

# The Press & Dakotan

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**OPINION**

## House Chaos And The Public's Will

The current chaos in the U.S. House of Representatives in regards to choosing a new House speaker tells us arguably just how tone-deaf Washington lawmakers have become. The upheaval has been brewing for months, and the recent announcement by Rep. John Boehner (R-Ohio) that he is resigning from both his position and his House seat reflected it. Boehner has come under increasing pressure from the more rigidly conservative element of the Republican party, embodied in the House Freedom Caucus, that he was forced to pull several pieces of legislation this year because of concerns of an intra-party revolt. It also compelled him to rely on Democratic help to pass a continuing resolution that avoided another partial government shutdown earlier this month. (The resolution leaves things open only until about mid-December, which could make for a tense holiday season on Capitol Hill.)

Boehner's departure is widely viewed as a triumph for the conservative/Tea Party elements of the GOP, who want more confrontation and less compromising with House Democrats and the White House.

Last Thursday, Rep. Kevin McCarthy (R-Calif.), the heavy favorite to succeed Boehner as House speaker, abruptly withdrew his name from consideration just before the House was set to vote on the matter. McCarthy, the House majority whip, was seen as a status quo candidate, and a growing number of headline conservatives were balking. (His awkward statement that seemed to undercut the House's Benghazi probe probably didn't help.)

Rep. Charlie Dent (R-Pennsylvania) was blunt about the situation: "I said before John Boehner stepped down, those who wanted to take down John Boehner will try to frag the next guy. Well, that's what we just saw happen."

Thus, the Republicans have sunk into chaos, with clear fissures exposed. And Democrats are quietly but gleefully relishing the disarray.

None of this is what the public wants. Americans are utterly weary of Washington bickering and partisan intransigence — a fact reflected in the rock-bottom approval numbers for Congress. Tired of ideological grandstanding, political brinkmanship, government shutdowns and general federal chaos, the people want to see results from a responsive government. We want lawmakers working for what's best for the republic, not for the greater good of their respective parties.

The House speaker mess indicates the exact opposite of all that. The fact that lawmakers don't seem to recognize that, or simply don't care, screams volumes about them.

Having strongly held beliefs is to be expected of anyone who gets into politics, but the ability to work together to conduct the nation's business and work on solutions for the nation's many issues is absolutely imperative.

That's what we want to see happening in Washington. But it's clear that lawmakers aren't picking up on that message at all.

kml

### ONLINE OPINION

The results of the most recent Internet poll on the Press & Dakotan's Web site are as follows:

**LATEST RESULTS:**

**Do you support the idea of building a wall between the U.S. and Mexico?**  
Yes.....66%  
No.....31%  
Not sure.....3%  
**TOTAL VOTES CAST**.....280

The Press & Dakotan Internet poll is not a scientific survey and reflects the opinions only of those who choose to participate. The results should not be construed as an accurate representation or scientific measurement of public opinion.

**CURRENT QUESTION:**

**Do you think President Obama could win a third term if he were allowed to run for re-election?**  
To cast your vote in the PRESS & DAKOTAN'S Internet poll, log on to our website at www.yankton.net.

### IN HISTORY

**By The Associated Press**  
Today is Tuesday, October 13, the 266th day of 2015. There are 79 days left in the year.

**Today's Highlight in History:** On October 13, 1775, the United States Navy had its origins as the Continental Congress ordered the construction of a naval fleet.

**On this date:** In A.D. 54, Roman Emperor Claudius I died, poisoned apparently at the behest of his wife, Agrippina.

In 1792, the cornerstone of the executive mansion, later known as the White House, was laid during a ceremony in the District of Columbia.

In 1843, the Jewish organization B'nai B'rith was founded in New York City.

In 1932, President Herbert Hoover and Chief Justice Charles Evans Hughes laid the cornerstone for the U.S. Supreme Court building in Washington.

In 1944, during World War II, American troops entered Aachen, Germany.

In 1957, CBS-TV broadcast "The Edsel Show," a one-hour live special starring Bing Crosby designed to promote the new, ill-fated Ford automobile. (It was the first special to use videotape technology to delay the broadcast to the West Coast.)

