

# JUST PROGRESS PROGRESSIVE REVIVAL RETREAT

**Stop the War**



**Protect the Earth**



**Promote Human Rights**



## SHOW UP!

***"Ninety percent of life is just showing up" Woody Allen***

## Six Years of Leadership Voids and Counting from President Bush

Jim Fluegel, Ph.D

*Leader* is defined as a person who leads, directs, commands, or is a guiding head, as with a group or activity or process. Lead is defined as to show the way to, or direct the course of, by going before or along with. Positive constructs related to leadership come to mind for each of us, such as personal and corporate integrity, honesty and simplicity, having a vision of an outcome that is driven by the burning desire to achieve the goals for the good of the people, etc. This has been lost on W, in my opinion.

What way has been shown in the past six years by the sitting President? What programs and services have improved to show a remarkable difference in a positive direction since he burst on the scene? How has the common good of the people fared under his lead? Leadership voids define his moment in time. *U.S. International reputation* is a joke. Rove, Cheney, et al. are nefarious by political actions and daily choices. Presidency by committee has been a recipe for disaster in these last six years. When he said, "That he intends to do this or that", I shudder to think what else can happen. Can't he take two weeks off and then quit for good? Do his fingers have to touch anything or anyone else? Oh, for a soiled dress instead of an eroding great nation. We are imploding from within, W. We are deteriorating every single day, under your lack of ethics and leadership, in my humble, American opinion.

Can the *national debt*, that was in good shape when you took office, stand to go much further in the red, than the \$8.738 Trillion noted at on 02-15-07 at [www.Public/Debt.Treas/gov/opd](http://www.Public/Debt.Treas/gov/opd) ? Every plan you develop for Social Security, for example, seems to cost more and give less. The *SS system* is good until the 20- 47 years go by, but most of us would encourage further funding to continue the marginal benefits that it provides with baby boomer numbers breaking into the system in the near future. ("What's in your wallet?") For starters, GW wanted to privatize the system into personal retirement accounts, and increase program costs while decreasing the individual benefits by 37%. Investment companies would lunge at this new form of revenue for them, but what about retirement revenues for retirees? *Education* gets new initiatives like 'no child left behind,' but funding and program initiatives are underfunded or sister programs are cut by millions of dollars. *Medicare and Medicaid* programs for persons with disabilities or seniors are no longer an entitlement, and millions of dollars are cut. There is no loyalty to honest, hard working Americans looking forward to retirement.

The *trade deficit* widens to **\$763 Billion for 2006**, while *exports linger at \$1.4 Trillion and imports weigh in at \$2.2 Trillion*. **China holds** on to the largest individual share of the deficit with **\$232.5 Billion** coming to them alone. American jobs are outsourced overseas, and plants close across our land. *Health insurance*, for some but not all, is adversely affected by deals with pharmaceutical companies holding patients hostage or making them choose between medications and heating oil in the cold of winter. **The last Congress would not let the government negotiate for better medication rates** for Medicare Part D recipients, because they accepted too much lobbying monies from the drug companies. Patient care in programs for the indigent fall short in meeting the needs of the patients and hospitals, where state and federal dollars are insufficient for adequate services. *Ethics* is a lost art, just as much as is writing thank you cards, but it endangers the thread and fiber of America when our leaders act the way they do on a daily basis. *Minimum wage* is the rule for many citizens.

*Civil liberties* are under attack, without regard to judicial influence or oversight, just from White House staffers who say OK to anything W insiders want to do. Come on America, vote the Democratic Party today and every time you have a chance, until there is a reliable presence of leadership that stands in front of the people of the United States, asking us for our help and ideas to make a better America. Business as usual is not a very pretty sight these days in many political circles. *Erosion of the middle class* is a foregone conclusion.

Web sites of interest to Progressive Democrats include: [www.democrats.org/agenda.html](http://www.democrats.org/agenda.html); [www.demookie.com/forum](http://www.demookie.com/forum); or [www.okyellowdog.com/](http://www.okyellowdog.com/).

## THE POLITICS OF FEAR

Pat Fluegel

Iraq is an “imminent threat” to our “American way of life.”

