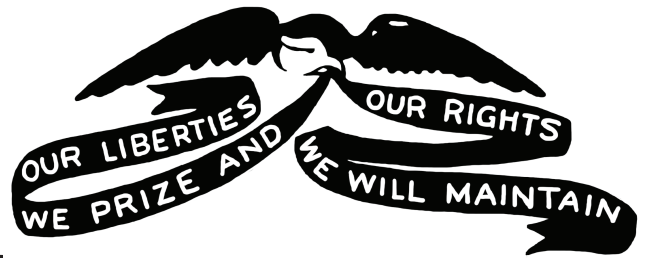


THE PRAIRIE PROGRESSIVE



Spring 2018

A NEWSLETTER FOR IOWA'S DEMOCRATIC LEFT

Roseanne: Meeting people where they're at?

I have watched the first three episodes of the rebooted Roseanne. I have read Roxane Gay's emphatic denunciation of the show. I have seen friends on social media suggest a boycott of companies which advertise on Roseanne.

Maybe Roxane Gay and my Facebook friends are just wrong. Maybe the rebooted Roseanne will make a positive contribution to our culture and politics.

First, the show might not be for you because you are likely not the target demographic. I never watched *The Apprentice* because I don't like bad reality television. If you do not like a working-class sitcom, don't watch Roseanne.

In three episodes, this version of Roseanne indicates it will confront many real issues faced by regular people: job loss; parents bringing their children to move in with their parents; nonconforming gender expression; opioids; family members deployed abroad in the military; personal debt. While television has brought us countless stories of wealthy people living in nice suburbs where everybody is attractive, both the original and reboot of Roseanne stand out because they attempt to show the unglamorous life of working-class America. There is a word for that. It is called relatable.

Of course, it is not just the economic and family challenges of everyday life

which are relatable, disagreements over politics within families have also become very common. Roseanne's character is a Trump supporter. Trump is ever-present in this show as he is in our news and culture.

Just think about how this may become a tangible positive. The reboot of Roseanne is going to force Trump to withstand the test of time. When a relatable challenge confronts the Connor Family this week, guess what? Trump will not have the answer. When a different problem emerges next week, guess what? Trump may not even care.

Ah, you may ask, what good does this do? Anybody can see this for themselves on MSNBC, on late night TV or in my twitter feed, right? This takes us back to remembering the target demographic: it is probably not you. It might just be possible that traditional news outlets and cultural elites are not going to sway a sizable chunk of white working-class Americans with a tradition of voting Democratic who strayed to Trump in 2016. The logic or satire that converts your moderate Republican banker might not do it for a boiler room technician. Roseanne may be able to utilize a permission structure of white working-class Americans that NPR will never penetrate. With the brand and the credibility the show Roseanne brings, it could become easier for a lot of voters Democrats need to

conclude, "Maybe this guy really isn't worth a shit."

You are naturally asking how anybody can defend the real-life Roseanne Barr's extremely unpleasant public statements? Nobody is trying to do that.

Be careful, though, as some of the progressive criticism seems to go a bit further. Some of the progressive criticism seems to object to any show featuring a white working-class family. There is some degree of class condescension against this version of Roseanne just like there was against the original.

You must be able to tell a story without college degrees or much diversity. If you cannot accept a story about Keokuk, why would you expect the people of Keokuk to vote for the same candidates as you? Blue-collar Iowans are not "those people." Actually, they are my clients, my wife teaches their children, and they are our neighbors. We must meet people where they are at. The rebooted version of Roseanne does that and may be uniquely positioned to demonstrate that the emperor has no clothes.

And if you don't buy any of that, just remember, Wanda Sykes is the head writer for Roseanne. ✂

—Nate Willems is a union lawyer who lives in Mt. Vernon but spends a lot of time in Keokuk.

