
Libertarian Party

2000

Issues Briefing *Booklet*



**Facts,
statistics,
& opinions
to bolster
the case
for liberty**

Compiled by

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If you are a Libertarian Party candidate, it is not enough to simply assert that a particular government program, policy, or law is causing problems. You must be able to prove it with specific facts, figures, and studies. ■ And if you are speaking to an audience, it is not enough to talk in broad generalities. You must be able to give the "human dimension" of a problem — by telling stories about specific people who have suffered. ■ In this booklet, you'll find those kinds of resources: Statistics, research studies, quotations, anecdotes, and analysis about most of the major policy issues of the day — in easy, bite-size sections. And each one is source-cited, just in case you are questioned about where you got your information. ■ In short, this "Issues Briefing Booklet" can make you a smarter, better-prepared, more effective Libertarian candidate.

Affirmative Action Americans With Disabilities Act

■ In the mid-1940s, the Detroit Tigers were at the top of baseball, winning the American League pennant in 1945 and finishing in second place the following two years.

Their fortunes turned, however, in the next decade, as the Tigers finished among the top three teams in their league only once and found themselves in last place in 1952.

What happened? While many things contribute to a team's victory on the field, we shouldn't overlook the impact of baseball's integration. After Jackie Robinson's major league debut in 1947, the Cleveland Indians, for example, immediately signed African-American talent such as Larry Doby and Satchel Paige and won the World Series in 1948.

By contrast, Walter Briggs, owner of the Tigers, refused to sign any African Americans, and the Tigers dropped from second to fifth place in 1948 – and continued to spiral down the standings throughout the 1950s.

The sad story of the Detroit Tigers illuminates a facet of the morality of capitalism: It makes immoral decisions such as bigotry expensive.

Briggs could insist on preserving racial barriers only at the cost of fewer wins and, by extension, fewer fans. In a free market, artificial limitations on potential employees and customers mar the product and cripple the firm.

By contrast, firms that want to remain competitive will seek talent and markets wherever they may be found. And this drive to remain competitive prompts firms to more open patterns of hiring, buying, and selling.

– Robert Sirico, *Acton Notes*, January 2000

■ The Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) was supposed to mean more disabled Americans could enter the workforce. Yet this year, only 29% of disabled people are employed full or part time, according to survey results reported in the *Washington Post* (July 23, 1998). This figure is lower than before the law was enacted. In 1986, 33% of disabled Americans were employed.

– *Competitive Enterprise Institute UpDate*, December 1998

■ When the list of “victims” defined under various civil rights acts was completed in 1991, some 80% of all Americans (everyone but white males under 40, not disabled, and not on welfare or SSI disability) were classified as “minorities.” It has become such a statistical joke that most citizens, including many of the “disabled,” have finally become angered.

– Martin L. Gross, *The End of Sanity*, Avon Books (1997)

Art & Government

■ The Left concludes that government support for the arts is needed; the Right often favors government support for “traditional” culture. A review of the evidence offers strong reasons for cultural optimism and confidence that a modern commercial society will stimulate artistic creativity and diversity.

The music of Bach, Mozart, and Beethoven is more accessible today than it was in the 18th and 19th centuries. Movies can be rented on videocassette very cheaply. New editions of many literary works are published regularly. Between 1970 and

1990 the world literacy rate for adults rose from 61.5% to 73.5%. Art museums and attendance are booming. Live performance of arts has flourished as well. New musical genres continue to blossom.

Creators have the best chance of living from their work in a wealthy, capitalist society. Capitalist art consists fundamentally of bringing the consumer and producer together. Therein lies its exhilarating, challenging, and poetic nature. We should not deplore our culture, as do the pessimists. Rather, we should recognize its fundamentally capitalist nature, which implies creativity, entertainment, innovation, and above all, diversity.

– Tyler Cowen, *Cato Policy Report*, September/October 1998

Civil Liberties

■ In Hong Kong, two democracy activists were convicted of desecrating the Hong Kong and Chinese flags at a rally calling for the end of one-party rule in China. Defacing the flags became illegal when Hong Kong was handed over to China.

The judge who convicted the two said the Chinese flag is “a symbol which represents the state, her people, and her land” and “should remain as a sacred symbol respected by all Chinese regardless of their social, political, or philosophical beliefs.”

Funny, I could have sworn I heard members of the U.S. House of Representatives saying something very similar a few months ago.

– Charles Oliver, *Reason* magazine, December 1998

■ To understand Clinton's dismal record on civil liberties requires an understanding of his genera-

tion. The story begins in the liberal academy. Over the past quarter century an intellectual war has raged on university campuses between left-wing advocates of women's and minority rights on the one hand, and advocates of civil liberties on the other.

Many cause-oriented feminists and minority activists see freedom of speech, and civil liberties in general, as a barrier to empowerment. They know the truth, and tend to be intolerant of the right of others to express counter-truth or politically incorrect views. These impatient left-wing advocates are winning the battle, and their academic victory is being translated into political policy. The translation is not a difficult one because left-wing political causes – abortion rights, gay rights, affirmative action – garner votes.

Civil liberties, however, do not have a significant constituency. On some issues moreover – particularly those affecting freedom of speech – the radical left has joined the religious right in a censorial coalition. As a result, civil liberties have become bad politics, while the anti-civil liberties agenda is a political freebie.

– Alan M. Dershowitz, *Penthouse* magazine, June 1998

■ Minnesota citizens may soon be guinea pigs for yet another privacy invasion experiment.

A new law authorizes a study to fingerprint all citizens. Proponents of the law are excited about the possibility that fingerprinting requirements on driver's licenses would allow retailers to check the fingerprints of suspect customers and “know in three minutes” if they are who they say they are. (Imagine the embarrassment experienced at grocery stores by citizens waiting

to be “verified.”)

The original language of the bill clearly shows the future plans for identification by biometrics. These include “tobacco, liquor, and lottery sales enforcement; health care; voter registration; and school access, and other situations where accurate personal identification is essential.”

– Twila Brase, *Intellectual Ammunition*, June/July 1998

Crime

■ In the wake of the recent wave of shootings in America’s government schools, there has been an orgy of hand-wringing and finger-pointing in the mainstream media. Blame for these tragedies is variously ascribed to the availability of firearms or the violent content of movies, television, and video games. Occasionally, blame is placed with the parents of the perpetrators.

Amidst all the clamor, there have been a few voices sounding a very different alarm: That millions of American children are on psychotropic drugs – many of which have violent side-effects.

Samuel L. Blumenfield, writing in *WorldNetDaily* (July 7, 1999) noted: “What is most disturbing, however, is the growing awareness that the increased violence among school children may have more to do with the drugs than with the guns they use to carry out their violence.”

Kelly O’Meara, writing in the June 28, 1999 issue of *Insight* magazine, reports that there are now over five million school children on psychotropic drugs, most of which are prescribed and administered in the government schools themselves. The December 1996 *Teacher Magazine* reports that there are four million

on Ritalin alone, while Alexander Cockburn, writing in the *Los Angeles Times* (July 6), reports that Ritalin is being given to about two million American school children.

Eighteen-year-old Eric Harris, who with his friend Dylan Klebold, 17, massacred their classmates and a teacher at Columbine High School in Littleton, Colorado on April 20, had been taking Luvox for Obsessive-Compulsive Disorder.

T. J. Solomon, 15, who shot and wounded six fellow students at Heritage High School in Conyers, Georgia, on May 20 was on Ritalin for depression. Also on Ritalin for bi-polar disorder was 15-year-old Shawn Cooper, who fired two shotgun rounds, narrowly missing classmates and teachers at his high school in Notus, Idaho.

Kip Kinkel, 15, who first killed his parents and later killed two students and wounded 22 more in his Oregon school’s cafeteria, was on Ritalin and Prozac.

Mitchell Johnson, 13, who, with his friend, Andrew Golden, 11, shot several children and a teacher at Westside Middle School in Jonesboro, Arkansas, was being treated by a psychiatrist and is presumed to have been on some sort of medication.

– Mark Valverde, *Freedom Network News*, August-October 1999

■ “That could have been my mother.”

That’s what drove Maleke Card, 19, to step in and grapple with the mugger tugging at the gold chains that were around the neck of Nicole Evans, 40, Friday morning outside a Bronx subway station.

Card, a good kid, didn’t hesitate when he leaped into action to defend a woman he didn’t even know. During the ensuing struggle,

Card, in self-defense, stabbed the mugger in the head and neck with the penknife he was carrying.

After the struggle, Card retrieved and returned the gold chains to Evans. Then he walked away towards his house, where he planned to get ready for work in a Midtown video arcade, but cops arrested him two blocks away from the Prospect Avenue train station. Card now faces attempted murder charges and 25 years in jail.

– Douglas Montero, *The New York Post*, September 27, 1999

■ Crime rates, according to FBI reports, fell about 16% per 100,000 population from their 1991 peak to 1997 and fell another 7% in 1998. Politicians claim credit because of their support for prison construction, longer mandated sentences, greater police funding, or policies that reduce unemployment . . .

No doubt many of these factors help explain falling crime rates, but there is another, perhaps more important, cause which has gone largely unnoticed: Private citizens’ growing investments of time and money in security.

Private crime control—including voluntary watch, patrol and escort arrangements, alarms, improved locks and better lighting, self-protection, and private security personnel – has been a growth industry for decades. A 1970 estimate put private security personnel at roughly equal to public police, but by 1990 there were about 2.5 private security personnel for every public police officer. Today, the ratio is probably at least three to one.

Consider [also] the market for security alarms. Alarm sales increased by about 11% per year in 1970, but this growth rate reached 15% in 1990. In 1970,

one percent of U.S. homes were connected to central alarm systems. By 1990, one in ten homes were. – Bruce L. Benson, *The Cato Institute*, August 20, 1999

■ The avalanche of new laws Congress has passed since 1970 to make America’s streets safe has failed, a report concludes.

“There is no persuasive evidence that federalization of local crime makes the streets safer for American citizens,” says a report prepared by a blue-ribbon task force sponsored by the American Bar Association and chaired by former Attorney General Edwin Meese III.

The 16-member task force says a Congress worried about being called “soft on crime” actually may be hurting the fight against street violence by passing federal laws that duplicate state and local efforts nationwide.

– The Associated Press, February 17, 1999

■ The Department of Justice reported in January [1998] that the nation’s prison and jail populations have risen nearly 6% from the previous year – more than 50% since the beginning of the decade. At midyear 1997 an estimated 1,725,842 men and women – roughly 645 out of every 100,000 Americans – were held in the nation’s prisons and jails. – *Jubilee Extra*, Prison Fellowship Ministries, March 1998

■ Number of sex criminals (rapists and child molesters) released from jail in 1994 on parole or probation: 134,000.

■ Number of sex criminals who remained behind bars in 1994: 99,300. – *NRA’s CrimeWatch Weekly*, February 18, 1997

Defense & Military Spending

■ Republican prosecutors have spent the better part of the past year obsessively looking for a smoking gun to hold against the president. But they might have dug up more dirt if they had thought a little more literally: Bill Clinton is, after all, the world's biggest arms dealer.

