately about the quality of courage and the willingness to fearlessly try to do what must be done. It is a supremely admirable trait, even if the tales of courage do not always have good endings.

A shocking example occurred last Thursday in Sioux Falls, when two people died in an attempt to save a small boy who had fallen into the frigid, turbulent Big Sioux River. One of the victims was 16year-old Madison Wallace of Vermillion, who leapt into the water in an effort to save her 6-year-old brother who had fallen into the river. The other victim was Lyle Eagletail, 28, of Sioux Falls, who was a bystander when the young boy went in. Both Wallace and Eagletail gave their lives in an effort to save the child, who did survive the incident, although authorities said it was not clear whether the actions of the two rescuers were what actually saved the boy.

Ultimately, it doesn't matter, for what does matter was the almost unthinking and selfless acts that led Wallace and Eagletail into the water in order to save a life.

The losses of these two souls is tragic, unspeakably sad and painful. And yet, they serve as examples, however grim, of the momentous courage

that everyday people summon sometimes in extraordinary situations. For Wallace, the courage sprang from the reflex of trying to save her kid brother.

For Eagletail, the courage propelled him to try to save a person who, as far as we know, was a stranger to him.

These were amazing acts of valor, albeit with tragic results.

Ultimately, family and friends are left grieving. In our immediate area, Wallace's death has left a painful vacuum in Vermillion that will not easily be filled.

But these acts shall not be dismissed, either. Wallace and Eagletail are examples of the best of us. That may be the best tribute that can be said of anyone. We were also reminded of another example of courage this week when this

newspaper did a profile on Yankton veteran Corey Briest, who was severely wounded in a 2005 roadside attack in Iraq. His experiences and travails have been well documented, and the former soldier stands as a heroic example for us all.

But his life and the lives of his wife, Jenny, and their family have not been easy in the years since. The Briests have been fighters: fighting to get back some semblance of the life they had before, fighting for the rights of wounded soldiers, fighting a bureaucracy that sometimes moves at a snail's pace, fighting the pain and the obstacles that life and war have dealt to this family.

Their story is also a story of courage. It was not only Corey's courage to go to war, but also the courage to fight through the wounds and fight for a sense of normalcy. The Briests have shown us many times over the courage, as well as the strength, to live and fight on. It has been a long and taxing battle, but every day is a victory and a validation.

We can learn a lot from these cases. While the stories of Wallace, Eagletail and Briest differ greatly in details and scope, they all share the same elements of courage. Their actions offer us a message and a challenge. They dare each of us to show such great courage if needed, to strive for it and to live with it. We would all be better people if we could tap into their energies. That much today is guite clear.

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lapsed as the state Senate adjourned with-

out taking up a measure calling for a

do-over contest. (Michigan had held an

early primary in January 2008 in violation of Democratic Party rules, and was

stripped of its delegates as a result.) Mao

Asada of Japan won the women's title at the World Figure Skating Championships in Goteborg, Sweden.

ney won the Illinois Republican primary with ease, routing Rick Santorum for his

third big-state win in a row. A 7.4-magni-

tude earthquake in Mexico damaged hun-

dreds of homes and killed at least two

people near the border between Guerrero

and Oaxaca states. Army linebacker An-

drew Rodriguez won the James E. Sullivan

Award, given by the Amateur Athletic

Union to the top amateur athlete in the

Lynn is 96. Producer-director-comedian Carl Reiner is 91. Actor Hal Linden is 82.

Former Canadian prime minister Brian

Mulroney is 74. Country singer Don Ed-

wards is 74. TV producer Paul Junger Witt

is 70. Country singer-musician Ranger

Doug (Riders in the Sky) is 67. Hockey

Hall-of-Famer Bobby Orr is 65. Blues

singer-musician Marcia Ball is 64. Actor William Hurt is 63. Rock musician Carl

Palmer (Emerson, Lake and Palmer) is 63.

Rock musician Jimmie Vaughan is 62.

Country musician Jimmy Seales (Shenan-

doah) is 59. Actress Amy Aquino is 56.

Movie director Spike Lee is 56. Actress

Theresa Russell is 56. Actress Vanessa

Bell Calloway is 56. Actress Holly Hunter is

55. Rock musician Slim Jim Phantom (The

Stray Cats) is 52. Actress-model-designer

Kathy Ireland is 50. Actor David Thewlis is

50. Rock musician Adrian Oxaal (James) is 48. Actress Liza Snyder is 45. Actor

Michael Rapaport is 43. Actor Alexander

Chaplin is 42. Rock singer Chester Ben-nington (Linkin Park) is 37. Actor Michael

Genadry is 35. Actress Bianca Lawson is

34. Rock musician Nick Wheeler (The All-

American Rejects) is 31. Actress-singer

Christy Carlson Romano is 29. **Thought for Today:** "I am I plus my cir-cumstances." — Jose Ortega y Gasset,

Spanish philosopher (1883-1955)

Today's Birthdays: Singer Dame Vera

United States.

