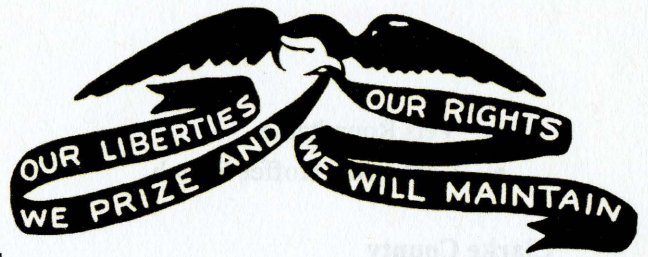


THE PRAIRIE PROGRESSIVE



January 2017

A NEWSLETTER FOR IOWA'S DEMOCRATIC LEFT

Punching down

Much has been written about Bobby Kaufmann's latest foray into school-yard bullying. The State Representative for Iowa House District 73, is 'annoyed' by high school and college students who feel vulnerable, threatened, and fearful following the November election (known in Prairie Progressive dens as The Night of the Living Dread).

Casual observers may not know that Bobby's 'Suck it Up, Buttercup' proposal is classic Kaufmann. It's not the first time that he's been annoyed by young people who don't have the platform bequeathed to him by his father, former state representative and current Iowa Republican Party Chair Jeff Kaufmann.

What most distinguishes Bobby as a legislator is that he, like all bullies, tends to punch down. Bobby the Bully is Bobby the Brave when he goes after the Governor's Conference on LGBTQ Youth, or the tiny and universally scorned Westboro Baptist Church.

That LGBTQ Youth conference, funded privately (despite the word Governor

in its title) and coordinated by Iowa Safe Schools, drew over 1000 people in 2015 to listen and talk to local and nationally-known speakers. Bobby, hearing rumors of 'X-rated' content, sought to investigate the conference with subpoenas by the House Oversight Committee, which he chairs.



Attempting to use the power of a government committee to intimidate private citizens not involved in a government activity? Mr. Kaufmann, that's bullying.

We all abhor Westboro's publicity-seeking strategy of desecrating the American flag outside of funerals for veterans. Burning and otherwise defacing the flag are legal acts fully protected by the US Constitution, but once again, Bobby puffed out

his chest over a straw man (even the pro-constitutional amendment group Citizens Flag Alliance can count only a handful of flag burnings every year). Seizing another chance for his own publicity, Kaufmann the Younger announced in Letters to the Editor in small-town newspapers that he wasn't sure what he could do specifically, 'but count on me to fight with a fiery passion to defend the honor of our flag and our fallen soldiers.' Those of us who have been targets of Westboro thuggery over the years have learned that they revel in attempts to censor them. Thanks, Bobby, for giving them exactly what they want.

Bobby's claim that he "value[s] our First Amendment rights" is a joke. Freedom of speech is the same in Washington, DC, in Ferguson, Ohio, and in Bobby's home town of Wilton, Iowa. Without the freedom to be offensive, it ceases to exist. A protest that fails to annoy or inconvenience may as well not occur. Bobby doesn't understand our Constitution, or he willfully exploits it for his own self-aggrandizement. Worst of all, Bobby's faux patriotism is insulting

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What Went Wrong, and the Way Forward

Democrats continue to be in denial about what went wrong in the November elections. It was not the fault of the FBI, or “the Russians,” or the unjustly vilified Julian Assange, or Wikileaks, or Clinton’s emails. It was a nationwide rejection of the policies of the Democratic Party, which have generated an economic recovery characterized by low wages, wealth inequality, job insecurity, and health care insecurity.

Our first political task is to turn the Democratic Party back into a majority party at every level of government and in all parts of the country, as it was in the wake of the New Deal. In order to do that, it is important to understand what went wrong under Democratic leadership.

For two years leading up the election, 65% of the American people consistently believed that the country is moving in the wrong direction. Under President Obama the Democratic Party, with the full support of Democratic elected officials at every level of government, pushed through a comprehensive plan to deal with the Great Recession of 2008. Every major policy initiative but one (the Trans-Pacific Partnership, or TPP) was put into effect with congressional approval. The Democratic argument that Republican obstructionism prevented Democrats from responding effectively to the recession is simply false.

