



Writer's Block

A Minimum-Wage Idea

BY WILLIAM KERR
For the Press & Dakotan

“How to improve the economy, increase jobs and increase U.S. tax revenue without increasing our deficit.”
Is that really possible? I think so. And, no candidate or incumbent I have heard is even mentioning the idea.

“One obvious place to begin would be to increase the minimum wage, which as Roosevelt Institute senior fellow, Richard Kirsch points out, now buys 30 percent less than it did 40 years ago.” So stated the article “The Missing Economic Debate,” written by Sherle R. Schwenninger in the Oct. 29 edition of *The Nation*.

It would all be sent immediately as it is received by the working people, who haven't had a rise in buying power since 1968, while normal price rises have taken prices up on just about everything they buy considerably since then. (I can't imagine many people working for minimum wages putting the extra money into a savings or investment account.) So, with nearly 2 million people (according to the U.S. Department of Labor) working at that level, if the Congress would raise the minimum wage to \$12 per hour, it would bring to the economy nearly \$2 billion per year, with no cost to the U.S. government. But wait, that isn't all. If we raise the minimum to \$12, there will be a lot more people who have already been earning between \$7.25 per hour and \$12 per hour who would then also get a rise in pay. Might even bring in close to another billion dollars per year.

As more things were purchased consistently, storekeepers would soon have to hire back some of the employees they had released due to the reduction in their cash register income after the recession hit. Those re-hired employees would also spend most of the extra income right along with their regained income, and both would give another boost to the economy. Soon those increases would reach the point



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where suppliers would have to hire back a few more formerly released employees to handle the increased business. Next when the stocks of the suppliers and the manufacturers began to reduce, the manufacturers would have to begin hiring back some of those they released during the recession to handle the increased business.

I just can't imagine many of the workers or the re-hires would immediately begin to save either their newfound wages or the extra minimum wage money. We are just not a people with saving ways. If you don't believe me, look at how many people today are using credit cards for living expenses. I don't have figures, but I see them using credit cards in grocery stores as well as department stores! My parents would turn in their graves to see such goings on!

Then, too, with this increase most of our minimum-wage workers who have not been paying income tax (the ones Mitt Romney has said he doesn't care about) would earn enough money to now pay income tax — and more income tax if they were already earning enough to pay income tax before the increase. On top of that, the owners of many suppliers and small businesses might ultimately pay a little more income tax as a result of the extra business. And best if all, none of this extra income would cost the government any money and therefore not increase the national debt! How about them apples?

I do understand that the increase would be a little hard on the retailers until the money started bringing in the additional business, but on the other hand, many of those whom they have laid off when this recession began have had four years of hardship with no income of consequence.

It's so simple, it's hard — and dumb not make the increase so millions (and the government) can benefit by it. Because it's dumb not to do it, Congress hasn't and probably won't without some pressure, maybe from a newly elected president and newly elected congresspersons if you voters do a good job.

Point Of View

George McGovern's Three Talents

BY ROBERT G. DUFFETT
Dakota Wesleyan University

Dakota Wesleyan University, Mitchell and South Dakota lost a dear friend. George McGovern, age 90, DWU Class of 1946, died early Sunday morning, Oct. 21, 2012.

As a congressman, senator, and the Democratic candidate for the American presidency in 1972, he gained international fame. *Rolling Stone* magazine's 40th anniversary issue said McGovern was one of the most significant people in the last half of the 20th century.

As I view his life, three talents may account for his meteoric rise.

First, George was an exceedingly bright man. This was a gift of birth. Yet, he developed this gift by reading and writing — two habits that sharpen the intellect. We at DWU claim the importance of lifelong learning, recognizing no college provides a complete education. Rather, a DWU education is a springboard to a lifetime engagement with important ideas. George absorbed this lesson. He wrote books, articles and speeches almost to the very last day of his life. What nature gave, George developed.

By his own admission, he was shy — not the type of person attracted to debate or politics. Yet, through one he found the other. A teacher at Mitchell High School suggested this painfully shy boy join the extroverted debate team. He flourished, continued debate at DWU, and became a nationally renowned college debater. Later, as professor of history at DWU, he was the debate team coach. The discipline of debate strengthened his ability to persuade ideas, marshal arguments, present them in research ways, and then next time, argue against what last week he affirmed. Debate was his second talent.

Love of history is the third talent. George himself said he had great history teachers at both Mitchell High and DWU. At DWU he was particularly influenced by Dr. James Van Kirk. Van Kirk spent his entire teaching career at DWU. He, like George, obtained his Ph.D. in American history from Northwestern University. I have always thought this was George's best talent. It set him apart from almost every politician. He knew instinctively that any contemporary political problem, issue, or crisis had a trail of past events or factors. He could see that trail and context, which gave him portentous insight. For instance, George



Duffett

was no pacifist. He knew evil exists and war is sometimes the only way to counter it. He was a legitimate hero of what Studs Terkel called the Good War. He was against the war in Vietnam because the Vietnamese, like American colonists in 1776, sought independence and autonomy. He argued American armies in Vietnam were analogous to and as welcome as the British Red Coats. He saw this sooner and more clearly than most due to historical insight.