We went to war in Iraq to destroy Saddam’s weapons of mass destruction.

America has a moral duty to free the world from tyranny.

Either you’re with us or against us.

“The radical Islamists are going to do one of two things. They are going to force everyone to convert to their brand of Islam or they are going to saw off our heads.” (Henry Murphy – *The Tulsa World*, 2/18/07)

Do these statements make you: Scared? Angry? Worried? Confused? Hang in there. You’re not alone. These ARE scary times. While Al Qaeda terrorists threaten American soil, North Korea builds an arsenal of nuclear weapons. And how does the Bush administration respond? By declaring war on Iraq. Why? Because Saddam MAY have WMDs, which he MIGHT use against some unspecified enemy sometime in the future. And, oh, by the way, Iraq sits on the world’s second largest oil reserve! Follow that?

What about the scene right here in the U.S.? “Rank opportunism rules. In the name of preventing terrorism, the Bush administration has employed a politics of fear to create the most extensive national security apparatus in our nation’s history: military tribunals, mandatory registration, mass detentions, electronic surveillance, government secrecy, executive privilege, Office of Total Awareness, perpetual war.”(Ruth Rosen, *The San Francisco Chronicle*, 12/30/02) Just think what’s happened since 2002!

At the center of this situation are two groups: the Neo-conservatives and the radical Islamists. Both were idealists born out of the failure of the liberal dream to build a better world. Together they created today’s nightmare vision of an organized terror network. A fantasy that politicians then found restored their power and authority in a disillusioned age. **Those with the darkest fears became the most powerful.** (BBC News 1/14/05)

Psychotherapist and writer Carol Norris says the slogans like “you’re either with us or against us” utterly dismisses the complexities of people, societies and their relationships. But the slogan works because it is meant to encourage people to do just that – to think in oversimplified terms, tapping into deep-seated fears. It is no coincidence that Ted Geisel, aka Dr. Seuss, was once a writer of war propaganda. Both types of writing get in touch with the same concrete, childlike (not childish) thought processes such as “you bad, me good.” Young children think like this because of where they are in their cognitive development. Adults whose lives have been seriously threatened--or perceive that they have, sometimes think similarly. They move from a healthy balance of operating from all areas of the brain to using primarily the (more primitive) limbic system, which is responsible for self-preservation. And so when you and I question or disagree with our government, many of these people can’t hear it, absolutely won’t hear it. It’s too threatening: please don’t tell us about the world’s complex realities, say their unconscious minds, because we are SCARED and have little access to our rational brain right now. We need our government, our metaphorical “parent” to survive. DON’T YOU KNOW OUR VERY SURVIVAL IS AT STAKE RIGHT NOW? But in order to get those people to hear the difficult, ugly realities, we must realize the role fear plays in their lives and find ways to speak to them so that this audience can also hear our message. If people are able to loosen the clutches of fear and let themselves take a critical look at the world around them, slowly but surely change will happen.

**I do not want this war, this sham.  
I don not want it. Scared? I am.  
I do not want it in Iraq.  
I do not want it in a sock.  
I do not want it on TV.  
I do not want it haunting me.  
I do not want my Congress to fail me.  
I do not want John Ashcroft to jail me.  
I do not want this war, this sham.  
Unpatriotic? Oh please, what a scam.**

[www.counterpunch.org](http://www.counterpunch.org)  
[www.commondreams.org](http://www.commondreams.org)

## THE IRAQ WAR: ENTERING, LOSING, LEAVING

Gary Allison

Congress gave Bush permission to go to war with Iraq by approving H.J. Res. 114. The House adopted it on Oct. 10, 2002, by a vote of 296 (215 R, 81 D) to 133 (7 R, 126 D) with 3 Reps not voting (2 R, 1D). <http://clerk.house.gov/evs/2002/roll455.xml#N>. The Senate adopted it on Oct. 11, 2002, by a vote of 77 (48 R, 29 D) to 23 (1 R, 21 D, 1 I). <http://archives.cnn.com/2002/ALLPOLITICS/10/11/iraq.us/>. See the Senate vote at [http://www.senate.gov/legislative/LIS/roll\\_call\\_lists/roll\\_call\\_vote\\_cfm.cfm?congress=107&session=2&vote=00237#position](http://www.senate.gov/legislative/LIS/roll_call_lists/roll_call_vote_cfm.cfm?congress=107&session=2&vote=00237#position). See the House vote at <http://clerk.house.gov/evs/2002/roll455.xml#N>.