From 1993 to 1997, the Pentagon sold \$70.6 billion in weapons to virtually every nation on earth, including governments that have used them against their own people, notably Indonesia, Mexico, and Turkey.

— *Mother Jones* magazine, April 1999

■ Containing Saddam Hussein isn't cheap. Frequent military build-ups in the Persian Gulf since the 1991 war have cost the nation about \$7 billion, in addition to the tens of billions of dollars some budget analysts estimate is spent annually on maintaining a strong U.S. military in the region.

The Pentagon does not release figures on the spending for day-to-day Gulf duties, [but] by private budget analysts' estimates, roughly \$50 billion of the annual \$270 billion in U.S. defense spending goes toward maintaining the Gulf deployment and keeping the Iraqi president in line.

"You've got carriers, ground troops in Kuwait, pre-positioned equipment all over and you're spending money on no-fly zones in northern and southern Iraq," said Lawrence Korb, a former assistant secretary of defense.

Around the Gulf, U.S. forces include at least 24,000 soldiers, sailors, and Marines, many on ships.
— Associated Press, November 26, 1998

■ Number of foreign countries where U.S. troops were deployed in 1997: 100

■ Total number of countries on the planet: 197

■ Percentage of countries with U.S. troops: 51%

■ Some countries where U.S. troops were deployed, and their mission: Haiti (dig water wells); Congo (to evacuate 57 people and one dog); Morocco (to supervise a civil war cease-fire); Cambodia and Laos (to clear land mines); Micronesia (to build a warehouse); Egypt (to monitor the Israel/Egypt demilitarized zone); Belize (to renovate schools and roads); Ecuador and Peru (to monitor a disputed border region).

— U.S. Army News Releases, May 23, 1997 & July 4, 1997

Drug Prohibition

■ Though [New Mexico Governor Gary] Johnson now advocates a drug-free lifestyle, he still does not think drug users should be treated like criminals.

"Did we belong in jail?"

Johnson asked the Cato audience, noting that a felony record would have prevented him from running for governor. "Does anybody want to press a button and retroactively punish the 80 million Americans who have used drugs?"

In 1997, Johnson noted, state and local officials arrested 1.6 million people for drug offenses, and about 400,000 drug offenders are behind bars right now.

"I don't think we can continue to lock Americans up [for] bad choices," he said.

— *Reason*, December 1999

■ In the name of establishing a drug-free society, overzealous police have too often failed to notice the difference between the

innocent and the guilty. As a result, the war on drugs has gone beyond keeping the peace. It's become a threat to liberty.

From asset forfeitures to home invasions to military involvement, the war on drugs has taken disturbing turns.

Among the more recent incidents, a SWAT team broke into a Compton, California, home at about 11 p.m. on Aug. 9. They killed a retired grandfather by shooting him twice in the back. His widow — handcuffed and wearing only a towel and panties, according to the *Los Angeles Times* — and six others were taken into custody. All were questioned. None was charged.

By the way — no drugs were found on the property. But one life was ended and others changed forever because those officers were waging a war on drugs.

— *Investor's Business Daily*, September 21, 1999

■ The boundary between good and bad drugs is harder than ever to draw.

The same week that a Republican candidate for President spent struggling to compose ever more tortuous non-denials of his drug use as a young man, a former Republican Presidential candidate could be seen in full-page advertisements forthrightly acknowledging his own use of another drug.

Oh, I know: two completely different and incomparable situations; how unfair to Robert Dole and the Pfizer pharmaceutical company even to mention them in the same paragraph as George W. Bush and cocaine. One concerns an illegal drug that people take strictly for pleasure. The other concerns a legal drug that people take . . . well, also strictly for pleasure, but (almost) always with a prescription.

You would be hard-pressed to explain the taxonomy of chemicals underpinning the drug war to an extraterrestrial. Is it, for example, addictiveness that causes this society to condemn a drug? (No; nicotine is legal, and millions of Americans have battled addictions to prescription drugs.)

So then, our inquisitive alien might ask, is safety the decisive factor? (Not really; over-the-counter and prescription drugs kill more than 45,000 Americans every year while, according to *The New England Journal of Medicine*, "There is no risk of death from smoking marijuana.") Is it drugs associated with violent behavior that your society condemns? (If so, alcohol would still be illegal.)

Perhaps, then, it is the promise of pleasure that puts a drug beyond the pale? (That would once again rule out alcohol, as well as Viagra.)

Then maybe the molecules you despise are the ones that alter the texture of consciousness, or even a human's personality? Tell that to someone who has been saved from depression by Prozac.

— Michael Pollan, *New York Sunday Times Magazine*, September 12, 1999

■ Percentage of inmates at Joliet maximum security prison in Illinois who tested positive for drugs in 1999: 2

■ Percentage of prison employees who tested positive: 4
— *Playboy*, August 2000

■ Futile efforts to enforce [drug] prohibition have been pursued even more vigorously in the 1980s and 1990s than they were during alcohol prohibition in the 1920s. Drug enforcement cost about \$22 billion in the Reagan years and another \$45

billion in the four years of the Bush administration. The federal government spent \$16 billion on drug control programs in 1998 alone and plans to spend \$18 billion this year. States and local communities spend even more.

What good has it all done? Well, total drug arrests are now more than 1.5 million a year. There are about 400,000 drug offenders in jails and prisons now, and over 80% of the increase in the federal prison population from 1985 to 1995 was due to drug convictions. Drug offenders are about 60% of all federal prisoners, while those in federal prison for violent offenses are only 12.4% of the total.

As for discouraging young people from using drugs, the massive federal effort has largely been a dud. Every year from 1975 to 1995 at least 82% of high school seniors said they found marijuana "fairly easy" or "very easy" to obtain.

When a public policy isn't working, we should try something different. If spending more than \$30 billion a year and arresting 1.5 million people a year isn't stopping drug use and abuse, then we should try a different strategy. — David Boaz, *The Albuquerque Journal* (New Mexico), August 23, 1999

■ The nation's largest federally funded teen anti-drug program, D.A.R.E., has no long-term effect on adolescent drug use, a new study to be published in the August issue of the American Psychological Association's (APA) *Journal of Consulting and Clinical Psychology* found.

"This study joins a growing body of academic research demonstrating D.A.R.E.'s ineffectiveness as a deterrent to youthful drug use," NORML Foundation Executive Director Allen St. Pierre

said. "For this reason, numerous localities, including Houston, Oakland, and Seattle are scrapping the program."

Researchers tracked over 1,000 students who participated in the D.A.R.E. program in sixth grade. They re-evaluated the students at age 20, ten years after receiving the drug prevention education. The study found that the program initially influenced the students' perceptions towards drug use, but concluded that these changes did not persist over time.

— NORML Foundation News Release, July 29, 1999

■ While African-Americans and Hispanics make up 20% of the United States' marijuana users (and about 20% of the population), they make up 58% of those arrested for federal marijuana charges.

— *The Drug Policy Letter*, January/February 1999

■ Number of Americans arrested in 1997 for murder, rape, robbery, and aggravated assault (combined): 717,720.

■ Number of Americans arrested for marijuana offenses: 695,200.

■ Percentage arrested for possession: 87.

■ Percentage of federal prisoners incarcerated on drug charges: 59.

■ For violent crimes: 2.5.

■ Number of Americans in federal and state prisons in 1980 for violating drug laws: 23,900.

■ Number of people in federal and state prison in 1996 for violating drug laws: 292,794

— *Playboy* magazine, April 1999

■ In 1996, it was revealed that, as part of their infiltration of one Latin American drug cartel, federal agents had successfully

smuggled millions of dollars' worth of cocaine onto the streets of America's cities. At that level, it's hard to see the difference between successful infiltration and full-scale participation.

So, across the country, undercover DEA agents are staking out undercover FBI agents who are selling drugs to undercover DEA agents who are staking out undercover ATF agents.

— Mark Steyn, *The American Spectator*, April 1999

■ I agree that marijuana laws are long overdue for an overhaul. I also favor the medical use of marijuana — if it's prescribed by a physician. I cannot understand why the federal government should interfere with the doctor-patient relationship, nor why it would ignore the will of a majority of voters who have legally approved such legislation. — Abigail VanBuren, "Dear Abby," March 1, 1999

■ Increased drug arrests and longer prison sentences have not slowed illegal drug use, according to a study by the nation's largest organization of lawyers.

In a study, the American Bar Association's Criminal Justice Section found that illicit drug use increased 7% from 1996-1997. . .

[At the same time], the ABA study found that 1.2 million people were arrested on drug charges in 1997, a 73% increase over the number of people arrested in 1992. — Gary Fields, *USA Today*, February 4, 1999

■ Marijuana remains the fourth-largest cash crop in America despite law enforcement spending approximately \$10 billion annually to enforce prohibition, a new report from the NORML founda-

tion concluded.

Nationally, only corn, soybeans, and hay rank as more profitable crops to American farmers. — NORML Press Release, October 15, 1998

■ Two new reports, one from the FBI and one from the General Accounting Office (GAO), found that drug-related corruption among law enforcement has increased since the early 1990s.

The FBI report, "Misconduct to Corruption," found that the number of federal, state, and local officials in prison has increased fivefold in four years, from 107 in 1994 to 548 in 1998. — *The Drug Policy Letter*, Summer 1998

■ In the early 1960s, the United Nations committed itself to eliminating the plant sources of cocaine, heroin, and marijuana in 25 years. The clock ran out in 1989. Instead of reevaluating its plan, the United Nations promised last June to get the job done in 10 years.

In 1989, President Bush proposed cutting drug use 55% in 10 years. In February, President Clinton introduced his plan to cut drug use in half in 10 years, without mentioning Bush's plan.

Not to be outdone, the speaker of the House of Representatives, Newt Gingrich, rejected Clinton's plan and declared that the timeline should be four, not 10, years.

— Rob Stewart, *The Drug Policy Letter*, Summer 1998

■ California law enforcement arrested more citizens on marijuana charges in 1997 than in any year since 1985, newly released figures from the Bureau of Criminal Statistics revealed.

The rising number of arrests one full year after voters legalized

the use of marijuana for medical purposes alarmed many activists who question whether police are continuing to punish patients despite the new law. Law enforcement arrested 57,667 Californians on marijuana charges in 1997, the data showed.

– NORML Press Release, August 7, 1998

■ Thomas Jefferson: statesman, philosopher, drug kingpin.

As anyone who follows the hemp movement knows, our third president grew cannabis on his Virginia farm. Lots of it.

According to *Marijuana News*, published by an Ohio chapter of the National Organization for the Reform of Marijuana Laws, in some seasons Jefferson raised more than 100 acres of hemp, which was used to make sailcloth and rigging. With a typical yield of 150 plants per square yard, multiplied by 4,840 square yards per acre, that's more than 70 million plants a year.

Under the 1995 Omnibus Crime Control Act, anyone who cultivates more than 60,000 marijuana plants is a "drug kingpin," subject to execution. In a single year, then, the author of the Declaration of Independence qualified for the death penalty a thousand times over.