The bank bailout, passed with the enthusiastic support of the Obama administration, placed a high priority on protecting the income and wealth of bank investors on the theory that American working people need big banks to guarantee their prosperity.

The home foreclosure program, touted as a way to save millions of Americans from foreclosure, successfully protected the income of mortgage lenders while

doing nothing to help desperate Americans from losing their homes.

The economic stimulus program was too little and too late to help American working people get good jobs at good wages, as some Democratic economists like Nobel Prize winner Paul Krugman warned repeatedly. The failure to introduce a second round of stimulus was probably the biggest failure of the Democratic Party under Obama.

Capping the federal minimum wage at \$7.25 an hour was a very conscious decision on the part of the Obama administration, based on the theory that raising the minimum wage during a recession would slow down the natural recovery of the capitalist economy.

The Obama administration’s enthusiastic promotion of the **Trans-Pacific Partnership**, labeled by Clinton the “gold standard” of trade deals, represented a continuation of NAFTA, a policy of driving down the wages of working people in America in the interests of profits for investors in trans-national corporations.

Democratic party cooperation with the Republicans in **austerity programs for domestic federal spending**, which required any increase in spending (other than defense) to be matched by cuts in other areas of domestic spending, produced a disastrous policy of layoffs of government employees. Under a Democratic administration, federal employees faced a wage freeze. At the end of Obama’s first term, there were 500,000 fewer public employees in America.

Obamacare is a program designed first of all to fatten the profits of the private health insurance industry with compulsory enrollment for all Americans, who face an insurance system with no price controls.

Americans now face a choice of being fined if they fail to enroll in a health care plan that they cannot afford, paying for health insurance that is so expensive with deductibles and co-pays that they cannot afford a hospital visit, or applying with no certainty of success for one form or another of means-tested or income-tested welfare.

Democrats have apparently forgotten the lessons of the New Deal and Great Society, which created entitlement programs like Social Security and Medicare which are not means-tested. Welfare never works to provide universal coverage, and is never popular either with its recipients or the general public. That is one of many reasons why Obamacare is unpopular even among the people who are newly enrolled on the insurance exchanges, or on Medicaid. Bruce Braley lost Tom Harkin’s Senate seat to the right-wing nut case Joni Ernst because he thought Obamacare was a good idea, and could be defended.

These economic policies have been a failure. Every one of them put the interests of wealthy private investors, who fund most Democratic campaigns, over the interests of the American working class. Working people turned to Donald Trump in key states, and turned the Democratic Party into a minority party at every level of government.

Bernie Sanders has emerged from this election as the de-facto leader of the Democratic Party because he understands why the New Deal was a success. If we are to restore our party to its former status as the natural party of government, we should pay attention to his advocacy of working class politics. That is the path to economic prosperity and electoral victory for Democrats, from the White House to the courthouse. ✂

– Jeff Cox

- Grandview Firefighter (2015 AFG, 40,000)
- Midwest Rod and Restoration (Branstad visit July 2015)
- Littleton Brothers Monument (Dedication June 2016)

Jefferson County

- Century Farms
- Milton Firefighter (2015 AFG, 29,000)
- Chamber Meeting
- County Development Incubator
- SunnyBrook Living Care Center-Fairfield
- First Friday Art Fest
- Jefferson-Henry-Washington USDA-RD Project Collaboration

Henry County

- Century Farms
- Hearth and Home (Branstad Visit July 2015)
- Mackay (Adding new jobs and equipment July 2015)
- MM Composite
- Jefferson-Henry-Washington USDA-RD Project Collaboration

Lee County

- Century Farms
- FM Battlefield (looking to get battlefield into national parks registry)
- Steffensmeier Welding & Manufacturing (Adding Solar, Branstad visit July 2015)
- Quarry Creek Elk and Bison
- Appleberry Orchard
- Fort Madison Bank and Trust
- FM Sports Complex
- Lexington Square Assisted Living-Keokuk
- The Kensington- Ft. Madison
- Lee County Econ Devel Tour

- Ft. Madison Senior Dining
- Keokuk Senior Dining
- West Point Fire Department
- Fort Madison Area United Way
- Siemens Wind Power
- Lost Duck Brewing Company- Ft. Madison