“Over time, the principal justifications originally given for the Iraq war lost much of their force. [W]eapons of mass destruction have not been found. No significant prewar link between Saddam Hussein and international terrorism has been discovered. The difficulty of establishing stable institutions in Iraq is making the country an increasingly unlikely staging ground for promoting democracy in the Middle East. As time elapses, the Bush administration’s dominant remaining justification for the war is that Saddam Hussein was a tyrant who deserved to be overthrown—an argument of humanitarian intervention. . . . [But] the invasion of Iraq failed to meet the test for a humanitarian intervention. . . . And while at the time it was launched it was reasonable to believe that the Iraqi people would be better off, it was not designed or carried out with the needs of Iraqis foremost in mind. Ken Roth, War in Iraq: Not a Humanitarian Intervention, <http://hrw.org/wr2k4/3.htm>.

Credible analysts have made plausible cases that “the Iraq war was designed to 1) secure U.S./U.K. oil supplies before and after global Peak Oil, and 2) to have a large military presence to "dissuade" other oil-producers from moving towards the euro as an oil transaction currency. . . . While deceiving the American people into war, this administration sent a message to other OPEC-producers – ‘You are either with us or against us.’” William Clark, The Real Reasons for the Upcoming War with Iraq, <http://www.ratical.org/ratville/CAH/RRIraqWar.html#p4a>. See also, Kevin Phillips, American Theocracy: The Perils and Politics of Radical Religion, Oil and Borrowed Money in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century 87-96.

The costs of this war have been immense. Our military has suffered 3151 deaths and an estimated 23,000 to 100,000 wounded. <http://antiwar.com/casualties/index.php#count>. Iraq has suffered between 56,880 and 100,000 civilian deaths. <http://antiwar.com/casualties/index.php#count>. Economically, the war has cost the United States over \$368 Billion, Oklahoma over \$5.5 Billion, and Tulsa over \$674 Million. [http://nationalpriorities.org/index.php?option=com\\_wrapper&Itemid=182](http://nationalpriorities.org/index.php?option=com_wrapper&Itemid=182). The United States has also lost its status as a champion of human rights by its use of torture, its refusal to implement Geneva Convention principles for humanely treating prisoners, and its use of extraordinary rendition-taking prisoners to countries where torture is a normal means of conducting interrogations. <http://www.realcities.com/mld/kwashington/15642236.htm>, <http://www.aclu.org/safefree/extraordinaryrendition/22203res20051206.html>.

The Iraq War has been a failure. Thus, many strategies for exiting Iraq have been put forward. <http://www.comw.org/pda/0512exitplans.html>. Perhaps the most sensible were made by the Iraq Study Group, which recommended the initiation of negotiations with all countries in the Middle East, especially Iran and Syria, changing the U.S. military mission to that of training Iraqis to take over all security operations, and pressuring the Iraqi government to take steps needed to reconcile its warring religious and ethnic groups. [http://www.usip.org/isg/iraq\\_study\\_group\\_report/report/1206/iraq\\_study\\_group\\_report.pdf](http://www.usip.org/isg/iraq_study_group_report/report/1206/iraq_study_group_report.pdf). Then there is Bill Maher’s comic/tragic advice: “Our intention was good: to penetrate Iraq and bring it to a glorious, euphoric climax. But it's clear now that's just not going to happen. And yet we're still pounding away. Causing the whole area to become painfully inflamed. And in that situation, the kindest thing you can do is...just pull out.” [http://www.hbo.com/billmaher/new\\_rules/20061020.html](http://www.hbo.com/billmaher/new_rules/20061020.html). Instead, despite the results of the 2006 elections, our Great Decider has decided to surge. <http://www.timesonline.co.uk/tol/news/world/iraq/article1292393.ece>. In response, the Democratic controlled Congress is trying to pass a toothless resolution condemning the surge. <http://www.msnbc.msn.com/id/17179124/>.