Our responsibility: Taking care of our state

As a Democratic candidate to succeed Senator Bob Dvorsky, I've spent the last four months traveling all over Johnson, Cedar, and Muscatine Counties listening to voters and in April, my campaign will visit every single community in District 37. Many of the top issues I hear about are what I expected — our beleaguered health care system, devastating education cuts, the assault on workers' rights. Beyond these "kitchen table" issues, however, there is no set of issues I am asked about more frequently than protecting our natural resources.

I'm best known for my speech about marriage equality to the Iowa legislature, which turned me into an overnight activist for same-sex marriage and LGBTQ rights in our state. At the time I gave that speech, however, I was a civil and environmental engineering student at the University of Iowa hoping to work in either the renewable energy industry or environmental protection.

As an Eagle Scout, I developed a deep commitment to leaving the world a better place than we found it. That commitment led me to environmental engineering and then, when given the opportunity, to continue my advocacy for families all over Iowa. And now, we all have a commitment to fight for tomorrow's families, too, and making sure that we leave our state in better shape than we found it. Part of the challenge is that "better shape" has often been a moving target.

Because we are always learning more about how our actions affect our environment, what seemed "normal" or "better" five or ten (or fifty) years ago may be understood differently today. But solving problems means a willingness to update how we see the world. Changing our worldview and

our practices can be exceptionally difficult, but we owe it to each other and to future generations to do this work.

We need an updated approach to resource management that values the health and prosperity of our communities and makes sure future generations have the same opportunities as past generations. Specifically, we need new strategies and solutions to water quality, climate change, air quality, clean energy, and mitigating the impact of concentrated animal feeding operations or CAFOs.

Early in 2018, the legislature passed a \$280 million water quality bill, which sounds like a lot. But experts I'm speaking with at the University of Iowa believe this is at least a \$4 billion problem. The Republican solution is a drop in the water quality bucket. In 2014, the Iowa DNR reported that 80% of our water bodies could be impaired and in need of clean up under the Clean Water Act. A better water quality plan should establish a dedicated funding source for larger investments without taking the money from our schools and other infrastructure projects, include monitoring efforts to track water quality progress, and foster partnerships within Iowa watersheds to encourage Iowans to work together toward a cooperative vision for cleaner water.

There should be no doubt that climate change is among the greatest threats facing future generations. Iowa will experience increased frequency of extreme weather events like the 2008 Floods. These events will impact our agricultural productivity, economic development, and public health. To address these threats, Iowa must help communities identify their climate-change vulnerabilities, invest in infrastructure improvements that promote preparedness and resilience to extreme weather events, and main-

tain our position as an international leader in wind energy production while expanding that leadership to solar energy production as well.

Today, far too many Iowans worry about the levels of nitrates in their tap water or rely on private wells that may be contaminated with bacteria or arsenic. Many others live near concentrated animal feeding operations (CAFOs) and fear health effects from the air they breathe. Iowa needs a stronger and fully funded DNR for reliable oversight and enforcement of environmental protections. We also need more dedicated resources for smaller water systems and private well owners to improve access to clean and safe drinking water at every tap. To overhaul the process for CAFO siting and permitting, we need to update the DNR's Master Matrix to better integrate environmental protections and address the concerns of affected communities.

Natural resources are a critical pillar of Iowa's social foundation — the air we breathe, the water we drink, and the soil with which we grow our food. It's that same social foundation that the Iowa Republicans are dismantling in the legislature.

We must balance our obligations to feed the world with our responsibility to future generations of Iowans. It is our responsibility to do our best. A renewed foundation starts with fully funding water quality efforts, preparing for a changing climate, and continuing to invest in wind and solar energy. Clean, renewable energy is both good for environment and our economy.

It's our state. It's our responsibility to take care of it. ❧

—Zach Wahls lives in Coralville and is running for the Iowa Senate, District 37.

Time to do better for our seniors

They are our parents, our grandparents, our friends, our neighbors. Iowa's senior citizens are people about whom we care. You know someone who is not as sharp as she once was; and you know a senior citizen who is having a hard time making ends meet and worries she may not be able to afford her medication if the price goes up again.