In 1960, John F. Kennedy and Richard Nixon held the third televised debate of their presidential campaign (Nixon was in Los Angeles, Kennedy in New York).

In 1962, Edward Albee's four-character drama "Who's Afraid of Virginia Woolf?" opened on Broadway.

In 1972, a Uruguayan chartered flight carrying 45 people crashed in the Andes; survivors resorted to feeding off the remains of some of the dead in order to stay alive until they were rescued more than two months later.

In 1981, voters in Egypt participated in a referendum to elect Vice President Hosni Mubarak the new president, one week after the assassination of Anwar Sadat.

In 1990, Le Duc Tho, co-founder of the Vietnamese Communist Party, died in Hanoi a day before his 79th birthday.

In 2000, South Korean President Kim Dae-jung was named winner of the Nobel Peace Prize. Longtime American communist Gus Hall died in New York at age 90.

**Ten years ago:** British playwright Harold Pinter won the 2005 Nobel Prize in literature. Scores of Islamic militants launched simultaneous attacks on police and government buildings in Nalchik, a city in Russia's turbulent Caucasus region, leaving 139 people dead, most of them insurgents.

**Five years ago:** Rescuers in Chile

using a missile-like escape capsule pulled 33 men one by one to fresh air and freedom 69 days after they were trapped in a collapsed mine a half-mile underground. U.S. authorities announced the arrests of 73 people accused of being part of a vast network of Armenian gangsters and their associates who, allegedly used phantom health care clinics and other means to try to cheat Medicare out of \$163 million.

**One year ago:** President Barack Obama huddled with some of his senior national security aides and with top administration health officials for the latest assessment on the government's response to Ebola in the aftermath of a Dallas nurse's contracting the disease. Frenchman Jean Tirole was announced as the winner of the Nobel Prize in economics for showing how to encourage better products and competitive prices in industries dominated by a few companies.

**Today's Birthdays:** Gospel singer Shirley Caesar is 78. Actress Melinda Dillon is 76. Singer-musician Paul Simon is 74. Actress Pamela Tiffin is 73. Musician Robert Lamm (Chicago) is 71. Country singer Lacy J. Dalton is 69. Actor Demond Wilson is 69. Singer-musician Sammy Hagar is 68. Actor John Lone is 63. Model Beverly Johnson is 63. Producer-writer Chris Carter is 59. Actor Reggie Theus is 58. Sen. Maria Cantwell, D-Wash., is 57. Singer Marie Osmond is 56. Rock singer Joey Belladonna is 55. Former White House press secretary Ari Fleischer is 55. NBA coach Doc Rivers is 54. Actress T'Keyah Crystal Keymah is 53. College and Pro Football Hall of Famer Jerry Rice is 53. Actress Kelly Preston is 53. Country singer John Wiggins is 53. Actor Christopher Judge is 51. Actor Matt Walsh (TV: "Veep") is 51. Actress Kate Walsh is 48. Rhythm-and-blues musician Jeff Allen (Mint Condition) is 47. Actress Tisha Campbell-Martin is 47. Classical singer Carlos Marin (Il Divo) is 47. Olympic silver-medal figure skater Nancy Kerrigan is 46. Country singer Rhett Akins is 46. Classical crossover singer Paul Potts (TV: "Britain's Got Talent") is 45. TV personality Billy Bush is 44. Actor Sacha Baron Cohen is 44. Rock musician Jan Van Sichem Jr. (K's Choice) is 43. Rhythm-and-blues singers Brandon and Brian Casey (Jagged Edge) are 40. Actress Kiele Sanchez is 39. NBA All-Star Paul Pierce is 38. Singer Ashanti is 35. Christian rock singer Jon Micah Sumrall (Kutless) is 35. Olympic gold medal swimmer Ian Thorpe is 33.

**Thought for Today:** "A hero is a man who is afraid to run away." — English proverb.

### FROM THE BIBLE

Be merciful, even as your Father is merciful. Luke 6:36. Portals of Prayer, Concordia Publishing House, St. Louis.