Van Buren County

- Century Farms
- Good Samaritan Center
- VBCO Hospital Visit

Washington County

- Century Farms
- Washington HS Tour (New Building)
- Jefferson-Henry-Washington USDA-RD Project Collaboration
- ACH Foam Technologies
809 E 15th St
Washington, IA 52353
www.achfoam.com
- Kalona Brewing Company- Kalona

Clinton County

- Whittier Elementary Blue Ribbon School Visit
- Clinton After School Program visit- Clinton (September)
- Senior Dining- Clinton
- Senior Dining- DeWitt
- Senior Dining- Camanche
- Mobile Food Bank/River Bend- Clinton
- Women's Health Services- Clinton
- Darling International- Clinton
- Mobile Meals United, Inc.- Clinton
- Clinton NARFE Guest Speaker Invite (Nov 3)
- Front Street Brewery- Davenport

Johnson County

- Medicaid Families Meeting
- U of I Med Students Meeting

Good Riddance

Wasn't it just perfect? There was John Podesta, Bill Clinton's former Chief of Staff and CEO of Hillary's 2016 presidential campaign, striding onto the NYC stage to address Hillary's die-hard fans on election night. He, the dean of Wall St. connections and organizer of multi-millionaire fundraisers, sent to give the faithful the bad news. He, who was quoted in an email complaining about having to live in "a leftie alternative universe." And what instruction did Clinton's messenger give loyal supporters late on Nov. 8? "Go home."

It was a fitting and final ending to the Clinton Democratic Dynasty.

Looking back, many consider the Clintons as saviors of the modern Democratic Party. After all, Demos had lost presidential elections in 1980, 1984 and 1988 before Bill rode to the rescue in '92. During his eight years as president he oversaw strong economic growth, although as he admitted while speaking at the 2004 Harkin Steak Fry he had little or nothing to do with that economic progress, which was primarily the result of increasing worker productivity due to the maturation of computerization.

As leader of the newly created 'centrist' Democratic Leadership Council and as US president, Bill delivered, especially on GOP legislative priorities. By his own admission Bill's major accomplishments were NAFTA and welfare reform. For the life of me, I've never understood the love affair Iowa Democrats have with Bill Clinton. Other than Supreme Court nominees he was basically a Republican president who presided over the GOP takeover of Congress for the first time in 48 years.

Hillary's legacy is more complex. A tireless organizer and civil rights

lawyer, she accomplished more in her first 20 years as an adult than most of us will in a lifetime. But at this year's Democratic National Convention, did you notice how heavily front-loaded her life's accomplishments were in her bio video? Somehow she lost her way, and her hawkish foreign policy proposals positioned her to the right of every Democratic presidential candidate of the past 50 years. Still, as the first woman presidential nominee of a major party, she inspired many women young and old.

Together Bill and Hillary lured Democrats to the middle, implying we had to be more conservative to win. But on the national stage the Clintons lost about as many elections as they won. Bill won the presidency in '92 and '96, but Hillary lost her Demo primary bid in '08 and the general election in 2016.

The overall Clinton legacy will be shifting the Democratic party financial foundation to Wall St. and wealthy donors. A perfect – and utterly depressing – example of this was the weekend following the late-summer Louisiana flooding which displaced over 100,000 people, making it one of the largest floods in recent US history. Donald Trump took time to fly down, and well, look presidential. Where was Hillary that same weekend? Holding a fundraiser in the Hamptons with multi-millionaires. And President Obama? He was in the Hamptons too. Playing golf.

The result of this disconnect between party and people was made clear on Nov. 8, when 72% of white folks without a college degree voted for a nontraditional Republican. Days immediately afterward were also instructive, when a representative of Hillary's largest super-PAC, which spent more than any super-PAC in history, said "we had no idea the extent of the anger" in the industrial Midwest. In

a private speech Hillary admitted she and Bill were "far removed" from the middle class folks she claimed to represent. That tends to happen when you have a private chauffeur, daily, for 24 years.

