



OUT OF THE WOODS

A Question-Mark Economy

BY ROBERT B. REICH
Tribune Media Services

We're closing in on Election Day, but the questions about what Mitt Romney and Paul Ryan would do if elected are only growing larger. Rarely before in American history has a presidential ticket campaigned on such a blank slate.

Yet, paradoxically, not a day goes by that we don't hear Romney, Ryan or some other exponent of the GOP claim that businesses aren't creating more jobs because they're uncertain about the future. And the source of that uncertainty, they say, is President Obama — especially his Affordable Care Act (Obamacare), the Dodd-Frank Act, and uncertainties surrounding Obama's plan to raise taxes on the wealthy.

Romney says that if elected he'll repeal the Affordable Care Act and replace it with something else, and promises he'll provide health coverage to people with pre-existing medical problems, but he doesn't give a hint how he'd manage it.

Insurance companies won't pay the higher costs of insuring these people unless they have extra funds — which is why Obamacare requires that everyone, including healthy young people, buy insurance. Yet Romney doesn't say where the extra money to fund insurers would come from. From taxpayers? Businesses?

Talk about uncertainty. Romney also promises to repeal Dodd-Frank, but here again he's mum on what he'd replace it with. Yet without some sort of new regulation of Wall Street we're back to where we were before 2008, when Wall Street crashed and brought most of the rest of us down with it.

Romney hasn't provided a clue to how he proposes to oversee the biggest banks, what kind of capital requirements he'd impose on them, and what mechanism he'd use to put them through an orderly bankruptcy that wouldn't risk the rest of the Street. All we get is a big question mark.

When it comes to how Romney and Ryan would pay for the giant \$5 trillion tax cut they propose, mostly for the rich, they take uncertainty to a new level of abject wonderment. "We'll work with Congress," is their response.

They say they'll limit loopholes and deductions that could be used by the wealthy, but Romney and Ryan refuse to be specific. Several weeks ago, Romney said he'd cap total deductions at \$17,000 a year. Days later, the figure became \$25,000. Now it's up in the air. Pick a figure, he now says.

Make no mistake: Wall Street traders and corporate CEOs are supporting Romney and Ryan not because of the new level of certainty they promise but because Romney and Ryan promise to lower their taxes.

Meanwhile, many of the Romney and Ryan allies who are attacking Obama for creating uncertainty are themselves responsible for much of it. They're the ones who have delayed and obfuscated Obamacare, Dodd-Frank and any semblance of a federal budget.

"Continued uncertainty is the greatest threat to small businesses and our country's economic recovery," says Thomas Donohue, president and CEO of the U.S. Chamber

of Commerce, which has funneled tens of millions of dollars into ads blaming Obama for the nation's economic woes.

That's the same Chamber of Commerce that has been using every legal tool imaginable to challenge regulations emerging from Obamacare and Dodd-Frank — thereby keeping both laws in limbo as long as possible. The Chamber even helped bring Obamacare to the Supreme Court.

At the same time, congressional Republicans have done everything in their power to scotch any agreement on reducing the budget deficit. Because they've pledged their fiscal souls to Grover Norquist, they won't consider raising even a dollar of new taxes. Yet it's impossible to balance the budget without some combination of spending cuts and tax increases — unless, that is, we do away with Social Security, Medicare and Medicaid, or the military.

Business executives justifiably worry about January's so-called "fiscal cliff," requiring sudden and sharp tax increases and spending cuts. But they have no one to blame but Norquist's Republican acolytes in Congress, including Ryan, all of whom agreed to the fiscal cliff when they wouldn't agree to anything else.

Average Americans, meanwhile, face more economic uncertainty from the possibility of a Romney-Ryan administration than they have at any point in their lifetimes. Not only have the pair thrown the future of Obamacare into doubt, but Americans have no idea what would happen to Medicare, Medicaid, college aid, Pell grants, food stamps, unemployment insurance and many other programs Americans rely on. All would have to be sliced or diced, but Romney and Ryan won't tell us how or by how much.

Romney and Ryan are casting a pall of uncertainty in every direction — even toward young immigrants. Romney vows that if elected, he'll end Obama's reprieve from deportation of young people who arrived in the U.S. illegally when they were children. As a result, some young people who might qualify are holding back for fear the information they offer could be used against them at later date if Romney is elected.

Conservative economists such as John Taylor of the Hoover Institution, one of Romney's key economic advisors, continue to attribute the slow recovery and high unemployment to Obama's "unpredictable economic policy."

In truth, it's Romney, Ryan and the GOP who have put a giant question mark over the future of the economy and over all Americans. The only way our future becomes more certain is if they lose on Election Day.

NOTE: Note: In last week's column it was incorrectly stated that Arizona's immigration law allows authorities to stop drivers who look Hispanic. The law allows authorities to question suspected illegal immigrants about their status after they have been stopped in order to enforce other laws.

Robert B. Reich, Chancellor's Professor of Public Policy at the University of California and former U.S. Secretary of Labor, is the author of "Beyond Outrage: What has gone wrong with our economy and our democracy, and how to fix it," a Knopf release now out in paperback.