Noting that the Democratic Party's platform praises the drug kingpin provision, *Marijuana News* concludes, "If Thomas Jefferson were alive today, William Jefferson Clinton would execute him." – *Reason* magazine, June 1998

■ As a career police officer for 35 years (including police chief of Kansas City, Missouri, and San Jose, California), I have seen the racism, violence, corruption, and failure to curb drug abuse that

stems from government policies. Before 1914, Americans had the right to possess and use drugs. Of course there were abuses, but there was no \$400 million black market or widespread corruption and violence, nor was there the vastly disproportionate incarceration of non-whites, until the Harrison Act of 1914 criminalized drugs. Prohibition does not work.

– Joseph D. McNamara, *The New York Times*, March 18, 1998

■ Nearly 642,000 total marijuana arrests were made by state and local law enforcement during 1996, according to the latest edition of the Federal Bureau of Investigation's (FBI) Uniform Crime Report.

This figure is an 80% increase since 1990 and pushes the total number of marijuana arrests under the Clinton administration to approximately 2.1 million.

The 1996 yearly arrest total for marijuana violations is the highest ever recorded by the FBI. Of the 642,000 arrests made for marijuana in 1996, approximately 85% (545,700) were for simple possession.

– The NORML Foundation, October 7, 1997

The Economy & the Free Market

■ Adjusted for inflation, the hourly wage has fallen nearly 15% since 1973. So what? The only measure that counts is what we can buy for the time we spend working.

A half-gallon of milk cost 10 minutes of labor in 1970; and only 7 minutes in 1997. A gallon of gasoline cost 11 minutes in 1950 and now goes for less than half that. A three-minute coast-to-coast phone call cost an incredible

90 hours of work in 1910; today it costs less than two minutes of work time. Cars at first seem to cost about the same as they did in the 1970s. But they are now far safer, pollute much less and are loaded with standard goodies like stereos that weren't even options in 1970.

If there's something sad about all this, it's that so many Americans are convinced these improvements are the fruits of reinvented government. As Michael Cox and Richard Alm observe in *Myths of Rich and Poor*: It's not government policy that gave us drive-through service, instant mail, [automatic] teller machines, home shopping networks, air-conditioned offices, and much, much more.

It wasn't public decree that raised life expectancies by 30 years over the past century, or shortened our workweek by more than 20 hours. Over the past 200 years, we've progressed not by the grace of government but by the mechanism of the market. – Michael Fumento, *Reason*, April 1999

■ Without the wealthy, fewer new goods and services would find their way to the rest of us. The system harnesses the spending of a relative few and puts it to work delivering goods to the many. Unequal income distribution drives society forward.

A cellular phone costs just 2% of what it did a decade and a half ago, and computing power is less than 1% of its 1984 real price.

What better proof could there be that free enterprise is society's greatest welfare program? – Michael Cox, *Wall Street Journal*, March 6, 1998

■ Stock prices and retirement wealth have become more important to the new 125 million-

strong investor class. The new investor class is increasingly made up of middle-class people. Recent surveys show that during the 1990s, 49% of the newest investors have been women. Thirty-eight percent of the new investors are non-professional salaried workers. The typical new stockowner earns less than \$70,000.

Karl Marx is both dead and wrong. Through the stock market, the American work force owns the means of production. – Lawrence Kudlow, *The Washington Times*, November 3, 1998

Education

■ [In his book], *The Conspiracy of Ignorance: The Failure of American Public Schools*, author Martin L. Gross [notes]:

■ Since 1960, the number of teachers in the U.S. has doubled, while the number of "support personnel" has quadrupled.

■ Would-be teachers usually come from the bottom third of their high school graduating classes.

■ [Most] teacher exams are geared towards the 10th-grade level. When Massachusetts teachers were tested last year at a somewhat higher standard, 59% of them flunked.

■ 12% of all students now qualify for federal grants under the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act. – *Capital Ideas*, September/October 1999

■ The next time you hear a politician or a National Education Association spokesperson say that more money means better schools, remind them of the ignominious failure of the Kansas City School District.

In response to a desegregation

lawsuit and orders from U.S. District Judge Russell Clark, Kansas City spent \$2 billion building the most expensive school system in the world. Beginning teacher salaries rose from a low of \$17,000 to a high of \$47,851.

Fifteen new schools were constructed and 70 had additions or renovations. The luxurious facilities include a planetarium, a vivarium, greenhouses, a model United Nations wired for language translation, radio and television studios, movie editing and screening rooms, swimming pools, a zoo, a farm, a wildland area, a temperature-controlled art gallery, and 15 computers per classroom. Students can study Suzuki violin, animal science, and robotics. Language instruction spans French to Swahili.

Despite the extraordinary facilities and massive sums of money, student performance is so low that recently the state had to strip the Kansas City School District of its accreditation. The school district has fewer students and is less integrated today than in 1984 when Judge Clark took control of the school district in order to achieve "mathematical racial balance."

— Paul Craig Roberts,
The Washington Times,
December 9, 1999

■ Pupil-teacher ratios have been shrinking for a century. In 1955 pupil-teacher ratios in public elementary and secondary schools were 30.2-to-one and 20.9-to-one respectively. In 1998 they were 18.9-to-one and 14.7-to-one.

We now know it is possible to have, simultaneously, declining pupil-teacher ratios and declining scores on tests measuring schools' cognitive results.

If making classes smaller is such an effective route to

educational improvement, why, after 45 years of declining pupil-teacher ratios, are [government] schools so unsatisfactory they need to be "revolutionized" by [Al Gore's proposed] "investments"? — George F. Will, *The Washington Post*, May 4, 2000

■ The majority, 60%, of U.S. high school students don't understand the purpose of profits and think wages are set by the government, according to the National Council on Economic Education. — *USA Today*, December 15, 1999

■ American schools, on average, have 52.1 teachers [and 47.8 people in *non-teaching* positions] — 15.2 in school staff, 8.6 district staff, and 24 county- and state-level bureaucrats out of every 100 education personnel. In seven states — Michigan, Oklahoma, Indiana, Mississippi, Florida, New Mexico and Alaska — more than half of "education" personnel are not teachers. Rhode Island and Hawaii have the highest number of teachers — 63 per 100 education personnel. In almost all cases, the bureaucrats earn more than teachers do.

— Center for Education Reform,
August 17, 1999

■ Literacy levels have declined over the past 30 years, despite significantly increased resources for public schools:

■ Inflation-adjusted per-pupil expenditures have increased more than 14 times since 1920.

■ In 1955, there were 27 students per teacher; by 1990 there were 17.

■ In 1949, there were 19 pupils per staff member; by 1990 there were nine.

— David Kirkpatrick, *School Reform News*, May 1999

■ Reducing class size meets one Democratic criterion for a national program: It's expensive. Eric Hanushek of the University of Rochester notes that reducing the size of the average classroom by just one kid for one year costs something like \$350. Multiply that by all the American children in grammar school and you come up with \$12 billion over seven years. But as Prof. Hanushek points out, there's a problem here: There is little evidence that reducing class size has any effect on education. In fact, the nation has already run the class-size experiment.

In the past 45 years, the average pupil-teacher ratio in this country fell by 35%. Many of our parents recall that they learned reading in classes with more than 35 students. Many of our children are in classes with fewer than 25. Yet with this dramatic change in class size has come little or no improvement in performance. Data from the National Assessment of Educational Progress show that, despite shrinking classes, 17-year-olds today perform about as well now as they did in 1970. — *The Wall Street Journal*,
September 30, 1998

■ Percentage of Americans who send their children to private school: 14%

■ Percentage of U.S. House members who sent their children to private school: 34.4%

■ Percentage of members of the U.S. House Education Committee who send their children to private school: 40%

■ Percentage of U.S. Senators who sent their children to private school: 50%

— Nina H. Shokraii, The Heritage Foundation, September 9, 1997

Environment & Global Warming

■ [For people who wonder whether non-governmental groups can protect wilderness areas], during 1999, The Nature Conservancy took direct action to bring 900,000 acres of biologically significant land in the United States into conservation ownership or management.

That brings The Nature Conservancy's 48-year total to well over 11 million acres, an area larger than Switzerland. — The Nature Conservancy President's Report,
January 10, 2000

■ Wilderness conservation has little to do with urban sprawl. Our cities, suburbs, highways, and local roads now cover about 60 million acres, well over double the area they occupied in 1920 — but still under 3% of the land area of the continental United States.

Most of what the wilderness has lost to Americans it has lost to our agriculture. For every acre of land we use for home or office, roads, and byways, we currently use six acres for crops. Another eight acres are designated as rangelanders for our livestock, which, pound for pound, outweigh us.

Happily, however, our agricultural footprint has been shrinking a lot faster than our cities have been sprawling. When Europeans first arrived on this continent, the area now represented by the lower 48 United States had about 950 million acres of forest. That area shrank steadily until about 1920, to a low of 600 million acres, as Americans spread across the landscape.

Then, astonishingly, we began to retreat, and the wilderness began to expand once again.

Precisely how fast is hard to nail down: The continent is large, most of the land is privately owned, and the definitional debates rage. But all analyses show more, not less, forest land in America today – somewhere between 20 million and 140 million acres more – than in 1920. Roughly 80 million more acres of cropland were harvested 60 years ago than are harvested today.

– Peter Huber, *The Washington Post*, April 21, 2000

■ You never hear about the 1997 survey of 36 official state climatologists finding that 58% disagreed with President Clinton's claim that "the overwhelming balance of evidence and scientific opinion is that it is no longer a theory, but now fact, that global warming is for real." Nine out of 10 agreed that "scientific evidence indicates variations in global temperature are likely to be naturally occurring and cyclical over very long periods of time."

Further, last year more than 15,000 scientists signed a petition declaring, "There is no convincing scientific evidence that human release of carbon dioxide, methane or other greenhouse gases is causing or will, in the foreseeable future, cause catastrophic heating of the Earth's atmosphere and disruption of the Earth's climate."

The petitioners strongly urged rejection of the accord signed in Kyoto, Japan, in 1997 committing the United States to drastic, incredibly costly reductions in emissions of these gases, declaring it "would harm the environment, hinder the advance of science and technology, and damage the health and welfare of mankind."

– Michael Fumento, *The Washington Times*, July 8, 1999

■ While environmentalists rail against the use of fossil fuels, the federal government spends tens of millions of dollars every year subsidizing the use of fossil fuels.

For instance, in fiscal year 1997, fossil energy research and development at the Department of Energy received \$365 million. The Clean Coal Technology Program (CCTP), which subsidizes additional coal-related research, has cost taxpayers approximately \$1.5 billion since its inception.

– *Intellectual Ammunition* (The Heartland Institute), March/April 1999

■ In the early 1990s, the National Toxic Campaign Fund (a private environmental advocacy group) labeled the military establishment the nation's worst polluter, responsible for more than 14,000 "toxic hot spots" at military bases around the nation. The environmental group estimated that, in 1989, the defense Department generated 900 million pounds of hazardous waste.

No private business, or combination of companies, has anywhere near such a devastating impact on America's environment. Nevertheless, because of poorly drafted laws and regulations, the public continues to associate environmental degradation exclusively with businesses.