Personally, I was surprised so many folks were surprised at the outcome. Hillary's strategy to appeal exclusively to women, minorities and LGBTQ folks left me feeling invisible, and her closing TV ad looked nothing like any community in Iowa – its images consisted 90% of minorities and women. My friends on the West Coast chuckled and chided me when I pointed out this fact prior to Nov. 8. They're not laughing now. I work for equality for all, but that doesn't mean we should appeal to voters according to their heritage, gender, or skin color at the expense of economic issues and class. Clinton outspent Trump by perhaps 5-1, and lost.

This, then, is the final Clinton legacy.

Whether this legacy guides the Democratic Party in the coming years may well depend on its next presidential nominee. The good news heading into 2020, thanks to Bernie Sanders, is that Democratic candidates should no longer be afraid to campaign on a truly progressive, broad-based populist agenda.

Yes, it sure was good to see you out from behind the curtain, John Podesta...hopefully for the last time. You and the Clintons had your turn. Now, follow your own advice and go home. Go far, far away. And good riddance.



–Waterloo resident Dennis Harbaugh has been an angry populist since 1976.

The Only Thing to Fear

Although it feels like we lost the war on November 8, I would argue that overwhelming and paralyzing fear is a horrible response to an election. Fear leads to irrational decisions. Panic. Paralysis. Along with paralyzing fear, we seem to be experiencing an epidemic of paralysis through analysis.

The Labor Movement, like all successful movements, wasn't built on fear and idleness. It was built on courage. People began organizing with no laws to protect them. People were beaten for concerted activity. People were killed attempting to raise standards for their families. People stood up to confront dangers and injustices when laws didn't exist to protect workers and families. People with courage. Those people adapted their tactics to the fight they were in.

Our political opponents of today adapted their tactics and won the war. They kept us busy trying to survive, and when we weren't looking they carpet-bombed us. They kept us so busy in hand-to-hand combat that we forgot to notice that the war we're losing is not the war we should be waging. Unions have been fighting the battle over workers' rights to organize into individual bargaining units, when the real battle is to create a social movement that gives workers power on *and off* the job.

Research shows that almost every problem facing working families is disproportionately affected by socio-economics. Hunger, homelessness, diabetes, mental health, housing, drug abuse, smoking, wage theft, incarceration..... *every* issue affects working families disproportionately. And the

less you make, the less likely you are to have advocates and services. Now the far right has a plan to cut services even more, and launch an attack on the advocates for the exact people who need it most – working families.

If unions want to be the "voice of working people" we must expand our mission and redefine who we are as an organization. We must redefine the war. And we have to start by building our own infrastructure for the new war.

Movements aren't built in a day and they're not killed in a day. A single election, Supreme Court decision, or regulatory ups and downs cannot be

They kept us so busy in hand-to-hand combat that we forgot to notice that the war we're losing is not the war we should be waging.

the determining factor in defining success for a movement. The movement remains the same but the tactics *have* to change! The train wrecks in Des Moines and DC are all the reasons we need to change the battlefield and finally start organizing on a grassroots level – in our neighborhoods.

The union I'm a member of, Teamsters Local 238, with 6000 members in 86 Iowa counties, knows that the resistance on attacks on working families must be built not just jobsite by jobsite, but neighborhood by neighborhood. Community by community. Town by town. Along with our traditional and core mission of collective bargaining, Teamsters will be working with our allies to survey working families in both union and non-union households,

and to build community committees to fight for and find solutions to our issues. Coalitions in different towns may be working on different issues, depending on the issues working families have identified. We won't wait for the next election. We don't have to. There are no laws that say unions can't organize and advocate for working families *outside* of the workplace. We don't need anyone's permission. Building infrastructure at the neighborhood level is now core to the mission of the Teamsters union in Iowa.

We don't need a law to tell us we can organize in our workplace, in our communities, in our state. Thinking we needed the permission of the government to fight to protect standards of working families is a trap we fell into. A trap that made us comfortable. It got us off the street. It got us out of the neighborhoods. They can change the laws, but they can't "You're Fired" us from the movement, like a reality TV show. If they change our laws, it's an opportunity for us to evolve as a movement.

Unplanned events move us down new paths with new opportunities. Thinking strategically instead of emotionally is necessary. We shouldn't be afraid to redefine our movement. We should be afraid of waking up and going through the day without doing anything except analyzing our losses to the point of paralysis. How we deal with our fear will define our courage and leadership. ✨

–Jesse Case grew up
in Storm Lake, Iowa.