As Iowans, we want to do right by the older generation. After all, one day, WE will be the older generation. This is not a partisan issue. Senior citizens are our family, and these should indeed be their Golden Years.

Consider for a moment just how humbling it is to have held a job, raised a family, been the decision-maker. Then something happens, and suddenly you are faced with the prospect of diminished independence or self-sufficiency. What will happen next? Can you afford it? We must create a smoother glide path for the ever increasing ranks of aging Iowans.

Senator Bob Dvorsky fought for legislation to protect our seniors from elder abuse. Yet ever tighter state budgets have led to cut backs in areas crucial to the safety of our most vulnerable seniors. The state ombudsman, charged with regular unannounced visits to nursing homes, lacks funds to make physical visits. What happens to those who don't have family to check on them and ensure they are being well cared for? Meals on Wheels, the only daily contact some elderly people have with another human being, has also seen budget cuts. Every meal cut represents an elderly Iowan who has lost a meal and daily contact.

We must follow in Senator Dvorsky's footsteps to improve services and reduce risks. The list is long, and includes quality, coordinated healthcare, transportation, mobility, visiting nurses, and other home services. Programs designed to help the elderly transition back to their homes after a health event are also key – the CARE Act, that would require relatives to be educated on medical tasks they will need to do when a relative is discharged, seems a common sense start. We need to increase affordable, accessible housing options. For seniors who remain healthy, we must examine options that will allow them to age in place.

There are good models: Johnson County, for example, has a clearinghouse of services available on its Livable Community website (livablecommunity.org). The county now also has an aging specialist whose job is to connect caregivers and seniors to services in the community. That should be the standard – a comprehensive overview and a helping hand.

One problem in particular looms large: a caregiver shortage. It is already here, though not on the scale that is coming as baby boomers age. Caregiving must become a respected profession with competitive wages. Community colleges can train all the certified nursing assistants they want, but if pay is low, hours are long and benefits non-existent, CNAs will move on. We need to think out of the box.

As a state and as a country, we could benefit from a caregiver visa program. Canada has one, and it works well. Private agencies vet and bring in intending immigrants with rel-

evant skills - mostly nursing degrees. The caregiver lives with a family for at least two years, and is paid a designated, reasonable wage. After two years working in elder care or child care, the caregiver becomes eligible for the Canadian equivalent of a Green Card, and eventually citizenship. Families benefit and Canada benefits. We can, too.

Adult Family Homes offer an in-between level of care and already exist in several states. A family decides they want to become full time caregivers for four to six senior citizens who can no longer live on their own, but do not require nursing home-level care. Each senior has her own room with her own belongings. They eat together, are surrounded with family life, have visitors, and enjoy a great degree of independence. The industry is carefully regulated and providers train regularly. Someone is there at the push of a button, 24/7. My mom lived her last years in a wonderful Adult Family Home in Washington State. Why not Iowa?

As state budgets have tightened and Republican legislators have slashed one program after another, it's time to ask ourselves: If it is not the role of government to help those who need it most, what is its purpose? We can and must do better. We are Iowans, after all. It will take all of us to make it happen, from individual acts of kindness, to local programs, to legislation in the State House and, I hope, in Congress. I challenge us all to do right by aging Iowans. ✨

–Janice Weiner grew up in Coralville, served as a US diplomat for 26 years, and is a candidate for the Iowa Senate, District 37.

I swear to uphold the Constitution

There is a theme to the 2018 Session of the Iowa General Assembly of which many people are aware but remain silent about its existence. Our courts and its officers are under attack.

Several legislative bills are evidence of the Republican offensive. But it's not just the bills; statements made by certain legislators during debate, primarily in the Iowa Senate have been critical of the Iowa Supreme Court's decisions and ability to interpret the Constitution properly.