Was it debate or history that pushed him to politics? I am not sure. What I am sure of is that these talents gave him a significant advantage on the campaign trail, in the Senate, and in his writings and speeches. History provides content, context and insight; debate the means to explicate ideas.

His religious faith brought together his three talents. The Wesleyan Methodist church of his father, the Rev. Joseph McGovern, called people to personal faith and activated them to do something useful in the world. For George, the useful part derived from the universal moral imperatives from Sunday School Bible stories:

- Feed the hungry;
- Cloth the naked;
- Do good to all humanity;
- Do justice;
- Learn war no more.

Due to the emotional excesses of zealous believers, George carried a lifelong reticence about personal faith. Yet, he built his world-shaping political career on social and humanitarian issues grounded in Christian ethics. Like an Old Testament prophet, he lifted our moral vision and summoned society to a higher ethical plane.

Some say George was the greatest humanitarian and peacemaker of our era. *Rolling Stone* magazine thought so. This is why we at DWU honor him by naming our library, Center for Leadership and Public Service and a museum for him. It all began here in South Dakota; his influence had worldwide impact.

Jesus' words may be a fitting epitaph for his life: “Blessed are the peacemakers ... they are the sons of God.”

Duffett is president of Dakota Wesleyan University in Mitchell.

THE PRESS & DAKOTAN

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OPINION | OTHER THOUGHTS

Storm Lives Up To Its Dreaded Forecast

THE DALLAS MORNING NEWS (Oct. 30): Hurricane Sandy redefined what it means to be in harm's way.

Billed as the perfect storm, an Atlantic maelstrom unrivaled in generations, Sandy became all that and more — morphing into superstorm Sandy, in the parlance of TV weathercasters, paralyzing and splintering a huge swath of the East Coast, then punishing a quarter of the national map with relentless rain and wind, and even an October blizzard. The monster that roiled the ocean reached across and roiled the Great Lakes.

The monster that shut down New York became the monster that shut down a presidential campaign. In that regard, it touched all Americans.

The campaign hiatus was fitting and proper, albeit a political no-brainer for President Barack Obama and GOP rival Mitt Romney. With dozens dead and unaccounted for, with millions without power and wondering about putting their homes and businesses back together, politics needed to take a back seat.

Blunt-spoken New Jersey Gov. Chris Christie perhaps said it best, as he pondered the devastation of his state's coastline, ground zero for Sandy's landfall Monday night.

“I don't give a damn about Election Day,” Christie told reporters. “I've got bigger fish to fry” ...

The job of putting more than 20 storm-ravaged states back in working order will be less dramatic. Millions of New Yorkers in the center of the nation's business nerve wondered how they would be getting to work in the days ahead after the subway system suffered a level of damage it hadn't seen in a century. ...

THE VIEWS PAGE

The **PRESS & DAKOTAN** Views page provides a forum for open discussion of issues and interests affecting our readers. Initialed editorials represent the opinion of the writer, but not necessarily that of the **PRESS & DAKOTAN**. Bylined columns represent the view of the author. We welcome letters to the editor on current topics. Questions regarding the Views page should be directed to Kelly Hertz at views@yankton.net.

TODAY IN HISTORY

By The Associated Press

Today is Thursday, Nov. 1, the 306th day of 2012. There are 60 days left in the year. This is All Saints Day.

Today's Highlight in History: On Nov. 1, 1512, Michelangelo's just-completed paintings on the ceiling of the Vatican's Sistine Chapel were publicly unveiled by the artist's patron, Pope Julius II.

On this date: In 1765, the Stamp Act went into effect, prompting stiff resistance from American colonists.

In 1861, during the Civil War, President Abraham Lincoln named Maj. Gen. George B. McClellan General-in-Chief of the Union armies, succeeding Lt. Gen. Winfield Scott.

In 1870, the United States Weather Bureau made its first meteorological observations.

In 1936, in a speech in Milan, Italy, Benito Mussolini described the alliance between his country and Nazi Germany as an “axis” running between Rome and Berlin.

In 1944, “Harvey,” a comedy by Mary Chase about a man and his friend, an invisible six-foot-tall rabbit, opened on Broadway.

In 1950, two Puerto Rican nationalists tried to force their way into Blair House in Washington, D.C., in a failed attempt to assassinate President Harry S. Truman. (One of the pair was killed, along with a White House police officer.)

In 1952, the United States exploded the first hydrogen bomb, code-named “Ivy Mike,” at Eniwetok Atoll in the Marshall Islands.