Notes of a Native Iowan

White, rural voters had a hand in electing Donald Trump and the takeover of the Iowa legislature. Many articles are calling them moronic, racist, rigid, fundamentalist Christians. Some are. But some are merely misguided, poor, struggling, and can't keep up with the complexities of policy and politics.

I grew up in white, rural Iowa, but I am a progressive Democrat and not religious. Someone asked me recently how that was. I was surprised by the question, but as I thought about it, I came up with two things that were different in the rural Iowa I knew growing up, and the rural Iowa of today.

The first is unions. Where I lived, in a small town, most of the primary wage earners (men) were employed in a union plant such as John Deere or Firestone.

Being in a union meant my dad belonged to something larger than himself. I clearly remember the pride he took in keeping his picket line duty schedule when they were out on strike during contract negotiations. Sometimes the strikes were long and I remember "commodities," huge cans of peanut butter that we subsisted on, and powdered milk.

Being in a union is not just about wages and benefits. It is about a collective identity, being a full-fledged member of the middle class, a participant in the American dream, defined as a good job, a house, maybe even college for your kid if you were frugal enough. You were a part of America. You had someone fighting for you and you shared in the fight. You may not be rich, but being in a union meant you were not "poor."

Back in my day in white, rural Iowa, a union job gave you a sense of community, dignity, and satisfaction in

living a simple life. You didn't have to hate others for having more than you did, because you were doing okay for yourself. You had value. You belonged.

If there had not been that union job for my dad, our family would have just been poor and there would have been shame in that. I think that's where it is today. The good union jobs are gone, and the shame of being poor is back.

Enter the right-wing propaganda machine, the second thing that is different today, with its massive reach, telling you exactly who is to blame for jobs being gone, telling you everything the Democrats are trying to do to help you, is actually hurting you. Immigrants are stealing your jobs, your president wasn't born here, is a traitor. And on and on.

From our privileged view, with college educations, we can't imagine being taken in by such obvious lies. Why don't people just inform themselves better? But it is incumbent upon us to educate ourselves about the reality of life for many in rural Iowa.

The right-wing propaganda machine in Iowa takes the form of the dominating presence of conservative talk radio. NPR exists, but trying to get facts to the people is like shouting into a hurricane.

"The Telecommunications Act of 1996 provision that greatly expanded the number of stations that one individual could own was devastating to free speech. Clear Channel (Now I Heart) owned around 40 stations then. Within 2 years CC owned 1200 stations. Other networks also expanded. Once they controlled all those stations and could program each station from one location, the fate of talk radio was doomed to be conservative. Because that is what the owners wanted it to be.

"Today, 91% of the messages getting out to the people are filtered through conservative talk show hosts.

"Every day 2700 hours of conservative diatribes against health care, against energy policies, against programs to get people back to work are balanced by only about 254 hours of messages on the truth of what the [Obama] administration is doing for the people." www.populistdaily.com

In Iowa, at least 700 hours a week of right-wing propaganda is being broadcast on the AM dial. Stations that broadcast multiple hours a day of it are: KCPS Burlington – 11 hrs/day, KBUR Burlington – 6 hrs, KXEL Waterloo-CF – 9 hrs, WOC Quad Cities – 9 hrs, KXIC Iowa City – 6 hrs, WHO Des Moines 9 hrs, KSJC Sioux City – 13 hrs, Cedar Rapids WMT 6 hrs, WDBQ Dubuque, 13 hrs, KILR Estherville – 13 ½ hrs, KGLO Mason City – 3 hrs, KIWA Sheldon, 9 hrs, KFJB Marshalltown, 3 hrs, KASI Ames, 6 hrs, and KICD Spencer, 8 hrs.

This massive amount of false information being pumped into our communities, solely for profit, divides us and makes democracy unsustainable. Climate change, health care, social justice issues, and the economy cannot be even talked about when citizens hold two opposite versions of reality.

The unions going away and the onslaught of right-wing radio are two things that have done devastating harm to our political discourse. Unless we take time to more fully understand the enormity of the loss for rural Iowans caused by the destruction of unions, coupled with the daily tsunami of right-wing radio delivering a fictional version of reality, we are not going to be able to re-connect with rural voters in Iowa or throughout America. ✘

–Trish Nelson grew up in Marion County, Iowa.