## 'Where For Art Thou, Columbus?'

BY VINCE TWO EAGLES

Hau Mitakuepi (Greetings My Relatives), America, before you settle in for yet another opportunity to "celebrate" Oct. 12 (otherwise known as Columbus Day) and until this so-called holiday is repealed by America's lawmakers in order to serve the interests of truth and healing, you can start the process of coming to terms with America's past by asking, "What were the Americas like when Columbus arrived in 1492?" — or, "Where for art thou Columbus?"

James W. Loewen, author of the national bestseller, "Lies My Teacher Told Me," shares this about Columbus: "To make a better myth, American culture has perpetuated the idea that Columbus was boldly forging ahead while everyone else, even his own crew, imagined the world was flat."

This hoax goes something like this, according to Loewen: "The superstitious sailors ... grew increasingly mutinous ... because they were fearful of sailing over the edge of the world. In truth, few people on both sides of the Atlantic believed in 1492 that the world was still flat. Most Europeans and Native Americans knew the world to be round. It looks round. It casts a circular shadow on the moon. Sailors see its roundness when ships disappear over the horizon, hull first, then sails."

He goes on: "Washington Irving wins credit for popularizing the flat-earth fable in 1828. In his bestselling biography of Columbus, Irving described Columbus's supposed defense of his round-earth theory before the flat-earth savants at Salamanca University. Irving himself surely knew the story to be fiction. He probably thought it added a nice dramatic flourish and would do no harm. But it does. It invites us to believe that the 'primitives' of the world, admittedly including pre-Columbian Europeans, had only a crude understanding of the planet they lived on, until aided by a forward-thinking European. It also turns Columbus into a man of science who corrected our faulty geography."

"Intense debunking of the flat-earth legend by professional historians has made an impact. Yet, even 11 textbooks that do not repeat Irving's fiction choose wholly ineffectual words to counter



Vince  
**TWO EAGLES**

it. This passage from "Triumph of the American Nation" exemplifies the problem: "Convinced the earth was round, a knowledge shared by many informed people of the day, Columbus believed that if he sailed far enough to the west, he would reach Asia." To be sure, the minor subordinate clause quietly notes that not everyone, perhaps not even most people, believed in flat-earth geography. But the main subordinate clause and the primary clause emphasize Columbus's own belief that the earth was round. The sentence makes little sense unless the reader infers that Columbus's belief was unusual. I have talked not only with students but also teachers who have read textbooks like "Triumph" without noticing this point. Thus teachers often still believe and still relay to their students the flat-earth legend.

"Even the death of Columbus has been changed to make a better story. Having Columbus coming to a tragic end — sick, poor and ignorant of his great accomplishments — adds melodramatic interest. 'Columbus's discoveries were not immediately ap-

preciated by the Spanish government," according to "The American Adventure" [a history textbook] "He died in neglect in 1506." In fact Spain "immediately appreciated" Columbus's discoveries, "which is why they immediately outfitted him for a much larger second voyage."

"The errors textbooks make about Columbus do not result simply from sloppy scholarship. Textbooks want to magnify Columbus as a great hero, a 'man of vision, energy, resourcefulness and courage.'"

Loewen's book ought to be required reading for all American high school and college students. Reading and discussing it in a structured conversation will not only inform the reader about the gravity of "lying" but will help the reader to open their eyes and hearts to the truth which sets us all free. Better truth than consequence, wouldn't you agree?

Where for art thou Columbus? Shouldn't we be looking elsewhere than our own history textbooks for the answers?

And now you know the rez of the story ...  
Doksha (later) ...

### Leonard Pitts Jr.

BY LEONARD PITTS JR.  
Tribune Content Agency

## A Process Of 'Erasure'

BY LEONARD PITTS JR.  
Tribune Content Agency

"This," says Roni Dean-Burren, "is what erasure looks like."

She's talking about something you might otherwise have thought innocuous: a page from World Geography, a high school textbook. A few days ago, you see, Dean-Burren, a former teacher and a doctoral candidate at the University of Houston, was texted a caption from that book by her son Coby, who is 15. It said that the Atlantic slave trade "brought millions of workers from Africa to the southern United States to work on agricultural plantations." This was in a section called "Patterns of Immigration."