## Climate Change Challenges: U.S. Responses

Gary Allison

**Climate Change** is the world's most pressing environmental challenge. Much detailed information about the scientific and political consensus on Climate Change, its causes, its effects and what can be done about it, can be found on the webpages of the United Nations Framework on Climate Change. <http://unfccc.int/2860.php>.

“The average temperature of the earth's surface has risen by 0.74 degrees C since the late 1800s. It is expected to increase by another 1.8° C to 4° C by the year 2100 -- a rapid and profound change. . . The principal reason for the mounting thermometer is a century and a half of . . . burning . . . ever-greater quantities of oil, gasoline, and coal, the cutting of forests, and the practice of certain farming methods.

The current warming trend is expected to cause extinctions. Numerous plant and animal species, already weakened by pollution and loss of habitat, are not expected to survive the next 100 years. . . . Recent severe storms, floods, and droughts, for example, appear to show that computer models predicting more frequent "extreme weather events" are on target.

The average sea level rose by 10 to 20 cm during the 20th century, and an additional increase of 18 to 59 cm is expected by the year 2100. If the higher end . . . is reached, the sea could overflow the heavily populated coastlines of such countries as Bangladesh, cause the disappearance of some nations entirely, foul freshwater supplies for billions of people, and spur mass migrations.

Agricultural yields are expected to drop in most tropical and sub-tropical regions -- and in temperate regions, too, if the temperature increase is more than a few degrees C. Drying of continental interiors, such as central Asia, the African Sahel, and the Great Plains of the United States, is also forecast. These changes could cause, at a minimum, disruptions in land use and food supply. And the range of diseases such as malaria may expand.”

[http://unfccc.int/essential\\_background/feeling\\_the\\_heat/items/2917.php](http://unfccc.int/essential_background/feeling_the_heat/items/2917.php).

**Rational Responses** to the climate change challenge include: ***Reducing emissions, expanding forests, changing lifestyles and rules, adopting strategies for helping humans adapt to the inevitable effects of climate change.*** Reducing emissions can be accomplished by “[b]urning oil and coal more efficiently, switching to renewable forms of energy, such as solar and wind power, and developing new technologies for industry and transport can attack the problem at the source.” *Id.* Expanding forests will not occur unless the payments can be made to persons and countries so that preserving and expanding forests is as profitable as exploiting them for fuel and building materials. [http://unfccc.int/essential\\_background/feeling\\_the\\_heat/items/2909.php](http://unfccc.int/essential_background/feeling_the_heat/items/2909.php). Humans do not change lifestyles without incentives and prods, so governments must adopt a mixture of incentives and commands designed to reduce emissions (carbon taxes and markets), encourage energy efficiency (increase minimum fuel efficiency standards for automobiles, buildings, appliances; develop attractive mass transit systems; ship goods by boats and rail instead of trucks).

[http://unfccc.int/essential\\_background/feeling\\_the\\_heat/items/2910.php](http://unfccc.int/essential_background/feeling_the_heat/items/2910.php). Some damage from climate change is now inevitable, so it is imperative that governments take steps now to reduce the harms produced by that damage, including: identifying vulnerabilities, establishing flood walls and resettlement strategies, developing alternative and diverse crops for agricultural areas sensitive to climate change, and taking care to site infrastructure facilities where they will be the least affected by climate change.

[http://unfccc.int/essential\\_background/feeling\\_the\\_heat/items/2911.php](http://unfccc.int/essential_background/feeling_the_heat/items/2911.php).

The Kyoto Protocol was established to develop a world-wide strategy featuring nation-by-nation targets for reducing carbon emissions. [http://unfccc.int/kyoto\\_protocol/mechanisms/items/1673.php](http://unfccc.int/kyoto_protocol/mechanisms/items/1673.php). Kyoto has been ratified by 168 nations, *id.* but, unfortunately, the United States, along with Australia, Croatia, and Kazakhstan, has not.