– Murray Weidenbaum, *The Washington Times*, September 26, 1998

■ Private property serves a vital social function often ignored or trivialized. You don't have to be a keen observer to notice that privately owned property tends to receive better care than communally owned property. I've often said that I don't care that much about future generations. What has a kid who's going to be born

in 2050 done for me?

My actual conduct belies that sentiment. I own a nice home that is well cared for. Trees have been planted, rooms added, and many other improvements have been made that will outlast me and be available for that kid born in 2050. Part of the reason I made sacrifices in current consumption to improve my house is that the longer it provides housing services, the more I get when the house is sold.

The free market and private property rights do not produce a Utopia; we'll have to wait for heaven for that. But here on Earth, private property rights and free markets beat any other social arrangements in serving mankind's needs.

– Walter Williams, *The Washington Times*, August 16, 1998

■ "There is not a shred of persuasive evidence that humans have been responsible for increasing global temperatures. During the past 50 years, as atmospheric carbon dioxide levels have risen, scientists have made precise measurements of atmospheric temperature. These measurements have definitively shown that major greenhouse warming of the atmosphere is not occurring and is unlikely ever to occur."

– Arthur Robinson & Zachary Robinson, *The Wall Street Journal*, December 4, 1997

■ "Unfortunately for the [global warming] theoreticians, computer models they have constructed predict one thing, while the climate keeps doing other things. Although temperatures have gone up something more than one degree Fahrenheit over the past century, the increase

took place prior to the spewing of so-called greenhouse gases from cars and the like, meaning that the rise is most likely natural. During the past 20 years, weather satellites inform us, atmospheric temperatures have actually cooled some."

– Jay Ambrose, Scripps Howard News Service, August 2, 1997

■ "The climate warming of the past 100 years, which occurred mainly before 1940, in no way supports the results of computer models that predict a drastic future warming. Even [the U.N.'s] Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change Chairman Bert Bolin has admitted that the pre-1940 warming is likely a natural recovery from a previous, natural cooling."

– S. Fred Singer, President, The Science & Environmental Policy Project, *The Wall Street Journal*, July 25, 1997

Farm Policy

■ Another absurdity arising from the latest farm [subsidy bill being considered in Washington, DC]: How can the Congress consider relief simultaneously for poor prices and poor production? Some farmers in the Midwest are to receive money because there are too many harvests, others in the East because there are too few. By this strange rationale, farmers are to be paid whether they lose their crops to drought, or produce a surfeit and thus help saturate the market.

If there were no drought in the East, farmers of some crops there would be subsidized for producing too much and getting paid too little; if there were natural calamity throughout the Midwest, farmers would be paid for producing too little rather than too much. We need an

Orwell to figure out why some are considered in need and not others, or why low prices bring as much federal aid as high prices, or why a kind nature is as bad as an adverse one.

– Victor Davis Hanson, *The Wall Street Journal*, August 10, 1999

■ For some farmers, the best crop is the one they don't harvest.

In west Texas last year, 200 farmers obtained federally subsidized insurance on a type of cotton that wasn't feasible to grow in their arid region. They paid \$4.4 million in premiums and then claimed nearly \$15 million in benefits when most of the crop failed.

Farmers in North Dakota and surrounding states recently rushed out and bought seed for durum wheat, even in areas not suited for the crop, to take advantage of a new insurance policy offering benefits far higher than they could earn if they grew and sold ordinary wheat.

The [crop insurance] program has been costing the government more than \$1.5 billion a year, and Congress is considering doubling that to improve the coverage and make it less costly to producers – [even though] government auditors say the insurance system is riddled with abuse, conflicts of interest, and errors because taxpayers bear most of the risk for losses, not the private companies that sell and service the policies.

– Philip Brasher, Associated Press, April 1, 1999

Government Regulation

■ Add the medium-rare burger to the endangered list of American vices. States including California,

Illinois, and North Carolina have enacted laws requiring that burgers be cooked medium to medium well. – *The Wall Street Journal*, July 15, 1999

■ Who are the heaviest-duty regulators? Try the Department of Transportation, Environmental Protection Agency, Treasury Department, Department of Agriculture, and Department of Health and Human Services. The report calculates there are 117 rules in the works that will cost businesses and consumers more than \$100 million annually; 38 of those will come from the EPA. Another 70 rules costing more than \$100 million were finalized last year. – *The Washington Post*, April 9, 1999

■ Regulation has become America's version of socialism.

A recent report from the Competitive Enterprise Institute, *Ten Thousand Commandments*, tallies the price tag for implementing and sustaining federal regulations. The grand total is \$688 billion per year.

More than 4,400 new regulations seeped through the bureaucratic pipeline last year, imposing at least \$12.5 billion yearly in future costs.

[At least] 125 rules qualified for "economically significant" status: They will cost at least \$100 million apiece annually.

– Dan Miller, *Intellectual Ammunition*, November/December 1998

■ The Clinton administration has some 4,538 regulations in process, 137 of which are "economically significant" and will cost at least \$100 million each. The number of these big rules is up nearly a fifth from just

a year before.

There was a time when reformers thought the answer was to elect Republicans. Give the GOP control of Congress, it was said, and they will rein in the regulators.

Now we know better. Four years ago, Congress enacted the Congressional Review Act, which requires all agencies to submit their rules to Congress. Lawmakers then have 60 days to use an expedited process to block the proposals.

Not once has Congress acted.

Perhaps every regulation advanced by the administration has been a good one. All 4,684 final rules issued in 1999. And the 4,899 implemented the year before. And the 4,584 imposed in 1997. More than 14,167 new regulations passed after Congress approved the CRA, and apparently not one warranted rejection. – Doug Bandow, *The Washington Times*, June 6, 2000

■ Shortly after the National Maximum Speed Limit was repealed in 1995, the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA) predicted that an additional 6,400 motorists' deaths would occur annually, as a result of rising speed limits.

Now the most recent NHTSA reports show the exact opposite occurred: 1997 had the lowest traffic death rate in the nation's history. In 1996, the traffic accident death rate was 1.7 per 100 million miles driven. This number dropped in 1997 to 1.6 per million miles driven.

– National Motorists Association Press Release, October 1998

■ When the casket company she worked for went belly-up, executive and stockholder Thelma Jaco was given caskets in return

for her lost investment. So she opened a casket store. The first in Atlanta, her store offers caskets at prices far below those of funeral homes.

For doing so she's facing a penalty of up to a year in prison and a \$1,000 fine. Georgia law allows only licensed funeral directors to sell caskets. This, of course, is to protect the public.

Ask Jim Fowler, executive director of the Georgia Funeral Directors Association. "The majority of the population, I feel, will still want to deal with someone who is experienced in service with families upon the death of a loved one. Folks in a retail establishment are not those types of people."

Critics charge that Georgia funeral homes, thanks to this monopoly, charge consumers markups of 300% to 700% on caskets. – *The Liberator Online*, October 17, 1998

■ On average, for every new law passed by Congress, unelected bureaucrats turn out 18 new regulations with the force of law. – Paul Harvey, *Imprimis*, October 1998

■ For four decades, [auto] safety experts all assumed that safer models were better. Now federal officials say we were wrong the whole time. National Highway Traffic Safety Administration honchos believe that because the occupants of heavier vehicles fare better in crashes with lighter vehicles, the heavier vehicles are a safety problem. Oddly, the government is not mandating that small cars be strengthened.

Lighter cars mandated by government fuel-economy standards are already causing 2,200 to 3,900 deaths annually,

according to a study by the Brookings Institution and Harvard. Paramedics, who witness traffic accidents daily, tend to put their families in SUVs, pickups, or large cars. Let the bureaucrats and insurance executives leave their luxury cars and limousines and drive the subcompacts they recommend to us.

— David C. Stolinsky, *Wall Street Journal*, April 15, 1998

■ Standards for organic food can be handled much more cheaply, much more simply, and with much less bureaucracy, by private industry. Organic farmers could get together and form a standards association. Farmers and food merchants would submit to regular inspections by employees of the association, and if they meet the standards, they can display a certificate attesting to that fact. Violators would be subject to civil and criminal action under existing fraud statutes, with no need for any additional laws or regulations.

In a free market, anyone who thinks one association's standards are too lax or too strict would be free to start another association which could issue its own certificates.

Utopian? Impractical? Not necessarily. That's how kosher food has been regulated for centuries.

— Charles Lembke, KNX Radio, May 19, 1998

Government Size, Cost, & Waste

■ The standard definition of a compromise is that each side gives up something to facilitate a deal. In Washington, however, compromise means that both sides get more than they originally asked for; only taxpayers are asked to give something up.

Consider last fall's budget compromise. Way back in 1997, the president and Congress agreed that in fiscal year 2000, the federal government would spend no more than \$580 billion from its discretionary accounts. No matter: President Clinton proposed spending \$592 billion. After much wrangling, Congress managed to get him to agree to spend a mere \$617 billion.

"This is how agreements are made in Washington," says Scott Hodge, a budget analyst at Citizens for a Sound Economy. "The president requests a level of spending, Congress approves a slightly lower amount, and after they negotiate they compromise at a higher level than even the president asked for."

This dynamic was on display in the agriculture research bill, which funds such worthy items as blueberry research and aquaculture studies. Clinton requested \$469 million, the Senate approved \$474 million, and they compromised at \$486 million.

In the case of education, congressional leadership actually bragged that they spent \$1 billion more than the president requested.

— Michael W. Lynch, *Reason*, March 2000

■ In a study funded by the EPA, Kip Viscusi and James Hamilton (1999) have found that EPA cleanups of Superfund sites cost an average of almost \$12 billion for every cancer case prevented. Even more amazing is that virtually all — 99.5% — of the cancer cases that will be averted by EPA efforts are prevented by the first 5% of the agency's expenditures. The remaining 95% of expenditures avert only 0.5% of the cancer cases at a cost per case of an astonishing \$200 billion.

— *PERC Reports*, December 1999

■ So what happens when a surplus appears? Politicians devour it. [Economist Richard] Vedder and his Ohio University colleague Lowell Galloway have studied government budgets since 1789 and discovered the following: In the last 50 years, 74 cents of every surplus dollar has gone for new spending, 21 cents for debt reduction, and five cents for tax reduction.

— Tony Snow, *The Washington Times*, July 30, 1999

■ Nearly \$6 of every \$10 of Superfund money is used for purposes other than toxic materials clean-up, according to a report issued by the General Accounting Office. The majority of all Superfund money, the GAO found, goes to overhead expenses — salaries for managers and secretaries, rent, and laboratory work. The GAO also found the percentage of money spent on cleanup has been declining for several years.

— *Environmental News*, August 1999

■ Tens of billions of taxpayer dollars are wasted each year on hundreds of federal programs that duplicate or overlap the work of other programs. For example, there are 74 clean water programs, 127 programs for "at-risk" youth, 340 programs for children and families, 64 economic development programs, and 12 food safety programs.

— Citizens for a Sound Economy Issues Analysis, April 2, 1999

■ Government employment at all levels rose by 324,000 in 1998, the largest increase in eight years, the Nelson A. Rockefeller Institute of Government at State University of New York in Albany reported.

— *The Wall Street Journal*, June 1, 1999

■ The federal government is slated to spend over \$200 billion on highways over the next several years, [while at the same time] the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) is doling out taxpayer dollars to support anti-highway activism at the state and local level.