One year ago: Front-runner Mitt Rom-

Melissa Bader Derek Bartos Brett Beyeler Cassandra Brockmoller into Iraq from the south and U.S. and British forces bombed limited targets in Baghdad. Rob Buckingham Randy Dockendorf The start of war in Iraq triggered one of the Ieannine Economy heaviest days of anti-government protest-Jeremy Hoeck ing in years, leading to thousands of arrests across the United States and prompting Nathan Johnson pro-war counter-demonstrations. Muriel Pratt Five years ago: In a setback for Demo-Sheldon Reed crat Hillary Rodham Clinton, a drive for a second Michigan presidential primary col-Noelle Schlechter

Robert REICH

Bystanders To The Rape Of Decency

BY KATHLEEN PARKER

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NEW YORK — The recent rape conviction of two teenagers, one of whom also distributed a photo and sent cruel text messages about their victim, has captured the 'bystander effect" in graphic and nauseating detail.

The bystander effect is the psychological term coined after Kitty Genovese was raped and murdered outside her New York apartment building in 1964. As the story unfolded, neighbors ignored her screams during three attacks over a 30-minute period.

This rendition of events was later disputed. Apparently, the configuration of apartments was such that no one could see the entire series of events. Despite different accounts, at least some of the people in her building were aware that a woman was being attacked and none came to her rescue.

The horror of the crime was magnified by this apparent lack of interest, leading to studies that produced the bystander effect theory. Researchers discovered that the more people who witness something, the less likely any are to respond. When several witnesses are present, people tend to assume that someone else will jump in — or make the call — or they think that, since no one else is taking action, there really isn't a problem.

In the recent rape case, where two Ohio high school football players were convicted of assaulting a 16-year-old girl from West Virginia while she was too drunk to give consent (one of her attackers described her in a text message as "like a dead body"), not only were there witnesses but dozens of other teens were privy to what happened through postings to social media. In no time, a 16-yearold's humiliation went viral.

Once again, the horror of what happened to a victim has been magnified by the apparent lack of empathy among her peers. Not only has the girl been physically violated, but the psychological effects of her public exposure are unimaginable and likely will be enduring.

Much has been said about how social media helped solve this crime. Through texts, videos, photographs, and posts on Twitter and Facebook, police were able to piece together a timeline and document what happened. This history is posited as one of the marvels of social media.

What hasn't been addressed is the factor of social media in the events themselves. If the bystander effect prevented people in 1964 from coming to the aid of Kitty Genovese, what might we expect from this and future generations, technologically equipped with devices that by definition place one in the role of dispassionate observer?

With a cellphone in every pocket, it has become second nature for most people to snap a picture or tap the video button at the slightest provocation — a baby's gig-

gle, a fallen tree or, just possibly, a drunk girl stripped naked by boys who don't think twice. Over time, might the marginalizing effect of bystander detachment impede any impulse to empathy?

Endowed with miraculous gadgetry and fingertip technology that allow reflex to triumph over reason, millions of young people today have the power to parlay information without the commensurate responsibility that comes with age, experience and, inevitably, pain.

The ease of cellphone photography and videography promotes a certain removal from circumstances, thrusting all into the bystander mode that leads to a massive shirking of responsibility and perhaps even a lack of cognitive awareness of one's own part in the moment.

One of the most famous photographs of all time, by AP photographer Eddie Adams, showed Vietnamese Gen. Nguyen Ngoc Loan shooting Viet Cong operative Nguyen Van Lem in the head. Adams grieved for what he called his own killing of Loan, who was known throughout the world for that photo and little else.

Adams caught an essential moment with that Pulitzer Prize-winning photo, but not, according to him, a whole truth. For the rest of his life, Adams regretted his role in Loan's subsequent demonization.

Though both Adams and Loan are dead, the image endures forever. The same can be said of the poor West Virginia girl whose image was captured and distributed by one of her abusers. The difference is that Adams understood the power of the photograph, which he once called "the most powerful weapon in the world." Never mind the power of an instant publishing mechanism in every urchin's hands.