Senator Julian Garrett (R-Indianola) introduced and floor managed a bill that would have required a super majority of Iowa Supreme Court Justices to rule that a statute was unconstitutional. During the subcommittee meeting on the bill, Senate File 2153, Sen. Garrett explained the need for the bill.

Legislators, who are elected by the people of Iowa, vote on a bill and pass it on to the Governor, who also is elected by the people of Iowa, and after the Governor signs it, one person on the Court (assuming the Court is split 4-3), who is not elected by the people of Iowa, can decide that the legislation is unconstitutional. "That's just not right," he said.

The purpose of Garret's bill was to attack the Court for decisions with which he and his colleagues disagree. Thankfully, the bill fell out of sight once it got to the House.

A proposal to amend Iowa's Constitution to add a right to bear arms passed both chambers and will have to pass the next General Assembly in identical language to be on the ballot for Iowans to decide whether we want this addition or not. The

wording of the proposed amendment is different from the United States Constitution's Second Amendment. This proposal specifies that: "Any and all restrictions of this right shall be subject to strict scrutiny."

Strict scrutiny is a standard used by the courts to determine the weight of an issue when balancing the rights of individuals against the government's interest. It is unheard of for a legislature to dictate to the courts which level of scrutiny to follow when determining whether a law is constitutional or not. The use of strict scrutiny is reserved for cases involving possible violations of individual rights and suspect classifications. Rep. Matt Windschitl, the floor manager of the bill, was asked why there was a need to include the requirement of strict scrutiny. He said it was so that the Iowa Supreme Court could get it right. If Republicans remain in control of both chambers next year, expect this constitutional amendment to be on the 2020 ballot.

Logrolling is the legislative act of putting several different issues in the same bill so that a legislator will have to take the bad with the good. In a quarter century of lobbying, I have never seen a better example of logrolling than Senate File 2382. In its original form, it had sixty sections. A House amendment, if taken up, will remove most of those sections, especially the most egregious and constitutionally questionable. The bill covers everything from expungement of convictions, the medical examiner, drivers' licenses, enhanced penalties, judicial procedures, and more.

Logrolling is a constitutional violation. Article III, Section 29 of the Iowa Constitution prohibits its use in

that each bill shall "embrace but one subject, and matters properly connected therewith; which subject shall be expressed in the title." The title of this bill is an act "relating to criminal law and procedure including certain related administrative proceedings, providing penalties, and including effective date provisions."

During closing remarks on SF 2382, the floor manager and author of the bill, Senator Dan Dawson (R-Council Bluffs) stated that with the passage of SF 2382 "this Legislature is exercising its constitutional duty in its lawmaking and will hold the Supreme Court accountable for its decisions."

Then, there is the fetal heartbeat bill, SF 2281. This is the bill that many say is an attack on doctors. A doctor may be committing a class "D" felony for performing an abortion when medical instrumentation detects what is likely a heartbeat of the fetus. Most women don't know they are pregnant at this stage of fetal development. This is not so much an attack on doctors as it is an attack on the courts. Being the most restrictive abortion language in the country, the purpose of this measure is to get the courts to overturn every previous decision relating to abortion, going all the way back to *Roe v. Wade*.

"Legislating from the bench," a phrase most legal scholars cannot define, according to Catherine Cook (Harvard Political Review, March 2009), is a mantra of the right. Yet, the ultra-right conservative legislators who consistently utter that expression cannot see their hypocrisy of "adjudicating from the chamber." ❧

—Marty Ryan is the Prairie Progressive's Iowa Capitol Senior Correspondent.

Handmaid's Tale returns

Genesis 30: And when Rachel saw that she bore Jacob no children, Rachel...said unto Jacob, "Give me children, or else I die.....Behold my maid Bilhah, go in unto her; and she shall bear upon my knees, that I may also have children by her."

Margaret Atwood's enduring 1985 novel retold on HULU will debut season two on April 25. The following is a review of season one, already celebrated with Emmy's, Golden Globes, and other awards.