Seven Myths About Immigration

The recent presidential campaigns of both Donald Trump and Bernie Sanders tapped into the legitimate anger felt by US workers facing increasingly precarious working conditions in the aftermath of the Great Recession of 2007-2008. Nativists have pursued an argument which blames low-income immigrants for US job losses and perceived US decline. But this has developed into a kind of mythology. In my recent presentation before the Iowa City Foreign Relations Council, I set out to refute seven myths about immigration. These can be summarized as follows:

1. Immigrants do not pay taxes and are a drain on health and education.

Immigrants and their descendants will pay \$80,000 more in taxes than the cost of the public services they receive, since the average immigrant arrives at the onset of his or her working career and will not require health services until decades later. Because education is provided at the state level, in individual states, authorized immigrants may receive more in state spending on education than they pay in, but nation-wide, immigrants to the US pay in more than they take out.

2. Immigrants are a drain on the host country's economy.

Because immigrants overwhelmingly come to work, they are a net positive asset to the economy and are credited with revitalizing urban economies throughout the US. Moreover, the Mexican government spends hundreds of billions of dollars on education on social services for immigrants who end up working in the US, reflecting a net *subsidy* from Mexico to the US.

3. Immigrants are 'rapists' and criminals.

This claim, famously made by presidential candidate Trump in June of 2016, deserves two correctives. First, the incarceration rate for 18-39-year old male immigrants

is *five times* lower than among U.S. citizens in general. The Immigration Policy Center comments: 'The problem of crime in American society is overwhelmingly a problem of natives, not immigrants.' Second, immigrants come here to work, and most work long hours while living under nativist suspicions. Most don't have the time nor would they risk the consequences of committing crimes.

4. Allowing immigrants to enter increases the threat of terrorism.

On August 4, 2016, Trump told his supporters: 'We are letting people come in from terrorist nations that shouldn't be allowed because you can't vet them.' If Trump means the system is not perfect, he is of course correct, no system can be. But the claim that we 'cannot vet' immigrants is false. Refugees from unstable regions are first vetted by the United Nations Refugee Agency, which only approves about 1% of requests. Federal intelligence and security agencies in the US run names, bios, and fingerprints through databases while DHS interviews each applicant. If approved for immigration, immigrants undergo medical screening, cultural orientation classes, and one final security clearance (with another round of extra scrutiny for refugees from Syria). Even then, only half of those approved are admitted and the whole process takes about two years.

5. Building Walls and Fences will solve problems.

Over 670 miles of the 2,000-mile border with Mexico is already fenced, at a cost of \$3 million per mile, or \$2.01 billion. Fencing the entire border would thus cost an additional \$4 billion or so to

complete, but the real costs lie in maintenance and security, which one scholar puts at between \$32 and \$140 billion for the first 25 years. The DHS budget doubled from \$19.5 billion to \$64.9 billion over the past fourteen years, and that includes ballooning budgets for border patrol agencies: U.S. Border Patrol (1000% in ten years); U.S Customs and Border Protection (120% increase in ten years); ICE (100% increase in 12 years), among others. Since 1990 the number of unauthorized immigrants living in the US has grown from 3.5 to 12 million; how effective has this spending been?

6. Walls, Border Patrols, and Deportations reflect a serious intent to halt the flow of immigrants.

The truth is that for two centuries, farm labor and guest-worker programs have represented an 'uncomfortable marriage' between those who resented foreign workers and employers in the US whose appetite for cheap migrant labor is insatiable. Proposals to punish employers in the US for employing unauthorized workers have failed. The Immigration and Reform Control Act of 1986 included such provisions, but few employers were ever prosecuted or forced to pay the \$10,000 fine, in part because this

Criminalizing immigration puts immigrants in a position of extreme vulnerability, where they are willing to accept the rock bottom wages that translate into super-profits for big (agri)business.

new law inadvertently called into existence a vast new black market in counterfeit immigration documents. Criminalizing immigration puts immigrants in a position of extreme vulnerability, where they are willing to accept the rock bottom wages that translate into super-profits for big (agri)business. As the 'race to the bottom' has been largely driven by 'crimmigration', CEO compensation has shot

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through the stratosphere. What incentive does big business have to change this situation?