Robert REICH

Point Of View

McGovern: A Lifetime Of Service

BY SEN. TIM JOHNSON
D-South Dakota (Vermillion)

With such a long, accomplished life, it is difficult to fully describe the impact George McGovern had on our world. In each chapter of his life, his contributions to our society were gigantic. His accomplishments have already been the subject of many books, and his legacy will live on forever.

I was just 9 years old when George was elected to Congress. As a young man, I followed his career closely as he became increasingly influential. To see a man from Mitchell become a leading voice on the biggest issues of the day was inspiring to me and many other young South Dakotans. This inspiration continued throughout all of George's life. Even in these last few years, he spent time with South Dakota students, which undoubtedly inspired them to think big about their futures and how they can have an impact on our world.

Although George's 1972 presidential race against Richard Nixon gets a lot of attention, the work he did before and after his time in public office was incredible. George summed it up best last month when he wrote an article for the Washington Post on losing the 1972 race. George wrote that while the loss was a significant personal setback, "I have acknowledged it, absorbed it and integrated it into the rest of the long life I have been privileged to lead. Before that race, I had survived 35 missions as a B-24 bomber pilot in World War II; married



Johnson

Eleanor Stegeberg, the love of my life; had five children; completed a PhD in history; and had a successful career in politics and government service."

Instead of lamenting about losing the election, George went back to work. He made our world a better place through his work on many issues, including agriculture and foreign policy. But his greatest public policy achievement has to be his work on hunger issues. What drove George to work tirelessly to combat

hunger worldwide was his recognition that we are fortunate to live in a country with food abundance. He knew that so many individuals across the world were not as lucky. George often noted that hunger is a political condition that is 100 percent curable. In our country and across the world, there are countless individuals who never knew George but are no longer suffering from hunger because of his work.

It is sad to lose George, but we will be able to see his impact on the world for decades to come. South Dakotans and folks across the U.S. and world are thankful for his long life of service. Personally, I am thankful for George's friendship and advice. And I think I speak for many South Dakotans who grew up following his career when I say that I am thankful to George for showing us that a kid from South Dakota can have a major impact on the world.

think freely. In other parts of the world there is Communism, Socialism, Fascism where the people are not allowed a free choice, no voice in the government.

When this country was first organized there were only 10 rules — the Ten Commandments. Now the law books are full of rules and regulations. With all the permits required, people are feeling handicapped. I feel the freedom I fought for in World War II is being lost. Let's keep our freedom. A free USA.

There is one way for the USA citizens to do that. Go out and vote on Nov. 6 for a candidate that will keep us a free country. Exercise your right to have a say and keep this a free USA.

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OPINION | OUR VIEW

Teacher Bonus Pay Is A Dubious Plan

South Dakota's educational system may soon be redefined and based on a questionable theory.

That theory — that awarding bonuses to teachers whose students perform best in the classroom — sounds straightforward and productive enough. But like many theories, it doesn't always function ideally in the real world.

This brings us to Referred Law 16 on the South Dakota ballot. It's the referral of legislation passed by lawmakers (HB 1234) that would employ such a system, paying bonuses to the top 20 percent of teachers in each school district, as decided by the local school boards. It would also pay annual bonuses to math and science teachers as a means of encouraging such educators to remain in the state. The bill would also do away with continuing contracts (or tenure) for teachers who do not achieve tenure status by July 1, 2016, and would establish a scholarship program for eligible college students who commit to teach in the state in certain subject areas.

Let's concentrate on the bonus issues, which comprise the foundation of the legislation.

The notion of paying the top 20 percent of teachers in each district bonuses causes some big concerns. It must be assumed that the "Top Teachers" bonus would be based on the student achievement in the classroom. That sounds fine to an extent, but many educators would tell you that not all students are the same and, thus, not all results can be treated equally. There are some students who will do quite well and get straight A's; however, there are some students who will have to work hard just to get low B's or C's, and it will take some extraordinary educators to get that to happen. But those results won't translate well in this program.

It's sort of like comparing a school to a hammer factory. If all the factory does is make hammers, it's easy to assess the quality of the results because the materials are the same and the end product is the same. But schools are different. Each student is different, and students travel many different paths in school, as they will in life. By potentially placing one standard in place for the bonus, we are in effect judging each student's performance the same way, without allowing for the variables and circumstances.

It must also be noted that studies — notably, a 2010 research effort by Vanderbilt University — find no correlation between a teacher bonus system and better classroom performance. In fact, it has sometimes been shown to create poorer results by breaking down the collaborative atmosphere within a faculty. If teachers are not working together to achieve the best education for our kids, it would undermine the quality of that education.

At the same time, giving bonuses to math and science teachers just BECAUSE they are math and science teachers seems to contradict the spirit of that clause about continuing contracts and judging on performance. Also, what about the other subjects, such as English or history? Those are important disciplines, too, but they are slighted by this plan.