Show creator Bruce Miller and cinematographer Reed Morano have recreated Atwood's vision with the same creepy authenticity of her famous tale. The setting of her dystopia, Gilead, is Harvard, which began as a Puritan theological seminary in Cambridge, MA, 1636. Atwood penned her novel during the Reagan era of the Christian Right and Moral Majority, but the misogyny is current. Atwood has said that in creating Gilead, she did not include anything that has not already happened or that may not be happening somewhere now. (In 2017 women in scarlet demonstrated in WDC and other states dressed as "handmaids" protesting new anti-abortion laws and cuts to Planned Parenthood.) The novel has been translated into 40 languages, made into film, opera, ballet, even couture fashion since 1985.

The still-life, painterly colors of Gilead get lodged in your head like a memorable Vermeer. What sticks most is the cloaked handmaids in the deep red color of prostitution, menstruation, and the scarlet letter of adultery.

The premise here is of an unlivable America ruined by environmental catastrophes. Population and child-

birth have plummeted, many adults are barren. Evangelical fundamentalist Christians have staged a coup, massacring U.S. leaders. The drive to increase childbirth has led to segregating women according to their value — the fertile ones, handmaids, are parceled out as temporary property, fertility slaves, to powerful men and their barren wives for childbearing. They are indoctrinated by 'Aunts' who teach conformity and obedience through praise and torture. Gilead is a curated place, according to director Miller — inorganic, intentional.

Offred, the handmaid of our tale, is played by Elizabeth Moss ("Madmen"), choking us as well as herself on Gilead. Named for her "Commander" Fred, she is now 'of' - 'Fred' (Joseph Fiennes, of "Shakespeare in Love"). Fred's wife, Serena Joy, (Yvonne Strahovski), is a gifted televangelist member of the cult that created Gilead. She is neither serene nor joyful. The regime insures that she now sit mostly at home knitting for the child of her handmaid - an agent of her own oppression.

This Brave-New-World is qualified with Atwood's desire to have her characters feel real enough to arouse sympathy. In order to get inside Offred's head, the camera smothers her. The effect is to convey the entrapment by Fred and wife whose modus operandi is the holier-than-thou of a Mike Pence and a Phyllis Schlafly. Says Offred, "Handmaids are two legged wombs...ambulatory chalices." It's borne out by the key religious event in Gilead, a monthly ceremony recreating the image of the Biblical Jacob, his wife, and maid. Picture this: Fred reads a Bible verse, then Offred lies between Serena Joy's legs, her head in Serena

Joy's lap, while Fred deposits sperm in Offred — the tableau filled with suppressed jealousy and shame.

A fourth character figures here, Fred and Serena Joy's young driver — Nick, (Max Minghella). After months of the Handmaid's failing to conceive, Serena Joy faults her husband and arranges for Nick to stand in for the Commander during Offred's fertile period. It leads to a pregnancy and Offred's first real feelings since her capture. From here creeping thoughts of defiance and escape take over.

The novel and series one end with uncertainty about the fates of Offred, Nick, and the family from whom she had been snatched — her husband and small daughter. Margaret Atwood collaborated with Bruce Miller on Series Two to write the next chapter in her characters' lives, making Series Two something of a literary event.

As a footnote, one puzzles over history's parade of violence against women. Environmental causes are implied in the case of 'Handmaid's Tale,' and there are genetic rationales: men oppress women because they can. My own view includes the thinking of British scholar Steve Taylor in "Psychology Today" (August 2012) postulating that the inability of men to suppress arousal in the face of women's presumed sexual power affronts male need for power and control. Misogyny, then, cut loose during civil or environmental disorder, is based in revenge for the testosterone-driven sexual urge. ❧

—Lee Liberman can be read monthly at <https://trustmovies.blogspot.com/2018/04/April-Sunday-corner-with-lee-Liberman.html>

Fighting racism by voting local

Low levels of voter turnout in America are disheartening. Bernie Sanders showed that large numbers of young, new voters can be brought into the electoral system. But what about local elections for school board and city council elections, not to mention bond issues, and the sadly neglected party primaries for local officials?