She says the words jumped out at her. After all, a "worker," is usually someone who gets paid to do a job. An immigrant is usually someone who chooses to come to a new country. Neither of which describes the millions of kidnapping victims who cleared America's fields and endured its deprivations in lives of unending bondage that afforded them no more rights under the law than a dog or a chair.

As the Trail of Tears was not a nature walk and the Normandy invasion not a day at the beach, black people were neither workers nor immigrants, but slaves. Dean-Burren, who is black, took to social media to explain that. You can guess what happened next. The story went viral, and the embarrassed publisher, McGraw-Hill Education, scrambled to apologize and fix the mess.

That's all well and good. But let no one think this was incidental or accidental. No, there is purpose here. There is intent. In recent years, we've seen Arizona outlaw ethnic studies, Texas teach that slavery was a "side issue" to the Civil War, a Colorado school board require a "positive" spin on American history and Glenn Beck claim the mantle of the Civil Rights Movement.

We are witness to the vandalism of African-American memory, to acts of radical revision and wholesale theft that strike at the core of black identity. Once your past is gone, who are you? What anchor holds you? So Dean-Burren's

word strikes a powerful chord: This is, indeed, erasure — like a blackboard wiped clean, all the inconvenient pain, sting and challenge of African-American history, gone.

It is, she says, "the saddest thought ever" that her grandchildren might not know Nat Turner's rebellion or Frederick Douglass' harsh condemnation of slavery. "The fact that they may not know what it was like for women to get the right to vote, the fact that they may not know that millions of Native Americans were slaughtered at the hands of 'Pilgrims' and explorers ... I think it says a lot about our society."

Nor is she persuaded by the argument that teaching the uglier aspects of American history would make students hate their country. She calls that "a crock of poo." And it is. America's ugliness defines its beauty as silence defines sound and sorrow defines joy.

"We tell our children that all the time: 'The reason you're standing here today ... and you have what you have and you can go to the schools you want to go to, and you can say out loud, 'I want to be an Alvin Ailey dancer ...' or 'I want to go to Stanford,' ... is that you come from survivors. You come from people who said, 'I'm going to stick it out. I'm going to make it. I'm going to keep pushing.' If we don't know the ugly, I don't know how you can really love the pretty."

To put it another way: Black History Matters. So let us be alarmed at attempts to rewrite that history for the moral convenience of others or to preserve what James Baldwin and Ta-Nehisi Coates have described as the fiction of white American "innocence" where crimes of race are concerned. They keep trying to make it less painful, says Dean-Burren, like putting a document through a Xerox machine and making it lighter, lighter and lighter still.

"And then, when you look up, there's nothing on the page."

Leonard Pitts is a columnist for The Miami Herald, 1 Herald Plaza, Miami, Fla., 33132. Readers may contact him via e-mail at lpitts@miamiherald.com.

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### LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

#### Help 9/11 Responders

**Richard Rezac, Highmore**  
I am a South Dakota native, and a (Sept. 11, 2001) responder.

The Zadroga Act, which provides needed medical services for 9/11 responders, expired on Sept. 30. It was not included in the emergency spending bill passed on Sept. 30. There has been a proposal to provide these services on a permanent basis in Congress for at least six months.

Our members in Congress like to extol the heroism of those who died during the attacks on 9/11. They praise the courage of the responders who risked their lives to do their job. But now when these responders need their help the most, South Dakota's representatives in Washington are letting us down. None of them are cosponsor-

ing this bill. They haven't even confirmed that they will vote for the bill, ensuring that these responders continue to receive the care we have earned.

This is not a New York issue. It's not even an East Coast issue. 9/11 responders live in every state in the nation. We are in all but a few congressional districts. This is a national issue which deserves a national response, from every member of Congress, regardless of where they are from.

Please contact Sen. Thune, Rep. Noem and Sen. Rounds, and ask them to cosponsor the renewal of the Zadroga Act. Only then will this great nation make sure that those who are continue to suffer from the events of that tragic day get the care we deserve.