According to Peter Samuel, editor of the *Toll Roads Newsletter*, the EPA's "Transportation Partners" program derides road-building as "an expensive short-term fix" that (heaven forbid) "encourages driving," and is funding 340 groups in 43 states that feel the same way.

Recipients of EPA's anti-road largess range from the Bicycle Federation of America to the Environmental Defense Fund. Thus, American tax dollars don't just pay for roads, they also pay for the campaign to stop building them.

— *Competitive Enterprise Institute UpDate*, January 1999

■ Debate over the size and scope of government has long been the stuff of politics, and the upcoming presidential election will be no different. Al Gore is certain to advertise his credentials as a "New Democrat" by taking credit for nearly 400,000 jobs cut from the federal payroll over the past five years.

To see the true picture one must count all the heads, including full-time federal civil servants, uniformed military personnel, postal workers, and people who deliver goods and services on behalf of the federal government under contracts, grants, and mandates to state and local government.

When all those numbers are added together, the federal government looks very big indeed. In 1996, the most recent

year for which good numbers are available, the true size of government was just under 17 million, or roughly 10 times as large as the head count Mr. Clinton used when he announced the end of big government. That 17 million includes the 1.8 million civil servants in the president's head count, plus 1.5 million uniformed military personnel, 850,000 postal workers, 5.6 million contract employees (of whom 4 million were working under service contracts), 2.5 million grant employees, and 4.7 million state and local employees encumbered under federal mandates.

Although the contract, grant, and mandate numbers are estimates, they suggest the presence of a huge shadow workforce that accounted for 64 jobs per 1,000 Americans in 1996 – not the 11 per 1,000 advertised in that year's federal budget.

– Paul C. Light, *The Wall Street Journal*, January 13, 1999

■ In the first-ever independent audit of the federal government, number of the 24 major agencies that received a passing grade for keeping basic records in order: Eight.

Value of military equipment that cannot be located: \$636 billion (including a \$1 million surface-to-air missile launcher, a \$423,000 Howitzer cannon, two \$875,000 harbor tugboats, and two \$4 million jet engines).

– *Playboy*, November 1998

■ Economist Wendell Cox has discovered that since 1980, for every inflation-adjusted dollar of extra compensation (wages and benefits) the average private sector employee has earned, the average state and local government employee has received an

extra \$3.00.

Over the same period, the average federal employee has taken home five times more in additional compensation than his private sector counterpart.

The average state and local government worker now earns over 30% more than the average private sector worker, while the average federal non-military employee earns 50% more.

– Adrian T. Moore, *Reason*, February 1998

■ In the year Newt Gingrich became Speaker of the House, federal outlays totaled \$1.46 trillion. This year, federal outlays are expected to hit \$1.7 trillion. By 2002, they are expected to hit \$1.9 trillion.

“It is hard to grasp amounts so unfathomably huge, but here is an exercise that may help: Add together every penny the federal government spent from 1800 to 1940. Adjust the total upward to reflect nearly two centuries of inflation. You will wind up with less than the \$1.7 trillion budgeted for this fiscal year.

– Jeff Jacoby, *Syndicated Columnist*, November 3, 1997

■ Amount of money the government has spent on the “War on Cancer” since 1971: \$30 billion

■ Change in America's cancer death rate: Increased from 199 deaths per 100,000 population to 200.9 deaths

– Steve Sternberg, *USA Today*, May 29, 1997

■ Amount of money the federal government spends annually to train new doctors: \$7 billion

■ Amount of money the federal government might spend over the next several years to pay

hospitals not to train doctors, to reduce the doctor glut: \$9.7 billion.
– Amy Goldstein, *The Washington Post*, August 24, 1997

■ Number of Americans exposed to radiation by the federal government's Cold War nuclear tests: 230,000

■ Number of Americans who may develop fatal thyroid cancer because of government nuclear tests: 10,000 to 75,000
– Steve Sternberg, *USA Today*, August 4, 1997

■ Amount of money the U.S. Senate spent from 1992-1997 to subsidize haircuts at the Senate Barber Shop & Beauty Salon: \$1.8 million

■ In 1998, amount of money the U.S. Senate spent to subsidize haircuts: \$180,000

■ Salaries earned by the federal employees of the Senate Barber Shop & Beauty Salon: Barber (\$62,000 a year); receptionist (\$47,000); shoe-shine attendant (\$27,400).

– Ed Henry, *Roll Call*, October 13, 1997 & Andrew Moulton, *The Washington Post*, November 28, 1997

Gun Rights

■ Guns, like drugs, save lives and money. Research shows that citizens use guns two and a half to five times more often to prevent crimes than to commit them. Indeed, firearms are the most effective way to protect oneself against criminals – which is why police carry guns rather than going unarmed or carrying knives.

–H. Sterling Burnett, *The Las Vegas Review-Journal*, December 21, 1999

■ Network television news-casts overwhelmingly promote an

anti-gun view, a new study concludes.

“It's clear that when it comes to the gun debate, TV news is not an objective referee. It is a partisan player that has chosen sides,” said L. Brent Bozell III, chairman of the Media Research Center, which released the study, “Outgunned: How the Network News Media are Spinning the Gun Control Debate.”

The two-year study analyzed 635 stories on gun policy by four major networks – ABC, CBS, CNN and NBC – and found that while 260 stories could be classified as neutral, stories that advocated more gun control outnumbered stories that opposed such measures, 357 to 36.

“That translates into an astounding 10-to-1 ratio of news segments advocating gun control – hardly what any objective observer would consider balance,” said Mr. Bozell.

Good Morning America was the most anti-gun program, according to the MRC study, with 99.7% of its stories advocating gun control.
– *The Washington Times*, January 6, 2000

■ My guess is that if you go out and ask people how many gun deaths involve children under age 5, or under age 10, in the United States, they're going to say thousands. When you tell them that in 1996 there were 17 gun deaths for children under age 5 in the United States and 44 for children under age 10, they're just astounded.

There's a reason why they believe these deaths occur much more frequently: If you have a gun death in the home involving a child under age 5, you're going to get national news coverage. Five times more children drown

in bathtubs; more than twice as many drown in five-gallon water buckets around the home. But those deaths do not get national news coverage.

This type of news coverage has consequences, because it affects people's perceptions of the benefits and costs of having guns around. Concentrating on gun deaths in the home, exaggerating the risks of that, creates a false impression.

People are going to die because of that false impression. They're not going to have guns in the home, even though that's by far the safest course of action for them to take when they're confronted by a criminal. You may prevent some of the accidental deaths, but you're going to create other types of deaths because people won't be able to defend themselves.

— John Lott, *Reason*, January 2000

■ “Gun control? It's the best thing you can do for crooks and gangsters. I want you to have nothing. If I'm a bad guy, I'm always gonna have a gun. Safety locks? You pull the trigger with a lock on and I'll pull the trigger [without a safety lock]. We'll see who wins.” (Mobster Sammy “The Bull” Gravano, interviewed by Howard Blum.)

— *Vanity Fair*, September 1999

■ President Clinton goes on *Good Morning America* to advance what he calls the “common sense” idea that guns should be registered just like cars.

At last check there was no federal DMV, no waiting period to buy cars, and no limit on the number of cars you can buy. Nor do the feds monitor car sales between individuals.

Yet Clinton and other gun-grabbers continue to make the analogy.

— *Reason* magazine, August/September 1999

■ Are gun locks, as President Clinton says, a “no brainer”? Yes, indeed. The lock-up-the-guns proposal is great — as long as one doesn't think about it carefully.

Contrary to the impression created by sensationalist media, fatal firearms accidents involving children are far from common. According to the National Safety Council, there were about 30 fatal gun deaths in 1995 among kids age 0 to 4, and less than 40 for kids 5 to 9. This shows that even without legislation from Washington, the overwhelming majority of families with firearms already know how to act responsibly.

Any parent knows that a single child's death is unspeakably tragic. Yet the number of toddlers who die from gun accidents is fewer than the number who die from drowning in buckets. And it's much lower than the 500 who die in swimming pools. Yet the President is not scoring political points inveighing against bucket manufacturers, or demanding federal laws against unfenced pools in private homes. Politics, not saving children's lives, is the foundation of the current anti-gun campaign.

— Dave Kopel & Eugene Volokh, Independence Institute Feature Syndicate, June 3, 1999

■ In 1994, when the U.S. Congress debated whether to ban “assault weapons,” a talk show host asked then-Senator Bill Bradley (NJ), a sponsor of the ban, whether guns cause crime. The host noted that, in Switzerland, all males are issued assault rifles for militia service and keep them at home, yet little crime exists there. Sen. Bradley responded that the Swiss “are pretty dull.”

For those who think that target shooting is more fun than

golf, however, Switzerland is anything but “dull.” By car or train, you see shooting ranges everywhere, but few golf courses. If there is a Schuetzenfest (shooting festival) in town, you will find rifles slung on hat racks in restaurants, and you will encounter men and women, old and young, walking, biking and taking the tram with rifles over their shoulders, to and from the range. They stroll right past the police station and no one bats an eye. (Try this in the U.S., and a SWAT team might do you in.)

Shooting is the national sport, and the backbone of the national defense as well. More per-capita firepower exists in Switzerland than in any other place in the world, yet it is one of the safest places to be.

According to the U.N. International Study on Firearm Regulation, England's 1994 homicide rate was 1.4 (9% involving firearms), and the robbery rate 116, per 100,000 population. In the United States, the homicide rate was 9.0 (70% involving firearms), and the robbery rate 234, per 100,000.

[But] Switzerland, which is awash in guns . . . has substantially lower murder and robbery rates than England, where most guns are banned.

Here are the figures: The Swiss Federal Police Office reports that in 1997 there were 87 intentional homicides and 102 attempted homicides in the entire country. Some 91 of these 189 murders and attempts involved firearms. With its population of seven million (including 1.2 million foreigners), Switzerland had a homicide rate of 1.2 per 100,000. There were 2,498 robberies (and attempted robberies), of which 546 involved firearms, resulting in a robbery rate of 36 per 100,000. Almost half of these crimes were committed

by non-resident foreigners, whom locals call “criminal tourists.”

— Stephen P. Halbrook, *The Wall Street Journal* (Europe), June 4, 1999

■ While gun ban proponents and several big cities continue to push forward with their reckless lawsuits against firearm manufacturers, distributors, and dealers, a recent study by the National Center for Policy Analysis has exposed the suits as being in conflict with their alleged goal — recovering the cost to the cities due to the action of criminals and negligent individuals' misuse of firearms.

NCPA's study indicates that firearms in the hands of law-abiding citizens save far more money in preventing crime and injuries than criminals cost the cities through their misuse of firearms. The net financial benefit to this country because of firearms, according to the study, ranges as high as \$38.8 billion, easily dwarfing the medical and law-enforcement costs incurred because of the actions of armed criminals.