In 1954, Algerian nationalists began their successful rebellion against French rule.

In 1968, the Motion Picture Association of America unveiled its new voluntary film rating system: G for general, M for mature (later changed to GP, then PG), R for restricted and X (later changed to NC-17) for adults only.

In 1972, author and poet Ezra Pound died in Venice, Italy, at age 87.

In 1979, former first lady Mamie Eisenhower died in Washington, D.C., at age 82.

In 1989, East Germany reopened its border with Czechoslovakia, prompting tens of thousands of refugees to flee to the West.

Ten years ago: A federal judge approved most provisions of an antitrust settlement between Microsoft and the Justice Department. A Russian spacecraft carrying two cosmonauts and a Belgian astronaut docked with the international space station. Queen Elizabeth II's surprise revelation that she knew butter Paul Burrell had taken some of Princess Diana's possessions for safekeeping prompted prosecutors to drop theft charges against the servant.

Five years ago: British college student Meredith Kercher, 21, was found slain in her bedroom in Perugia, Italy; her roommate, American Amanda Knox and Knox's Italian boyfriend, Raffaele Sollecito, were later convicted of killing Kercher, but both had their guilty verdicts overturned. (Rudy Guede, a petty criminal who was convicted separately, remains imprisoned.) Retired Air Force Brig. Gen. Paul Tibbets, who'd piloted the B-29 bomber Enola Gay that dropped the atomic bomb on Hiroshima, died in Columbus, Ohio, at age 92. Less than a week after workers ratified a new contract, Chrysler announced 12,000 job cuts.

One year ago: Europe's days-old plan to solve its crippling debt crisis and restore faith in the global economy was thrown into chaos by Greek Prime Minister George Papandreou's stunning decision to call a referendum on the country's latest rescue package. (Papandreou dropped the referendum plan two days later.) Embattled Los Angeles Dodgers owner Frank McCourt and Major League Baseball reached an agreement to sell the troubled franchise. Dorothy Rodham, 92, mother of Secretary of State Hillary Rodham Clinton and former President Bill Clinton's mother-in-law, died in Washington.

Today's Birthdays: Actress Betsy Palmer is 86. Golfer Gary Player is 77. Country singer Bill Anderson is 75. Actress Barbara Bosson is 73. Actor Robert Foxworth is 71. Actress Marcia Wallace is 70. Magazine publisher Larry Flynt is 70. Country singer-humorist Kinky Friedman is 68. Actress Jeannie Berlin is 63. Music producer David Foster is 63. Rhythm-and-blues musician Ronald Khlalis Bell (Kool and the Gang) is 61. Country singer-songwriter-producer Keith Stegall is 58. Country singer Lyle Lovett is 55. Actress Rachel Ticotin is 54. Rock musician Eddie MacDonald (The Alarm) is 53. Rock singer Anthony Kiedis (Red Hot Chili Peppers) is 50. Pop singer-musical Mags Furuholm (aha) is 50. Rock musician Rick Allen (Def Leppard) is 49. Country singer “Big Kenny” Alphin (Big and Rich) is 49. Singer Sophie B. Hawkins is 48. Rapper Willie D (Geto Boys) is 46. Country musician Dale Wallace (Emerson Drive) is 43. Actress Toni Collette is 40. Actress Jenny McCarthy is 40. Rock musician Andrew Gonzales is 40. Actor David Berman is 39. Actress Aishwarya Rai is 39. Rock singer Bo Bice (“American Idol”) is 37. Actor Penn Badgley is 26. Actor Max Burkholder is 15. Actor-musician Alex Wolff is 15.

Thought for Today: “Good taste is the worst vice ever invented.” — Dame Edith Sitwell, English poet (1887-1964).

FROM THE BIBLE

I will greatly rejoice in the LORD; my soul shall exult in my God, for He has clothed me with the garments of salvation; He has covered me with the robe of righteousness. Isaiah 61:10. Portals of Prayer, Concordia Publishing House, St. Louis

YOUR LETTERS

Sincere Appreciation!

Steve Sternhagen, Yankton
Yankton County Child Protection Team

I would like to acknowledge and recognize the generous support from the Yankton United Way, Yankton Crime Stoppers, and Ladies Fire Auxiliary for sponsoring the True Lies Bullying Assembly. This assembly was held on Friday October 26 at both the Yankton Middle School and the Yankton High School. Nationally renowned speakers Phil Chalmers

and L.G. Wise presented a dynamic and powerful presentation that addressed teen violence, substance abuse and bullying. The fast-paced presentation delivered information about the consequences of making poor choices and decisions while trying to empower and encourage the youth to take a stand and make positive choices to end substance abuse, violence and bullying. Again thank you to all the individuals and groups who made this presentation a success.

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