[http://unfccc.int/files/kyoto\\_protocol/background/status\\_of\\_ratification/application/pdf/kp\\_rat\\_131206.pdf](http://unfccc.int/files/kyoto_protocol/background/status_of_ratification/application/pdf/kp_rat_131206.pdf). The United States still does not support effective climate change research and has attempted to keep government scientists and scientist who receive federal funding from speaking out on this issue.

[http://www.bushgreenwatch.org/mt\\_archives/000309.php](http://www.bushgreenwatch.org/mt_archives/000309.php). Bush's proposals—Clean Coal research, increased use of nuclear power, development of hydrogen power—divert resources from the most effective short term strategies of energy efficiency. *Id.* In fact, he has proposed fuel efficiency standards that go in the wrong direction. *Id.* ***Oklahoma could help change this direction by defeating the world's most prominent climate change denier-Senator James Mountain Inhofe-in 2008.***

## **LOSS OF CONSTITUTIONAL RIGHTS**

**John Butler**

Today, the American people are facing the loss of one of our most precious constitutional rights, the Writ of Habeas Corpus. The United States Constitution has been under siege for many years. We have seen the demise of the effectiveness of the Writ of Habeas Corpus along with the denial of due process and the right to privacy.

Habeas Corpus precedes Magna Carta in 1215 and has been the common law of the United Kingdom and the United States clear up until the passing of the Constitution of the United States. The ability to obtain a Writ of Habeas Corpus has now become questionable by the legislation pushed through congress referred to as the Military Commission's Act of 2006. Basically, the president of the United States, Mr. W. can decide on his own, certain threats to the United States and incarcerate or imprison an individual for an indefinite period of time at an undisclosed location. Prior to the passage of this bill, any individual that was within the United States, its boundaries, possessions or territories controlled by the United States had the right to habeas corpus. Today, we've seen the court take that right away from us. A good history of the Writ of Habeas Corpus can be found at [www.wealth4freedom.com/law/HabeasCorpus.shtml](http://www.wealth4freedom.com/law/HabeasCorpus.shtml).

The United States government is presently attempting to pass legislation that would require certain microchips to be placed in each person's state drivers license that would identify them and give other essential information to those who have the ability to read the microchips. Those entities or unauthorized individuals will eventually obtain access to the coded information for far less than legal or appropriate reasons. Residents of States that do not comply will be denied the right to enter public buildings or travel by air.

The federal government, various entities and corporations already have capabilities of tracking nearly every thing we purchase. Sam's Club has been recording and tracking every item each member purchases and entering the information into their private database for years.

The navigational systems and black boxes that are now installed in new automobiles virtually allow the government and the insurance companies to track our every movement and know each and every place we visit at any given moment. Many people, to this day, are unaware of the black boxes in their vehicles.

The recent marking of personal identification for each and every citizen of the United States is reminiscent of two books. The first one is that of George Orwell's, 1984 and the second book being Hal Lindsey's, Late, Great Planet Earth. The requirement of personal identification codes or chips in drivers licenses is very similar to that prophesied by Hall Lindsey and the Book of Revelations that speaks about the mark of the beast. It is difficult to imagine that even the most conservative of the Christian Coalition would be in favor of a measure allowing invasion of privacy of this magnitude.

Having been a student of the law for the better part of 40 years, it is apparent that we are headed in the direction of the times when inquisitions and the Star Chamber determined our rights. We will no longer have a free society.

**Hot Button Issues: A Time for Courage**  
**Gary Allison**

Our politics have been increasingly bitter as a result of demagoguery on two hot button issues: Reproductive Rights and Equality for all U.S. Citizens regardless of sexual orientation. Given the human rights inherent in these issues, Progressives must insist that candidates they support demonstrate courage on these issues.

**Reproductive Rights:** Under current U.S. law, everyone is entitled to access to birth control, *Griswold v. Connecticut*, 381 U.S. 479 (1965), *Eisenstadt v. Baird*, 405 U.S. 938 (1972). Women have qualified rights to terminate their pregnancies. *Planned Parenthood of Southeastern Pennsylvania v. Casey*, 505 U.S. 833 (1972).