A copy of this study can be found at <http://www.ncpa.org>. — NRA-ILA [National Rifle Association/Institute for Legislative Action] Fax Alert, March 26, 1999

■ A recent study by John Lott and David Mustard of the University of Chicago published in the *Journal of Legal Studies* found that concealed handgun laws reduced murder by 8.5% and severe assault by 7% from 1977 to 1992. Had “right-to-carry” laws been in effect throughout the country, there would have been 1,600 fewer murders and 60,000 fewer assaults every year.

— *Investors Business Daily*, January 8, 1998

Health Care

■ The Cleveland [medical] Clinic has landed a contract to treat sick Canadians who otherwise might face long delays getting treatment in that country's overcrowded health care system.

The contract will pay for 6-1/2 weeks of radiation therapy, airline tickets for patients and their spouses, meals, and hotels.

"We have a shortage of radiation therapists and the waits have become unacceptably long," said Kristen Jenkins, a spokesman for Cancer Care Ontario, an agency that oversees cancer programs.

About 560 Canadians from Ontario have [already] been sent to the hospital.

— *The Akron Beacon Journal*,
January 23, 2000

■ After the Children's Defense Fund, a lobbying group, claimed that 10 million American children were not covered by health insurance, the federal government responded by committing \$40 billion over five years to provide Kidcare, with the White House vowing to sign up at least 5 million uncovered children by 2000. But since the program's enactment in 1997, fewer than 500,000 children have enrolled, leading the administration to launch a \$1 billion "outreach" effort, complete with a toll-free telephone number, to sign up more children.

But a survey conducted by the Department of Health and Human Services showed that even among families with incomes of \$10,000 or less, 97% of children get all the health care they need, and less than 2% cite lack of money or insurance as a reason for not getting care.

And as Robert Goldberg of Washington's Ethics and Public Policy Center notes, another study

by the National Bureau of Economic Research even found that uninsured children tended to be healthier than those covered by Medicare regardless of income or race, with notable increases of illness rates among low-income children after starting to use Medicare.

— *The Weekly Standard*,
March 22, 1999

■ In one of the most embarrassing setbacks for the EPA in recent memory, a federal judge has thrown out the agency's landmark 1993 risk assessment linking secondhand smoke to cancer.

The ruling, handed down July 17, invalidated EPA research linking exposure to secondhand smoke, also known as environmental tobacco smoke (ETS), to 3,000 cancer deaths each year.

[Critics] argued that the EPA cherry-picked data and ignored standard scientific and statistical practices to reach its conclusions, an opinion shared by a large number of independent scientists.

— *Environment News*,
September 1998

■ A Florida hospice was fined \$8.9 million, wiping out profits for five years, because 176 of 15,426 dying patients lived too long.

Medicare rules say that hospice patients must be within six months of death when they are admitted. As the hospice's executive director observed, "this is easier to tell after the fact than before."

To avoid fraud penalties in the future, a day before the six-month limit on life runs out, the hospice would have to terminate the life of patients who have managed to hold on to it.

This is what you get with socialized medicine.

— Paul Craig Roberts, *Washington Times*, May 17, 1998

Immigration

■ There is little question that the U.S. economy would benefit tremendously from increasing H-1b visas for high-skilled workers. Every additional high-tech worker brings to the United States about \$110,000 of free human capital. High-tech immigration is like reverse foreign aid. Or as Bill Gates puts it, America's ability to recruit inventive minds from the rest of the world is "one of America's greatest advantages in the global high-tech marketplace."

So where's the opposition coming from? Some GOP restrictionists still worry about immigrants stealing jobs from Americans . . . [Clinton and Gore] are too beholden to labor bosses to command the immigration high ground.

High-skilled immigrants create jobs, they don't take them. Some studies have found that every additional high-skilled newcomer adds about four new Silicon Valley jobs for Americans. H-1b immigrants are not the world's "tired, poor huddled masses" or the "wretched refuse" Emma Lazarus' torch welcomes. They are the best and the brightest from the rest of the globe.

— Stephen Moore, *The Washington Times*, September 17, 1998

■ T.J. Rodgers, founder of Cypress Semiconductor on immigration: "For every foreign engineer you let me bring into this country and put to work at Cypress, I will guarantee you five new jobs locally to manufacture a microchip, sell the chip, ship the chip, market the chip, and administer the chip. The winners and losers in the information age will be differentiated by brain power.

"But we have Senators, like

Ted Kennedy, who don't see that. They want to send back the first-round draft choices of the intellectual world so that they can compete against us in their homelands. Four out of my 10 vice presidents are immigrants.

"Some 35% of my engineers are immigrants. My V.P. of research — the guy who designs my most advanced chips — is from Cuba."

— *The New York Times*,
March 14, 1998

Industrial Policy

■ [Despite the lobbying to "protect" the U.S. steel industry], there really is no U.S. steel crisis. The decline in steel shipments in the last half of last year can be traced in part to the GM strike. GM buys about 99% of its steel from U.S. producers, so last year's 54-day labor walkout took a bite out of domestic demand. The auto unions that struck GM ended up sticking it to the steelworkers who lost their jobs as a result. So much for labor solidarity.

U.S. steel production last year of 102 million tons was only slightly below 1997's record of 105 millions tons; for much of 1998, there was actually a steel shortage in the U.S.

What about America's own steel consumers? Even at record production levels, U.S. makers can meet only about three-fourths of American steel demand. Import restraints mean that American steel users will pay higher prices than their foreign competitors, hurting their sales.

So for every steel job saved by quotas, there may well be many jobs lost at Deere or Caterpillar or somewhere else.

— *The Wall Street Journal*,
March 16, 1999

National Debt

■ In 1916, John D. Rockefeller had enough money to single-handedly pay off the entire American national debt. In 1997, Bill Gates and Warren Buffett put together don't have enough money to pay for two month's interest on it.
— *CoffeeBreak*, March 1998

Police & Government Power

■ [In the past few years], the Pentagon has been equipping police departments with M-16s, armored personnel carriers, and grenade launchers. In all, the Department of Defense issued 1.2 million pieces of military hardware to police departments between 1995 and 1997.
— *Cato Policy Report*, November/December 1999

■ Most Americans believe the FBI intentionally covered up its actions during the Branch Davidian standoff in Waco, Texas, six years ago.

In the aftermath of the FBI's disclosure that potentially incendiary tear gas canisters were used on the final day of the standoff, 57% in an ABCNEWS.com poll think the bureau has been intentionally trying to cover up its actions at Waco. Just 23% believe its previous denials were an honest mistake, as the FBI has maintained.
— ABCNEWS.com, September 14, 1999

■ When government controls both the economic power of individuals and the coercive power of the state . . . this violates a fundamental rule of happy living: Never let the people

with all the money and the people with all the guns be the same people.

— P.J. O'Rourke, *Eat the Rich: A Treatise on Economics*, 1998

■ "There has been a dramatic rise in the number of Special Weapons and Tactics (SWAT) teams and a rapid expansion of their roles since the early 1980s, according to a new study by Peter Kraska, a professor of police studies at Eastern Kentucky University.

"Kraska surveyed 690 law enforcement agencies serving cities with populations of more than 50,000. According to his survey, 90% have active SWAT teams. In the early 1980s, only 60% of these cities had such units. The researchers found that even in smaller cities and rural communities two of every three police departments have SWAT teams, a trend that Kraska calls 'militarizing Mayberry.'

"The SWAT teams wear camouflage, body armor and gas masks, and use weapons such as 'flash-bangs' (a diversionary device), submachine guns, explosives and chemical weapons. Kraska's survey shows that the SWAT teams receive training by active and retired military experts in special operations. Some units also have helicopters and armored personnel carriers at their disposal."
— *NewsBriefs* (National Drug Strategy Network), July 1997

■ Number of federal employees who carry weapons as part of their jobs: Almost 60,000.

■ Number of federal agencies that arm their workers: 45

■ Which federal employees carry guns: Poultry inspectors, park rangers, and disaster aid workers. Plus special agents from the Small Business Administra-

tion, NASA, the Department of Education, the U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service, and the Department of Veterans Affairs.

— Sarah Foster, *World Net Daily*, August 15, 1997

■ States that use spy satellites: North Carolina (uses spy satellite photographs to search for unreported property improvements that might increase property tax assessments); Georgia (the Department of Revenue uses NASA satellites to search for improper timber cutting); Arizona (the Department of Water Resources uses spy satellite photographs to monitor 750,000 acres of state farmland to discover which farmers don't have irrigation permits, or exceed water-use regulations).

— Ross Kerber, *The Wall Street Journal*, January 23, 1998

Poverty

■ In the United States today, a smaller percentage of the population suffers from material deprivation than at any previous time in history. And people classified as "poor" in the United States have incomes that exceed the average income of most nations.

Our success in reducing poverty is not a result of government welfare programs. Rather, it appears that the continuing rising tide of America's free-market economy is lifting almost all boats.

Some 30 million Americans, or between 10 and 15% of the population, are still classified as poor. At the turn of the century, between 40 and 50% of American households had income levels that would have classified them as poor by today's standards. The number of "poor" senior citizens, children, and blacks is half of what it was in 1950.

— *Cato Policy Analysis*, December 15, 1999

■ How poor are the "poor"? Consider the following statistics, all drawn from government reports: The average poor American has a third more living space than the average Japanese and four times as much living space as the average Russian. Seventy percent of poor households own a car; 27% own two or more cars.

Poor children actually consume more meat than do higher-income children and have average protein intakes 100% above recommended levels.

Indeed, most poor children today are supernourished, growing up, on average, to be one inch taller and 10 pounds heavier than the GIs who stormed the beaches of Normandy in 1941.

— Robert Rector, *The Wall Street Journal*, September 24, 1998

Privatization

■ Federal Express president and CEO Frederick Smith jolted everyone at a Congressional subcommittee hearing on postal reform legislation when he suggested Congress seriously consider abolition of the USPS [United States Postal Service] because it "is inexorably losing its status as a provider of last resort. [Such] legislation would permit the USPS to split its products and services into competitive, operated by a private corporation, and noncompetitive."

Smith told the panel that the USPS "must be confined to noncompetitive markets and dismantled as these markets shrink. Closing down the USPS . . . is an option that ought to be considered seriously."

— *The Direct NewsLine*, March 8, 1999

Politicians

■ According to the Center for Responsive Politics, amount corporations paid lobbyists in Washington, DC in 1998: \$1.42 billion.

■ Number of registered lobbyists: 20,512.

■ Number of lobbyists per each of the 535 members of Congress: 38.

– *Playboy*, March 2000

■ Give tax dollars to politicians? Forget about it, most taxpayers say.

New IRS figures show a further decline in the percentage of taxpayers who put a checkmark in the “yes” box on their [income tax] return asking if they want to send \$3 of their taxes to the presidential election campaign fund.

Based on a sampling of returns filed through August, only 11.3% of individual income-tax returns included a “yes” check mark. That was down from 12.6% in the same period [last year].

The figure has been declining steadily from nearly 29% in the early 1980s.

– *The Wall Street Journal*, November 10, 1999

■ How representative is “the people’s house,” the U.S. House of Representatives? The Center for Voting and Democracy explores that question in a new report, “Electing the People’s House: 1998,” which contains hundreds of tantalizing facts and figures. With apologies to the incomparable “Harper’s Index,” here is a smattering of tidbits from this treasure trove:

■ Ratio of lawyers in the House to lawyers in the voting-age population: 38-to-1.