Here are some reasons to “think local” about elections if you care about racism, with evidence taken from five recent Johnson County elections. The first two, in 2012 and 2013, were bond issues for a large expansion of the county jail, supported by the entire city and county establishment and by the Johnson County Democratic Central Committee. Johnson County has a national reputation for racial disparities in incarceration (not to mention astonishingly high student arrest rates for alcohol and marijuana offenses).

Johnson County in fact needs a new modern jail, but in 2012 the Democratic establishment was not content to build a new jail. They insisted that we plan for growth, i.e. even more incarceration in a country that already imprisons 25% of the world’s prisoners. This was a classic case of the well-documented New Jim Crow launched by Bill Clinton in his 1994 crime bill, which has re-imposed racial segregation in America by the mass criminalization and incarceration of African-Americans.

The jail bond faced an organized and successful campaign against the proposed jail, organized around the slogan: “If We Build It, They Will Fill It.” The Democratic establishment was so astonished when the bond issue lost the first time in 2012 that they brought it back again in a 2013

special election that was timed for a lower turnout, assuming that regular voters in heavily Democratic Johnson County would endorse jail expansion. They failed again.

The result of these two victories against racism has been a gratifying fall in the number of people in jail, demonstrating that incarceration rates are as much a consequence of policing and prosecution policies as they are of population growth and crime rates.

Race also became the central issue in a third election. Johnson County Attorney Janet Lyness, a popular and well-known incumbent, faced a vigorous primary challenge in 2014 from a complete unknown, Jonathan Zimmerman. Vowing to eliminate prosecutions for marijuana possession, he promised a complete review of documented racial disparities in the policies of the County Attorney’s Office.

He received 30% of the vote by making an issue of the County Attorney’s racial disparities in marijuana prosecutions, which are among the highest in the nation. Zimmerman left town shortly after the election, and he is unlikely to be nominated for membership in the Johnson County Democratic Hall of Fame, but he has performed a valuable service to the community by exposing the way the New Jim Crow works in a liberal Democratic stronghold. A losing race can sometimes produce important changes in public opinion. Since this local primary the County Attorney’s Office has devoted increasing attention to what they refer to as “jail diversion programs.”

A fourth election led to important changes in policing policy. In 2015,

for the first time in living memory, Iowa City elected a progressive majority on the City Council, and they promptly named Jim Throgmorton mayor. Having survived a non-partisan election in which he faced a highly personalized campaign of vilification from members of the city establishment, he has made it a priority to speak out against racism in the community.

What is far more important is the new council majority’s choice of a police chief in 2017: Jody Matherly. He has reached out to the Black community to discuss ways to reduce the frequency of traffic stops, even offering to give out free vouchers to replace broken tail lights. He even met with the American Civil Liberties Union, and made it clear that policing policy needs to change if confidence in the police is to be restored. Without the city council election in 2015, it is likely that we would have a very different kind of police chief.

Finally, there was a school board election in 2017. One of the issues in the campaign was the use of windowless “seclusion” rooms, some of them little more than plywood boxes situated in classrooms. These are essentially a form of solitary confinement used for unruly students, many of them in special education, but also for school discipline.

The school administration and some teachers had been steadily expanding the use of these rooms as the percentage of African-American students grew to 20%. Seclusion rooms were the first experience many African-Americans had in the “school to prison pipeline.” Shortly

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A conversation at the Capitol: It was personal

Every year, students and staff from The University of Iowa travel to Des Moines to showcase our great institution. We fill the capitol rotunda with informational booths, unusually formal college students, and even a gigantic inflatable Herky. This year, our trip took place on March 27th, and I was privileged to be one of the students to attend.