*Our law affords constitutional protection to personal decisions relating to marriage, procreation, contraception, family relationships, child rearing, and education.* *Carey v. Population Services International*, 431 U.S. at 685. Our cases recognize "the right of the individual, married or single, to be free from unwarranted governmental intrusion into matters so fundamentally affecting a person as the decision whether to bear or beget a child." *Eisenstadt v. Baird*, supra, at 453 (emphasis in original). . . . These matters, involving the most intimate and personal choices a person may make in a lifetime, choices central to personal dignity and autonomy, are central to the liberty protected by the Fourteenth Amendment. At the heart of liberty is the right to define one's own concept of existence, of meaning, of the universe, and of the mystery of human life. ***Beliefs about these matters could not define the attributes of personhood were they formed under compulsion of the State.***

*Casey*, 505 U.S. at 851. With respect to a woman's choice about terminating a pregnancy:

The State is [NOT] entitled to proscribe it in all instances. That is because the liberty of the woman is at stake in a sense unique to the human condition and so unique to the law. ***The mother who carries a child to full term is subject to anxieties, to physical constraints, to pain that only she must bear. . . . Her suffering is too intimate and personal for the State to insist, without more, upon its own vision of the woman's role, however dominant that vision has been in the course of our history and our culture.*** The destiny of the woman must be shaped to a large extent on her own conception of her spiritual imperatives and her place in society.

*Casey*, 505 U.S. at 852. Given the profound complexity of the question of how society should treat the potentiality that pregnancies will, if uninterrupted, usually lead to the birth of a living child, our laws do not permit women to terminate their pregnancies absent any governmental interference. A compromise has been worked out by the U.S. Supreme Court. It includes the following:

[T]o promote the State's profound interest in potential life, throughout pregnancy the State may take measures to ensure that the woman's choice is informed, and measures designed to advance this interest will not be invalidated as long as their purpose is to persuade the woman to choose childbirth over abortion. These measures must not be an undue burden on the right.

[T]he State may enact regulations to further the health or safety of a woman seeking an abortion. Unnecessary health regulations that have the purpose or effect of presenting a substantial obstacle to a woman seeking an abortion impose an undue burden on the right.

[R]egardless of whether exceptions are made for particular circumstances, a State may not prohibit any woman from making the ultimate decision to terminate her pregnancy before viability.

[S]ubsequent to viability, the State in promoting its interest in the potentiality of human life may, if it chooses, regulate, and even proscribe, abortion except where it is necessary, in appropriate medical judgment, for the preservation of the life or health of the mother.

*Casey*, 505 U.S. at 878-879. This compromise has enabled states to require that women be given materials expressing the State's desire that they give birth and supports available if they do, women delay abortions for awhile to consider this information, and minor women give parental notice or obtain parental consent. *Casey*, 505 U.S. at 881-887, 899-900. This compromise certainly does not embody everyone's preferences with respect to this very serious issue, but it does much to balance the deep personal interests of women to not have their destinies shaped by biological factors while reflecting society's deep respect for human life.

## Hot Button Issues: A Time for Courage-continued

**Equality Regardless of Sexual Orientation:** Sexual orientation is a part of the complex phenomenon of human sexuality. This complexity involves the following factors:

Human sexuality encompasses a variety of orientations, genders, and practices. Individuals may be heterosexual, homosexual, bi-sexual, or asexual in orientation. As judged by physical characteristics (e.g. chromosomes, internal configuration, external genitalia), an individual's gender may be characterized as male, female, or intersex.” Giving rise to theories of multiple genders is the increasingly obvious fact that some people are transgendered . . .

Even more obvious is the fact that *many people, including persons involved in heterosexual coupling, engage in sexual practices other than vaginal intercourse* such as oral sex, anal intercourse, masturbation (with another or alone), the use of various sex toys, etc.