In regards to Referred Law 16, there are some things to like — such as the scholarship program — but there are just too many things that make us wary. As such, it would be best to vote "no" on Referred Law 16.

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OUR LETTER POLICY

The **PRESS & DAKOTAN** encourages its readers to write letters to the editor, and it asks that a few simple guidelines be followed.

■ Please limit letters to 300 words or less. Letters should deal with a single subject, be of general interest and state a specific point of view. Letters are edited with brevity, clarity and newspaper style in mind.

■ In the sense of fairness and professionalism, the **PRESS & DAKOTAN** will accept no letters attacking private individuals or businesses.

■ Specific individuals or entities addressed in letters may be given the opportunity to read the letter prior to publication and be allowed to answer the letter in the same issue.

■ Only signed letters with writer's full name, address and daytime phone number for verification will be accepted. Please mail to: Letters, 319 Walnut, Yankton, SD 57078, drop off at 319 Walnut in Yankton, fax to 665-1721 or email to views@yankton.net.

TODAY IN HISTORY

By The Associated Press

Today is Wednesday, Oct. 24, the 298th day of 2012. There are 68 days left in the year.

Today's Highlight in History: On Oct. 24, 1962, a naval quarantine of Cuba ordered by President John F. Kennedy went into effect during the missile crisis; the blockade was aimed at interdicting the delivery of offensive weapons to the island.

On this date: In 1537, King Seymour, the third wife of England's King Henry VIII, died 12 days after giving birth to Prince Edward, later King Edward VI.

In 1648, the Peace of Westphalia ended the Thirty Years War and effectively destroyed the Holy Roman Empire.

In 1861, the first transcontinental telegraph message was sent by Chief Justice Stephen J. Field of California from San Francisco to President Abraham Lincoln in Washington, D.C., over a line built by the Western Union Telegraph Co.

In 1901, widow Anna Edson (correct) Taylor became the first person to go over Niagara Falls in a barrel.

In 1939, Benny Goodman and his orchestra recorded their signature theme, "Let's Dance," for Columbia Records in New York. Nylon stockings were first sold publicly in Wilmington, Del.

In 1940, the 40-hour work week went into effect under the Fair Labor Standards Act of 1938.

In 1945, the United Nations officially came into existence as its charter took effect.

In 1952, Republican presidential candidate Dwight D. Eisenhower declared in Detroit, "I shall go to Korea" as he promised to end the conflict. (He made the visit over a month later.)

In 1962, "The Manchurian Candidate," a Cold War thriller starring Frank Sinatra, was first released.

In 1972, Hall of Famer Jackie Robinson, who'd broken Major League Baseball's color barrier in 1947, died in Stamford, Conn., at age 53.

In 1987, 30 years after it was expelled, the Teamsters union was welcomed back into the AFL-CIO. (However, the Teamsters disaffiliated themselves from the AFL-CIO in 2005.)

In 1992, the Toronto Blue Jays became the first non-U.S. team to win the World Series as they defeated the Atlanta Braves, 4-3, in Game 6.

Ten years ago: Authorities apprehended Army veteran John Allen Muhammad and teenager Lee Boyd Malvo near Myersville, Md., in the Washington-area sniper attacks. (Malvo was later sentenced to life in prison without the possibility of parole; Muhammad was sentenced to death and executed in 2009.) The San Francisco Giants defeated the Anaheim Angels, 16-4, to take 3-2 lead in the World Series.

Five years ago: Rapidly rising Internet star Facebook Inc. sold a 1.6 percent stake to Microsoft Corp. for \$240 million, spurning a competing offer from online search leader Google Inc. The Boston Red Sox flattened the Colorado Rockies in their World Series opener at Fenway Park, 13-1.

One year ago: President Barack Obama offered mortgage relief to hundreds of thousands of Americans during a visit to Las Vegas. Defense Secretary Leon Panetta, visiting Yokota Air Base in Japan, lashed out at North Korea for "reckless and provocative" acts and criticized China for a secretive expansion of its military power. The Texas Rangers beat the St. Louis Cardinals 4-2 for a 3-2 World Series edge.

Today's Birthdays: Football Hall-of-Famer Y.A. Tittle is 86. Rock musician Bill Wyman is 76. Actor F. Murray Abraham is 73. Movie director-screenwriter David S. Ward is 67. Actor Kevin Kline is 65. Former NAACP President Kevlin Mfume is 64. Country musician Billy Thomas (Terry McBride and the Ride) is 59. Actor Doug Davidson is 58. Actor B.D. Wong is 52. Rock musician Ben Gillies (Silverchair) is 33. Singer-actress Monica Arnold is 32. Rhythm-and-blues singer Adrienne Bailon (31w) is 29. R&B singer-rapper-actor Drake is 26. Actress Shenae Grimes is 23.

Thought for Today: "There are three things which the public will always clamor for, sooner or later: namely, Novelty, novelty, novelty." — Thomas Hood, British poet (1799-1845).

FROM THE BIBLE

For God alone my soul waits in silence; from Him comes my salvation. Psalm 62:1. Portals of Prayer, Concordia Publishing House, St. Louis

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