■ Ratio of college professors in the House to college professors

among voters: 9-to-1.

■ Percentage of eligible voters who voted in the 1996 House elections: 46%.

■ Percentage of eligible voters who voted for a winning candidate: 29%.

■ Percentage of voters who voted for a losing candidate: 37%.

■ Number of the 435 House seats where incumbents have no [major party] opposition in this November’s election: 84.

■ Won-lost record in 1996 of incumbents first elected before 1980: 56-2.

■ Won-lost record in 1996 of incumbents first elected in the 1980s: 113-0.

– Tom Brazaitis, *The Cleveland Plain Dealer*, August 9, 1998

■ Clinton is neither the first, the only, nor the worst criminal to hold high office. As rulers go, he may even be above the 50th percentile.

Think of – to confine ourselves to the recently deceased – Pol Pot, Sani Abacha, and Sam Yorty. The point is that governing somehow seems not to attract, as you might naively suppose, the most ardently law-abiding, moral, and ethical part of the population. On the contrary, those who have ruled throughout history seem to have been disproportionately recruited from the lower percentiles.

“Public service” is an inapt expression for politics. The only term limits most politicians might support would be limits on the length of prison sentences.

– Joseph Sobran, *Syndicated Columnist*, June 11, 1998

■ Percentage of Americans who say politicians tell the truth: 12%

■ Percentage of Americans who say prostitutes tell the truth: 55%

– Fox News Sunday/*Opinion Dynamics*, February 1997

■ Americans increasingly suspect the worst about their government. They think Uncle Sam may be a mass murderer, or a drug dealer, or a presidential assassin.

For example, 51% of the public believes it is either very likely or somewhat likely that federal officials were “directly responsible for the assassination of President Kennedy” in 1963, according to a nationwide poll of 1,009 people conducted by Scripps Howard News Service and Ohio University.

More than one-third of those surveyed suspect that the U.S. Navy, either by accident or on purpose, shot down TWA flight 800 near New York City. And an even higher percentage suspect FBI agents deliberately set the fires that killed 81 Branch Davidians in Waco, Texas.

– Scripps Howard News Service, July 5, 1997

Property Forfeiture

■ Federal agents can seize a person’s house, car, boat or other property by invoking more than a hundred different federal statutes involving everything from wildlife (prosecutors have seized farm equipment from ranchers and farmers accused of violating the Endangered Species Act) to taking money out of the country or making large bank withdrawals or deposits. In Miami, the \$150,000 home of an elderly Cuban-American couple was grabbed after they were convicted of holding illegal weekly poker games for friends and relatives on their patio. A federal appeals court eventually nixed the seizure, saying it was an excessive punishment.

Since 1979, federal seizures under forfeiture laws have increased 25-fold. More than \$5 billion in property has been

confiscated from accused private citizens and businesses. Seizures by state and local governments have increased a hundredfold since the early 1980s, according to forfeiture expert Steven Kessler.

The Clinton administration is pushing to make forfeiture laws even more sweeping. Justice Department lawyer Irving Gornstein told the Supreme Court in November 1997 that the government had a right to confiscate practically any property involved in a violation of the law “except that one small category of cases where perhaps the property is involved in what might be a minor infraction, such as a parking offense.”

– James Bovard, *USA Today*, May 27, 1999

■ When police raided Estel Rogers’ home in 1997, they found by some accounts nearly \$240,000 in cash, most of it hidden away in a blue bag in her bedroom. Rogers, an elderly widow who lives in a modest frame house in the Flatwoods community of Lincoln County, claims that the money came from a lifetime of hard work – from farming, logging, and selling handmade rugs and quilts.

“When I worked and made it, I’d go and put it in my satchel,” Rogers says of the money, noting that her father didn’t believe in banks and taught her not to trust them either.

The federal government didn’t buy her story, though, and filed a civil forfeiture action last summer alleging that the money came from drug trafficking. An order signed Dec. 10 by U.S. District Judge Karl S. Forester allows the government to take the cash along with Rogers’ house and 38 acres of land – even though Rogers has not been tried or convicted.

“She’s 80 years old, and they’re

going to put an 80-year-old woman out,” says Rogers’ son, Gary. “The United States is no longer a free country. There’s other countries that have more rights than us.”
 – *Danville (Kentucky) Advocate Messenger*, March 30, 1999

■ While people are terrified of private crime, they have neglected to notice how government actions cost them far more than private criminals.

The Justice Department estimated that total losses from the 7,885 bank robberies nationwide in 1994 was approximately \$28 million.

The same year, federal prosecutors confiscated \$2.1 billion in property, cash, and other goods in asset forfeiture proceedings.
 – James Bovard, *Freedom In Chains* (St. Martin’s Press, 1999)

Public Opinion

■ In 1954, Americans were asked how much of the blame for teenage crimes should be placed on comic books. 57% said “some” or “a great deal.”

[In 1999], 64% told Gallup they blamed the Internet at least partly for the mass shootings at Columbine High School.
 – *USA Today*, December 31, 1999

■ After seeing an ABC poll indicating that 78% of Americans favored legislation forcing employers to pay for employee health care, *Spy* magazine decided to see just how far people were willing to go in taking “free” goodies if offered to them by politicians.

Posing as Congressional staffers, they asked 100 New York-area workers this question: “New York is facing stiff competition in dairy production. Congressman Leach wants to introduce legislation that will stimulate New York dairy

production by requiring employers to provide their full-time employees with ice cream. Would you support such a bill?”

A whopping 68% said yes.
 – *The Liberator Online*, August 1998

Smoking

■ What do the public health officials in Maine have against Dick Metayer’s private smoking club?

Last spring, Maine imposed a smoking ban in restaurants “to protect employees, as well as patrons” from inhaling tobacco smoke. Knowing his customers, Metayer responded to the ban by changing his restaurant’s format – and the sign above the door – from “Uncle Dick’s Family Restaurant” to “Uncle Dick’s Smokers Club.”

He also turned his business into a private club by charging a \$1.00 annual fee and keeping an 850-name member list at the door. The new format ensures that guests and staff know that smoking is a feature of Metayer’s establishment. Both have a choice to dine or work in any of the hundreds of other restaurants in Maine that are now smoke-free by law.

Despite Metayer’s efforts, the Maine Bureau of Health has asked the state Attorney General to force “Uncle Dick’s Smokers Club” to ban smoking.
 – Guest Choice Network, January 2000

■ The government says, with a straight face: “Members of the public believed in the truth and completeness of the statements made by” the [tobacco] companies, and “relied upon the statements – and demonstrated that reliance by purchasing and smoking cigarettes, and by refraining from

trying to quit or reduce their consumption of cigarettes.” But there are about as many ex-smokers as smokers in America, and history suggests why.

“In my early youth, I was addicted to tobacco,” wrote former president John Quincy Adams in 1845. “Say, sport, have you got a coffin nail on you?” asks a character in an O. Henry short story written in 1906. The *New Dictionary of American Slang* dates the phrase “coffin nail” from the late 19th century. Which fact indicates that the government, in its suit against the tobacco companies, is committing the sin – fraud – that it supposedly is suing about.

Let us stipulate that the companies, without which the world would be better, have been deceitful about the addictiveness and harmfulness of cigarettes. But to prove fraud, government must show that its tobacco policy has been substantially affected by the companies’ duplicities, and that the companies prevented government and the public from knowing the truth. Good luck.
 – George Will, *The Washington Post*, October 3, 1999

■ Smoking is not like measles, striking innocent tots out of the blue. “Very few 12-year-olds have even tried a cigarette,” writes Mary Grace Kovar, an epidemiologist with the National Opinion Research Center in Washington. “The model age for trying a cigarette is 16.” Smoking is not a disease of children; it is a choice made by adolescents, often to distinguish themselves from children.

Moreover, not just anybody smokes. Kovar’s analysis notes that smokers age 15 to 17 are very much more likely than nonsmokers to be alcohol users and skip school. Adolescents who smoke

tend to be risk takers and rebels. “I think you’ll find the same thing through early adulthood, and maybe beyond,” Kovar said. “There is a group of risk-taking people. I’ve always disliked targeting an age group instead of targeting people who need certain kinds of help – but that’s what we do.”

Presumably, adolescents who are attracted to risk and rebellion – the ones who are most likely to smoke – are also the ones least likely to listen to adults who bluster about making America a land of “tobacco-free kids.” Or, worse still, they may listen and then decide that not being tobacco-free is a good way to show that they are not kids.
 – Jonathan Rauch, *National Journal*, July 10, 1999

■ The architects of California’s smoking ban routinely claim they passed the law for the benefit of employees. According to a recent survey of 300 California bars and taverns, conducted by KPMG Peat Marwick, the employees could do with a little less help.

■ Since January 1, 1998, 60% of California’s bars have lost business.

■ Of that group, the average decrease in business has been 26.2%.

■ 50% report more customer fights and complaints.

■ Almost 30% have had to lay off employees or cut working hours of shifts.

■ 65% report a loss of regular customer business.

■ Employees at 59% of the establishments report losses in tips.
 – The Guest Choice Network, July 1999

■ Members of Congress and other Hill insiders can buy cigarettes in the House and Senate

without paying the District's hefty cigarette tax or its sales tax. The Senate sells a carton of cigarettes for \$22.90 – \$10.40 less than the closest drug store. At the House, a carton goes for \$26.

That annoys some D.C. residents, who pay a 65¢ cigarette tax each time they buy a pack and another 5.75% sales tax on top of that – especially while lawmakers increasingly look at cigarette-tax increases as a way to reap new revenue while deterring smoking.

“That’s unfair,” said Terrence Casey, 23, a nonsmoker who lives in the District. “They should be taxed like everyone else.”

– *The Washington Times*, June 14, 1999

■ As for smoking, its none of the government's damned business!

I am radically pro-tobacco. Tobacco, an aromatic Native American herb, has made extraordinary contributions to Western civilization in the past 400 years. It focuses thoughts, stimulates energy, and improves efficiency.

Like everything else, it can be abused. But tobacco, with all of its long-term health risks, is a far better choice for teenagers than the host of other legal and illegal drugs that are out there, which dull the mind over time.

Tobacco is a handmaiden of the arts – while Ritalin, which dopes kids into servitude, will be the end of art as we know it.

– Camille Paglia, *Salon*, January 20, 1999

■ Anyone proposing stiff taxes on the poor and middle class would, presumably, face an uproar. But lo, such tax proposals exist and have barely aroused protest. President Clinton's [1998] budget assumes the equivalent of a \$1.10 per pack increase in cigarette

taxes by 2003. Senator Orrin Hatch (R-UT) has a similar plan. Senator Kent Conrad (D-ND) would raise the tax by \$1.50 a pack by 2001.

How regressive are these proposals? Under Conrad's proposal, someone who smokes a pack a day would pay \$547.50 in added annual taxes. If the smoker made \$10,000, that's 5.5% of income; at \$20,000, it's 2.7%.