Gary D. Allison, *Sanctioning Sodomy: The Supreme Court Liberates Gay Sex and Limits State Power to Vindicate the Moral Sentiments of the People*, 39 Tulsa L. Rev. 95, 95-97. Viewing this issue as whether certain type of sex should be legal is too narrow a focus, a fact recognized by the U.S. Supreme Court when it stated that **laws punishing non-harmful sexual behaviors:**

[H]ave more far-reaching consequences, touching upon the most private human conduct, sexual behavior, and in the most private of places, the home. The statutes do **seek to control a personal relationship that . . . is within the liberty of persons to choose without being punished as criminals.**

This, as a general rule, should counsel against attempts by the State, or a court, to define the meaning of the relationship or to set its boundaries absent injury to a person or abuse of an institution the law protects. It suffices for us to acknowledge that adults may choose to enter upon this relationship in the confines of their homes and their own private lives and still retain their dignity as free persons. When sexuality finds overt expression in intimate conduct with another person, the conduct can be but one element in a personal bond that is more enduring. *The liberty protected by the Constitution allows homosexual persons the right to make this choice.*

*Lawrence v. Texas*, 123 S.Ct. 2472, 2478 (2003). Moreover, the Court asserted that *Casey* had :

[C]onfirmed that our laws and tradition afford constitutional protection to personal decisions relating to marriage, procreation, contraception, family relationships, child rearing, and education. *Id.*, at 851. In explaining the respect the Constitution demands for the autonomy of the person in making these choices, we stated as follows:

These matters, involving the most intimate and personal choices a person may make in a lifetime, choices central to personal dignity and autonomy, are central to the liberty protected by the *Fourteenth Amendment*. At the heart of liberty is the right to define one's own concept of existence, of meaning, of the universe, and of the mystery of human life. Beliefs about these matters could not define the attributes of personhood were they formed under compulsion of the State.

***Persons in a homosexual relationship may seek autonomy for these purposes, just as heterosexual persons do.***

*Id.* at 2481-2482. Thus, the Court concluded that:

The petitioners are entitled to respect for their private lives. The State cannot demean their existence or control their destiny by making their private sexual conduct a crime. Their right to liberty under the *Due Process Clause* gives them the full right to engage in their conduct without intervention of the government. “It is a promise of the Constitution that there is a realm of personal liberty which the government may not enter.”

*Id.* at 2484. In coming to this decision, the Supreme Court in *Lawrence* gave legal affirmation to society's increasing acceptance of persons with same-sex orientation, for gay men and lesbian[ women] have been elevated in substantial numbers into the roles of public officials, religious leaders, pop culture icons, valued friends, trusted employees, and responsible parents. Allison, 39 Tulsa L. Rev. at 141. They have also been making significant strides toward achieving the first-class citizenship that will come when they gain the rights to sanctify their loving relationships through marriage and to demonstrate their love of country through service in the nation's armed forces. *Id.*

**DANGER! Childhood Ahead**  
**Brad Byers**

“Oklahoma really is OK, at least as far as the people who live here are concerned.”

That’s the lead sentence from a Tulsa World news story.<sup>1</sup> It’s based on a poll of 752 likely voters in January 2007.

They didn’t ask the 13,300 victims of child abuse (2005 figures).<sup>2</sup>

They didn’t ask the 7,000-plus mothers and 3,000-plus fathers, most of them drug abusers, who neglected, starved, beat, or killed those children.

Most important, they didn’t ask the Department of Human Services (DHS), which is able to reach only 8% of the families needing child abuse services.<sup>2</sup> DHS would have told the poll-takers they need 110 more case workers and supervisors just to take care of the existing load. In the past four years, DHS added just 2.5% more workers. In the past two years, it placed 22% more children in out-of-home care, where they must be monitored by DHS case workers.<sup>1</sup>

DHS Director Howard Hendrick says he needs \$14.3 million more this year just for a slight improvement in the children and family services division.

The poll-takers MAY have asked Oklahoma’s ultra-conservative legislators, who chose to cut taxes for the wealthiest among us while letting the children fend for themselves.

<sup>1</sup>Jan.4,2007, p.G1.

<sup>2</sup>Oklahoma Institute for Child Advocacy.

<sup>3</sup>Alliance for Oklahoma’s Future (AOF), May 31, 2006.