In the 21st century, it isn't possible to keep such weapons out of the hands of children. At the very least, the young should be taught to treat the artillery of social media with the same fear and loathing we demand for all deadly weapons. Otherwise, we risk becoming bystanders to our own dystopia.

Kathleen Parker's email address is kathleenparker@washpost.com.

ing death of Chicago Mayor Anton J. Cermak at a Miami event attended by President-elect Franklin D. Roosevelt, the presumed target, the previous February.

By The Associated Press Today is Wednesday, March 20, the 79th day of 2013. There are 286 days left

in the year. Spring arrives at 6:02 a.m.

Today's Highlight in History: On March 20, 1933, the state of Florida elec-

trocuted Giuseppe Zangara for the shoot-

TODAY IN HISTORY

On this date: In 1413, England's King Henry IV died; he was succeeded by Henry

In 1727, physicist, mathematician and astronomer Sir Isaac Newton died in London.

In 1815, Napoleon Bonaparte returned to Paris after escaping his exile on Elba, beginning his "Hundred Days" rule. In 1852, Harriet Beecher Stowe's influ-

ential novel about slavery, "Uncle Tom's Cabin," was first published in book form after being serialized. In 1912, a coal mine explosion in Mc-

Curtain, Okla., claimed the lives of 73 workers

In 1922, the decommissioned USS Jupiter, converted into the first U.S. Navy aircraft carrier, was recommissioned as the

USS Langley. In 1952, the U.S. Senate ratified, 66-10, the Treaty of Peace with Japan.

In 1969, John Lennon married Yoko Ono in Gibraltar.

In 1977, voters in Paris chose former French Prime Minister Jacques Chirac to be the French capital's first mayor in more than a century.

In 1985, Libby Riddles of Teller, Alaska, became the first woman to win the Iditarod Trail Dog Sled Race.

In 1988, 8-year-old DeAndra Anrig found herself airborne when the string of her kite was snagged by an airplane flying over Shoreline Park in Mountain View, Calif. (DeAndra was lifted 10 feet off the ground and carried some 100 feet until she let go; she was not seriously hurt.)

In 1995, in Tokyo, 12 people were killed, more than 5,500 others sickened when packages containing the poisonous gas sarin were leaked on five separate subway trains by Aum Shinrikyo cult mem-

Ten years ago: On the first day of the Iraq War, a subdued Saddam Hussein appeared on state-run television after the initial American air strike on Baghdad, accusing the United States of a "shamefu crime" and urging his people to "draw your sword" against the invaders. American combat units rumbled across the desert

FROM THE BIBLE

Peace I leave with you; My peace I give to you. Not as the world gives do I give to you. Let not your hearts be troubled, neither let them be afraid. John 14:27. Portals of Prayer, Concordia Publishing House, St. Louis

YOUR LETTERS

Changing Times

William L. Heubaum, Yankton

This responds to the writer who praised Rep. Bernie Hunhoff for his vote against the Sentinel Bill and castigated the idea of allowing guns in schools as the work of stupid, idiotic Republicans (Press & Dakotan, March 12).

In fact, the only thing stupid and idiotic is the concept of gun-free school zones. As reported by cnsnews.com, Rep. Steve Stockman of Texas has introduced a bill to repeal the "Gun-Free School

grounds that mass shootings at schools have increased five-fold since its passage. The "Safe Schools Act of 2013" (H.R. 35) notes that the 1990 'gun-free" law has made schools unsafe because "shooters now know that they can victimize American school campuses with no fear that victims will be armed." Stockman's bill notes that there have been 10 school shootings killing at least four people each in the 22 years since the "gun-free" bill passed as compared to only two in the 22 years before passage. Moreover, "Horrific

Zones Act of 1990" (amended in 1995) on the

massacres on school campuses in Pearl, Miss., and southwestern Virginia, were averted by armed staff and students," it says. Given that "the 'Gun Free School Zones Act" has been a deadly failure," H.R. 35 says it "will restore safety to America's schools by allowing staff, teachers, and administrators to defend the children and themselves.

It would shock the writer to learn that there was a time (long before "gun-free zone" laws were passed) when South Dakota high school students who were hunters brought their shotguns to

school (locked in the trunks of their cars) during pheasant season so that they could go hunting after school let out. He would be even more shocked to learn that at my high school, not only were we not forbidden from bringing guns to school but rather we held .22 rifle matches on the indoor range located in the basement of our school.

Admittedly times have indeed changed, but certainly not for the better.

Cathy Sudbeck Sally Whiting Brenda Willcuts Jackie Williams

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