7. Immigrants take jobs away from domestic workers.

This is a myth in aggregate terms, but it is not *all* myth. Studies of the aggregate effects of immigration demonstrate the net positive effect that immigrants have on the US economy, including contributing to a net *rise* in US wages, while the only negative effect in aggregate terms is a reduction in hours worked by US teens. In US manufacturing, however, the native workforce fell by 4.8 million between 1994 and 2008 (before the crisis) while immigrant employees increased by 0.8 million. This leaves 4.0 million native worker job losses, which can largely be explained by offshoring. But yes, in the manufacturing sector specifically, immigrant laborers have replaced native workers. This has accompanied the decline of the US labor movement in general. Union membership is down from 35% of the workforce in 1980 to well below 10% today. Immigrant laborers offer US employers a way of replacing higher-paid and unionized workers with workers willing to work under more exploitative

conditions. It is not hard to understand the rip-roaring anger of long-standing native workers in US manufacturing.

While it may appear to some as a simple and easy solution to US labor woes, the idea that we can 'make America great' by exporting immigrant laborers who drive a major portion of our economy is counterintuitive at best. Deporting millions of working immigrants would likely precipitate a recession as businesses close and effective demand drops. The US immigration crisis is but one (major) part of a restructuring of labor markets on a global scale never seen before. Hundreds of millions are on the move in search of better incomes, and their movement can only be welcomed by the multinational corporations whose soaring profits are but the other side of the coin to the rock bottom wages they pay to immigrants. ✂

—Michael Andrew Žmolek teaches World History, International Studies, and Development Studies at the University of Iowa. He has worked in Congress for Reps. Cynthia McKinney (GA) and Dennis Kucinich (OH). A list of sources is available upon request at michael-zmolek@uiowa.edu



December 25, 2016
Federal Holiday

January 1, 2017
Minimum wage increases to \$10.10/hour in Johnson County, Iowa

February 1, 1902
Langston Hughes born

February 11, 1937
GM recognized United Auto Workers after sit-down strike in Flint, MI

February 12, 1947
First draft cards burned in US to resist peacetime conscription

February 24, 1912
Bread and Roses strike led by Elizabeth Gurley Flynn in Lawrence, MA

March 2, 1807
Congress banned importation of slaves into US after January 1, 1808

March 4, 1917
Jeannette Rankin became first female member of US Congress

March 7, 1932
Police killed striking workers at Ford plant in Dearborn, MI

March 31, 2017
The Future of Black Iowa conference, Iowa City

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Punching down Continued from Page 1

to 'our flag and our fallen soldiers' that he pretends to defend 'with a fiery passion.' Maybe he is unaware that American soldiers take an oath to protect the Constitution, not the flag.

What also distinguishes Bobby as a legislator is that he, like all bullies, slinks away when he loses control of a situation. Recently Bobby bragged about how many "buttercup" interviews he had done, until he appeared by phone on the Canadian Broadcasting Company's *As it Happens* (similar to NPR's *All Things Considered*). Bobby obviously relished the attention, talking confidently about a

school that had brought in a 'therapy pony' to ease students' anxieties, until host Carol Off politely but firmly pressed him to tell her listeners where the therapy pony had appeared. [Editor's note: this question is an example of what was once known as 'journalism.'] After three squirming attempts to not answer, Bobby simply hung up, like a buttercup.

All of this punching down on weaker targets by a privileged son could be excused if he occasionally showed the courage to go after people or groups with genuine power. Bobby's silence is deafening on the abuse of power by

the Board of Regents, the Governor's trial balloon of cutting IPERS benefits to thousands of working Iowans, the payday loan companies, the nursing home industry, the pharmaceutical lobby, and the countless corporate interests that align themselves against our most defenseless citizens.

Bobby ran unopposed in the last election, in a district that includes a chunk of the People's Republic of Johnson County. It's time we challenge Bobby to be a big boy, not a bully, or find someone to take his place. ✨

-Prairie Dog

THE PRAIRIE PROGRESSIVE
Box 1945
Iowa City, IA 52244