## The War on the Middle Class and the Erosion of the Safety Net Mildred Banks

**Middle Class Nightmare**—Using almost any yardstick, the vanishing middle class, who once were the keepers of the American dream, have begun to live in a nightmare. *The middle class has never been so vulnerable, says Lou Dobbs, and it is under assault from politicians and the lobbyists who court them, big-business corporations that are sending our jobs overseas, and the media that rely on sensationalism instead of facts when reporting the news.*<sup>1</sup> Dobbs demonstrates how the gap between America's haves and have-nots is not just financial, but includes the erosion of education, employment, government, and community. The workforce has been restructured, so that jobs at the low and high ends have replaced those in the middle: there are now more janitors and fast-food workers, but their jobs won't support a middle-class life.<sup>2</sup> To end the class war that so many pundits and experts have acknowledged, all of us are exhorted to fight back and reclaim our economic status.

**Can't Afford to Retire**—The political debate can no longer be devoid of economic populists, because America's younger generation of workers sees its safety net falling away. With increasing cynicism, younger workers see that they can never retire, because 43% of working households are in danger of having too little income in retirement.<sup>3</sup> *While 80% of workers had a pension in 1985, only 33% of workers had a pension in 2003.*<sup>4</sup> Every year, 1,000 employers voluntarily shut down their pension plans, Dr. Salsbury says, yet Americans are living longer, with nearly half of all American households moving into retirement in the next 20 years. Simultaneously, *the federal government owes Social Security over \$1.5 trillion, with bankruptcy looming, he says, at the very time that 2/3 of retirees rely on Social Security for 50% of their incomes.* The government's approach to Social Security and the huge federal deficit threaten to make old age and poverty synonymous again, says Alicia Munnell of The Century Foundation.<sup>5</sup> The federal deficit is, in effect, an estate tax on the middle class and our children, Dobbs says.

**Spending Our Money**—Taxes are the single greatest monthly expense in a household, and *the Bush Administration's tax policies have shifted the burden to middle and lower class families, while removing the burden from the wealthy.* Dr. Salsbury looks at the health-care system, in which the Employee Benefits Research Institute estimates that even with Medicare, the average American will need thousands of dollars just to pay for health care in retirement. Lou Dobbs flatly calls our health-care system corrupt. In addition, *92% of those filing for bankruptcy last year were middle class,* according to Christine Dugas.<sup>6</sup> About half of those filing were working people who experienced catastrophic illness or injury, says Consumer Affairs.<sup>7</sup> *Millions of middle class families can no longer afford to live on 2 incomes,* due to the high costs of housing and employers requiring workers to pay more for benefits that used to be covered by employers.<sup>8</sup> The economic squeeze is even worse for single parents after divorce.<sup>9</sup> Meanwhile, the average CEO of a large corporation pulls in 300 times more pay than the average worker, at \$8.1 million per year.<sup>10</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Lou Dobbs, War on the Middle Class: How the Government, Big Business and Special Interest Groups Are Waging War on the American Dream and How to Fight Back, Penguin Group USA, © 2006.

<sup>2</sup> Griff Witte, The Washington Post, "As Income Gap Widens, Uncertainty Spreads," September 20, 2004.

<sup>3</sup> Center for Retirement Research, June 2006.

<sup>4</sup> Gregory Salsbury, Ph.D., But What If I Live: The American Retirement Crisis: A Retirement Guide for Baby Boomers © 2006.

<sup>5</sup> The American Prospect, May 2004 issue was devoted to The War on the Middle Class and has 10 authoritative articles on the subject from many perspectives, including families, education, future retirees, the economy, undercutting American workers, and shifting the tax burden away from the rich.

<sup>6</sup> Christine Dugas, USA Today, "Middle Class Barely Treads Water: Millions of Middle-class Families Can No Longer Afford to Live on Two Incomes," September 15, 2003.

<sup>7</sup> Consumer Affairs, "Major Illness Frequent Cause of Bankruptcy, Study Finds," April 26, 2000.

<sup>8</sup> Thom Hartmann, Screwed: The Undeclared War Against the Middle Class, Berrett Koehler Publishers, © 2006.

<sup>9</sup> Elizabeth Warren, Harvard Magazine, "The Middle Class on the Precipice," January-February 2006.

<sup>10</sup> Congressman George Miller, Pittsburg Post-Gazette, "A Wonderful Life if You're On Top, June 13, 2004.