For an undergraduate, meeting with state legislators can be a very intimidating experience. It requires the student to know the numbers, effectively present a neglected perspective, and build up the courage to confront some of the most powerful players in Iowa politics. Fortunately the Hawkeye Caucus student organization here on campus is exceptionally thorough in training and preparing attendees for the visit. Each student is assigned roughly three legislators to meet with, most of whom represent their hometown. My group, being from Cedar Rapids, had the opportunity to meet with Senator Rob Hogg. While our time with him was cut short by bells ringing from the chamber, he was very helpful in providing encouragement and advice for the day. Linn County's Representative Art Staed was also very welcoming.

He brought us on to the House floor, gave us a photo opportunity in the Speaker's chair, and reaffirmed his strong support for adequately funding our Regents' institutions.

Our interactions weren't all like this. One was *far* from it. Before I describe my conversation with State Senator and Education Committee Chair Amy Sinclair, I want to make a few points clear. We as students do not expect to be bear-hugged or greeted with roses upon arriving at the capitol. We don't insist on being handed millions of dollars on our way out either (though that would be nice). The only standard we set for discussions like these is to be treated with respect, like the adults the world wants us to be. In a perfect world, where people rise above politics, a public official would enthusiastically meet these requirements. That was not the case on this day. After consistently being told "Representative so-and-so is not in the chamber" or "they are still in caucus," I spotted a State Senator whom I recognized from an episode of *Iowa Press*. It was Amy Sinclair, Republican from Wayne County.

I saw this as a prime opportunity to have a real conversation with a

real impact, so I grabbed my group and walked across the room. As we got closer, I asked if we could have a moment of her time. Together, we shuffled to the side and out of the walkway. The conversation began very peacefully. I simply informed her that we were students from The University of Iowa concerned about the mid-year budget cuts and their effects on student services.

Without hesitation, Sen. Sinclair drilled us for details. "Can you give me some examples?" she asked. One of our group responded by mentioning the Summer Hawk Tuition Grant that is being discontinued. This program financially assisted students taking classes during the summer. Sinclair wrote this down on the back of her paper. Maybe she wasn't aware of that program? Maybe she intends on advocating for its renewal? My optimism was short-lived as moments into the encounter she declared, "Quite frankly, Regent institutions are not my priority." She went on to tell us that we don't need to be going to school that long. Mind you, this is the *Chair* of the Senate Education Committee. Her proposal for college affordability? Don't go. She also stated that it is our responsibility to earn college

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after the election, and as a result of public debate, a reluctant school superintendent gave up and ordered them removed.

There are many facets in the struggle against racism, but these five elections since 2012 have produced real gains for real people struggling against oppressive policing and incarceration. If you want to fight racism, vote local. A good place to begin would be casting a progressive vote in the June Democratic primary. ✨

–Jeff Cox

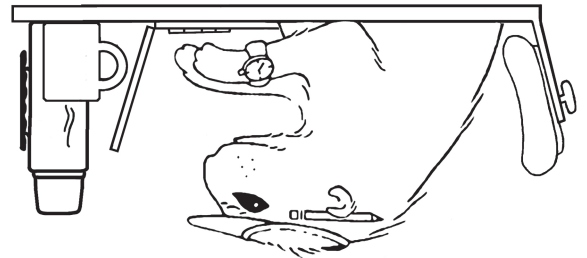
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credits in high school. Meanwhile, for the past decade her party has been underfunding K-12, the very system in which she wants us to earn part of our degree.

I asked her about the millions of dollars in tax credits and how we can create an economy to adequately support the state's most basic responsibility. She responded with two remarks. First, she pointed out a tax credit in Iowa that is directed towards an issue I was "complaining" about: student aid for low-income families. The second began with a question

about my major. After I told her it was political science, Sinclair began laughing, saying that I must not cover the economy. At that point, my colleagues and I knew that this conversation was no longer productive. It was personal. We took turns shaking hands, thanking her for her time, and before walking away, she noted "this conversation has reaffirmed why Regents' schools are not my priority." ✨

–Connor Wooff, a native of Cedar Rapids, is a first-year student at the University of Iowa studying Political Science.



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