What's being proposed is a vast income transfer system in which money moves mainly from smokers to others. The largest transfers involve new government spending. What justifies taxing smokers to support this spending? Studies have shown that, because smokers die younger, they have lower lifetime health costs than non-smokers. The latest study, done by Dutch researchers and published last year in the *New England Journal of Medicine*, estimates that if no one smoked, health costs would ultimately rise about 5%.

– Robert J. Samuelson, *The Washington Post*, February 25, 1998

Social Security

■ It is low-income workers, minorities and young people, especially, who are penalized under the current [Social Security] system. Heavy payroll taxes consume cash that could have gone to investment. Over the past 17 years, the stocks that make up the S&P have increased 15-fold.

Is the market risky? In the short-term, yes, but in the long-term (and that's the nature of retirement investment), no – as extensive research has shown. Uncle Sam shouldn't be an investor, but every American should.

– James K. Glassman, *The Washington Post*, December 8, 1998

■ Allowing the government to control Social Security investment could result in “a government bureaucrat sitting on every corporate board.” It is obvious that allowing the federal government to purchase stocks would give it the ability to obtain a significant, if not a controlling, share of virtually every major company in America.

Experience has shown that even a 2% or 3% block of shares can give an activist shareholder substantial influence over the policies of publicly traded companies. A nearly infinite list of current political controversies would be ripe for restrictions if the federal government began investing Social Security funds. Both liberals and conservatives would have their own investment agendas.

Should Social Security funds be invested in tobacco companies? Companies that pay high executive salaries or do not offer health benefits? Companies that extend benefits to the partners of gay employees?

– Cato Institute Press Release, December 1, 1998

■ Amount of money the average black man loses in Social Security payments (because African-Americans have a lower life expectancy than whites): \$10,000

– *USA Today*, December 11, 1997

■ A recent Zogby Poll asks this straightforward question: “How likely would you be to support Social Security privatization if it allowed you to take your Social Security money and invest it in a retirement account of your choosing?”

A whopping 68.7% of respondents said they support privatization. More than 80% of people 54 and younger favor the idea.

And that support cuts across

demographic lines – gender, race, income level, education level, union vs. nonunion, you name it. – Edward H. Crane, *Cato Policy Report*, May/June 2000

Sprawl

■ Herbert Gans wrote his famous book, *The Levittowners*, 30 years ago to defend suburbanites from the charge that they were “an uneducated, gullible, petty mass which rejects the culture that would make it fully human, the good government that would create the better community, and the proper planning that would do away with the landscape-despoiling little boxes in which they live.”

Those attitudes persist to this day [in Al Gore's rhetoric about sprawl and] a recent report of the Pennsylvania commission appointed by [Republican] Governor Tom Ridge. Identifying urban sprawl as the single most important environmental problem for the Keystone state, the report declared, “We must find ways to prompt individual Pennsylvanians to explore their personal lifestyle choices – where they choose to live and work, where and how much they travel each day, how much energy they consume or save, and consider changes in those patterns that will not only improve the long-term quality of their lives but also contribute to a better quality of life for all citizens of the Commonwealth.” And this gem came from a Republican administration.

The same government that brought you urban renewal is likely to make an even worse mess of suburban renewal.

– Steven Hayward, *The National Review*, March 22, 1999

■ The basic problem with the anti-sprawl crusade [by Vice

President Al Gore and others] is its flawed statistical foundations. Average commute times have remained remarkably constant over the past quarter century, having declined from an average of 22.0 minutes in 1969 to 20.7 minutes in 1995.

[In fact,] U.S. automobile commute times are faster than in more [public] transit-dependent Europe and Japan.
 – Wendell Cox, Political Economy Research Center's *PERC Reports*, March 1999

Taxation

■ According to the Roper Center for Public Opinion, Americans – across all demographic categories – believe that the highest percentage of income that a family should pay in taxes is 25% (rather than the current 40%).
 – *Dollars & Sense* (National Taxpayers Union), September/October 1999

■ The major reason the official U.S. savings rate (a very flawed statistic) has tumbled is because our tax system behaves dysfunctionally. The federal income tax double and in some cases triple taxes Americans who save.

First, we tax a worker's income when it's earned.

Next, if the money is invested rather than instantly consumed, we tax the capital gains on stocks; we tax the income of the businesses that we own the stocks in; if there are dividend payments, the government imposes a levy on those too. We even tax the 3% or 4% interest income on basic savings accounts.

If we are fortunate enough to die with money left over after paying all those other taxes, the tax collector robs the grave by

snatching away up to 55% of the estate. No wonder one of America's top-selling financial self-help books advises Americans to "die broke."
 – Stephen Moore, *The Washington Times*, September 22, 1999

■ Fox News Opinion Dynamics conducted a survey. On July 16, the results were reported on its website by Fox News reporter Dana Blanton. One question asked: "Some people say the government has plenty of money of its own and it should be spent on programs. Other people say that the government has no money except that which it takes from citizens in taxes. Which do you believe?"

Thirty-nine percent of the respondents said the government has no money except what it takes from citizens in taxes. Eleven percent said neither or they were not sure. But get this: 50% said the government has plenty of money of its own.

Since government can't spend what it doesn't first take, the correct answer is government has no money except what it takes from its citizens in taxes. But what about that 50% of the American people who believe government has plenty of money of its own? These are the people big-spending politicians love.

Politicians can convince these people that any elected official wanting to hold down spending for Medicare, food stamps, welfare, you name it is mean-spirited, uncaring, stingy and possibly a racist. After all, if government has plenty of money of its own, what else could explain why a politician would want to limit or cut government spending?

– Walter Williams, *The Washington Times*, July 31, 1999

■ According to the Tax Foundation, taxes now consume more than 38% of the average family's budget. That is more than is spent on food, clothing, housing, and transportation combined.

Compare this to the plight of medieval serfs. They only had to give the lord of the manor one-third of their output – and they were considered slaves. So what does that make us?

– Daniel Mitchell, *The Washington Times*, March 9, 1999

■ For a worker earning \$60,000 a year and living in a state with average taxes, the government's share rises to 36%. The overall tax burden is now at an all-time high. Nearly half the amount taken from workers' paychecks is hidden.

Three ways to bring those costs out of hiding are to replace federal income and payroll taxes with a national sales tax, to repeal withholding, and to encourage employers to adopt the Right to Know Payroll Form, first proposed by the Mackinac Center for Public Policy. That payroll form itemizes on workers' pay stubs each and every one of the costs that the employer must bear on behalf of the worker as a result of government tax and regulatory policies.

– Dean Stansel, *Cato Policy Analysis*, March 15, 1998

■ The current tax system did not become the behemoth that it is today overnight. In 1913, when Congress first began collecting personal income taxes, the tax code was only 15 pages long. Today, it is more than 10,000 pages long.

To administer the tax system, the Internal Revenue Service

(IRS) distributes almost eight billion pages of forms and instructions a year. Placed end to end, these forms would stretch 694,000 miles, or about 28 times around the Earth.

– Citizens for a Sound Economy's *Sentinel*, June 1998

■ Taxes are now nearly at a historical high, more than 19% of the Gross Domestic Product. That's as high as they've been since 1969, which included the run-up from LBJ's Vietnam surcharge.

Aggregating taxes at all levels, [the non-partisan Tax Foundation] calculates that the median, two-earner family, with a 1996 income of \$53,000, is now paying 38.4% of that in taxes.
 – *The Wall Street Journal*, January 16, 1998

■ The average family of four now pays more in taxes than for food, shelter and clothing combined. Taxes today, as a percentage of income, are three times higher than they were just 30 years ago.

If the cost of government is measured by a fraction of an 8-hour day, today we work for government 2 hours and 49 minutes to pay taxes. The nation's effective tax rate is 35% this year. In 1900, taxes took \$1 of every \$12 from American workers; in 1950, taxes took \$1 of every \$4; today, taxes take more than \$1 of every \$3. And that does not pay for all of government since spending has exceeded taxes for three decades, leading to a \$5.3 trillion debt.

– George Marotta, *Journal of Commerce*, May 12, 1997

■ Number of days the average American had to work in 1998 to pay their taxes: 129 (January 1 to

May 9)

■ Number of years the average American family head will have to work in their lifetime to pay taxes: 15-20
 – The Tax Foundation, Washington, DC, 1998

■ The root of Japan's [ongoing economic] problem lies in a massive increase in taxes over the last three decades.

In 1966, total taxes consumed just 17.8% of GDP in Japan, compared to 24.6% in the U.S.

By 1995, Japan's tax burden had increased by 60% to 28.5% of GDP, now putting it above the United States' 27.9% figure.

A typical Japanese company pays a total (national) tax rate of 57.9%. This is well above the 35% corporate rate in the United States.
 – Bruce Bartlett, *The Washington Times*, March 13, 1998

Victimless Crimes

■ John Stossel, libertarian's gift to television, takes up the cause of people who are being punished for "victimless crimes" ("Sex, Drugs and Consenting Adults," ABC). They include pornographers, drug users and sellers, gamblers, ticket scalpers, prostitutes, homosexuals, and sufferers in search of help in committing suicide.

What the examples of law-breakers being arrested for consensual activities have in common, Mr. Stossel argues, is society's habit of imposing certain moral views on those who don't share them. Moreover, he discerns hypocrisy and inconsistency in a state's efforts to suppress gambling while promoting its own lottery and to ban marijuana while permitting the use of alcohol and tobacco.

As for the famous war on

drugs, which has filled the nation's prisons to little avail, Mr. Stossel observes concisely, "it's what happens when you attempt to outlaw something that lots of people want."

– Walter Goodman, *The New York Times*, May 26, 1998

■ Number of states where adultery is a crime: 27 (Penalties range as high as a year in jail and a \$1,000 fine.)

■ Number of states where sodomy is against the law: 20 (Maximum sentence: Life imprisonment. Even married couples can be prosecuted under these laws.)

■ Number of states where fornication – sex between unmarried adults – is illegal: 10

■ Number of states cohabitation is illegal: 10
 – Peter McWilliams, *Ain't Nobody's Business If You Do* (1996)

Welfare

■ As economist Jonathan Hobbs stated, "the welfare system sustains a nationwide welfare industry of more than 5 million public or private workers . . . The industry has demonstrated that its goal is not to eliminate poverty, but to expand welfare through increased spending."

In other words, even if welfare rolls are down, we are still spending enough to sustain the real welfare bums, i.e. what economist Walter Williams calls the "Poverty Pentagon" – the army of politicians, bureaucrats, social workers, government-funded non-profit organizations and academic researchers who study and administer the poor.

– Thomas J. DiLorenzo, *The Free Market*, January 2000

■ Rather than giving relief, government welfare adds to the misery of the poor. But that is only half the problem with government welfare. Jennifer Roback Morse points out that the system tends to corrupt potential donors to charity as well.

It gives those able to finance real solutions to poverty an excuse, "I gave to the tax collector." People latch on to the political rhetoric that the problems of poverty are being adequately handled by government. Knowing that they are already being taxed to support those programs, they choose to give less to private charity.

In the process, they lose the direct contact with the deserving poor and with it the redemptive quality which charity has for the donor.

– Jim Johnson, *Intellectual Ammunition*, June/July 1998

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