

## Pied Piper Politics April 2014

Do we have a minimum wage problem, or do we have economic policy that is preventing us from creating enough jobs that pay more than the minimum wage?

The latest postponement, one of too many to count, of a Keystone Pipeline decision evidences our policy challenges. The construction labor and most all work involved in the waterfall economic activity from Keystone would surely create many jobs that pay way more than the minimum wage. Welders in energy infrastructure construction and maintenance can make more than \$100,000 a year. And McDonalds workers in oil booming North Dakota are reportedly making hourly wages in the high teens.

How about policy that supports building more pipelines, storage facilities and processing assets to support our exploding oil & gas production? That of course could be political suicide for the current administration and Washington's "progressives." Gosh golly gee whiz, how would those deep economic thinkers in the climate change religious left, Hollywood and the media react? Developing our natural resources is just not satisfactory kumbaya policy.

Let's do a little dissection of this minimum wage "problem."

According to the BLS, less than 3% of American workers are paid the minimum wage. Over fifty percent are between the ages of 16 and 24, aka adolescents. Two-thirds of minimum wage earners work part-time. Sixty-three percent live in family households with other workers. Sixty-two percent are still enrolled in school.

Overall, only 1.1% of all workers over the age of 25 earn the minimum wage. And guess what, over two-thirds of those in minimum wage jobs earn a raise above the minimum wage within a year.

Now here's some real light bulb data: Just 4% of minimum wage earners are single parents supporting a family. So let's see, how many people would that be, those 4% of single parents of the 3% of people earning minimum wage?

Do we have a minimum wage problem, or are certain politicians creating an "issue" they can use to gather emotional support from voters? Minimum wage, which pertains to only 1.1% of workers over the age of 25, two-thirds of which are likely to be paid more within a year, is a major political issue?

A good friend of mine recently suggested we don't have a Washington problem, but that instead we have a voter problem. "The politicians we get are put there by voters," and according to my friend, "most voters are just plain stupid." Well, what sort of voter intellect can we expect when they are being fed political propaganda like our minimum wage "problem"?

Instead of a minimum wage problem, it looks like we have millions, if not billions of dollars being spent on politically directed research to identify “issues” and develop communication strategies for how to get more voters on a certain side. **In effect, issues are market tested, then tactically executed, not for the good of the country, but for the benefit of political power.**

Let’s rock the La-Z-Boy a bit more.

According to the Williams Institute, “four recent national and two state-level population-based surveys suggest there are more than 8 million adults in the US who are lesbian, gay, or bisexual, comprising 3.5% of the adult population. Among adults who identify as lesbian, gay or bisexual, bisexuals comprise a slight majority (1.8% to 1.7% who identify as lesbian or gay).”

So let’s see, we have an ENORMOUS political issue around the 1.7% of our adult population that identify as purely homosexual. How much media attention has this subject garnered? How much political effort? How much money has been spent to make gay marriage legal in the United States?

Over fifty percent of our children are now born outside the traditional nuclear family. Student test scores have stagnated for decades, while the cost of education has exploded. Inflation, a stated policy goal of the Federal Reserve, has grown so much, and well paying jobs so little, that it now takes more and more two-household incomes to adequately support a family. And what of our exploding budget deficits? Yet issues that affect 1.1% and 1.7% of our population get significant airtime?

Do we have stupid voters? Or, are voters being manipulated by those millions and billions of dollars spent to create issues and strategies to get people elected?

So long as the Armchair has fallen way out of his La-Z-Boy, let’s take a glimpse at a political issue we will likely hear more and more about as the 2016 presidential race approaches: “gender inequality.”

Political strategists have really come up with a can’t-lose doozy here. The candidate that champions this issue likely plans to use gender to sway how many voters? How about over half the voters in the country? You think millions of dollars are not already being spent to craft the best way to frame this issue, and then the best way for a certain candidate to take up arms to conquer “gender inequality” once and for all?

Last time I checked, the genders were not equal. They are different. They’ve been different since the beginning of humanity, since the beginning of mammals, pretty much since all animal creatures evolved from a single cell organism. Men are from Mars, women are from Venus doesn’t sound like gender equality.

From Massachusetts Democrat Senator Elizabeth Warren:

“Bloomberg analyzed Census data and found that median earnings for women were lower than those for men in 264 of 265 major occupation categories. In 99.6% of occupations, men get paid more than women. That’s not an accident; that’s discrimination.”

You heard it, “That’s DISCRIMINATION!”

From President Obama:

“I call upon all Americans to recognize the full value of women’s skills and their significant contributions to the labor force, acknowledge the injustice of wage discrimination, and join efforts to achieve equal pay.”

Did you see that word again? “DISCRIMINATION!” Oh, the horror!

Do you think there are natural reasons women earn lower median wages? For one, maybe it’s because women work fewer hours on average. According to the Department of Labor’s Time Use Survey, men work 8.14 hours a day compared to women’s 7.75. One would think the person who works more hours is likely going to receive more pay. And how about the fact that women who plan on having and raising children will likely trade higher pay for more child-friendly jobs at lower pay?

Have you ever seen “comparative wage” data adjusted to reflect the unique gender differences between men and women? If so, send it to me. Otherwise, realize that someone is messing with your mind for one reason, to get elected.

I guess we could transfer the human embryo gestation process to some sort of Matrix-style human farming system. And then I guess we could let government bureaucracy raise those children. This might allow us to conquer gender inequality, except for maybe those physiological differences. Well, darn on that!

Fifty percent of our children are now being born outside the traditional nuclear family. Student test scores are stagnant. The cost of education has grown at a rate at least twice that of inflation. More and more, it takes two income households to adequately support a family. Borrowing and spending have replaced saving and investing in our value systems. Our economy seems increasingly dependent on fiscal and monetary policy, on government. And the most important of all, we are not creating enough well paying jobs that fit the skills of our labor force.

When we are fed “issues” by the well researched and calculated political machine, its intent is to, of course, upset us, to make us think we need to be more compassionate, to manipulate our emotions and exploit our guilt. What makes this an even bigger problem is that once elected, politicians have to “address” these issues, which results in policy for the few that ends up a burden on the many. Instead of helping the greater good, political “science” is creating more and more *what’s in it for me?* voters. If I’m part of the 1.5% of something, then I need to get my fair share of whatever I deserve!