



Snapshots

From the editorial advisory board

The Keystone Kops

The Treasury Department finally figured out that the majority of banks (especially smaller and regional) don't have publicly traded stock, and so can't participate in the proposed cash-injections-for-preferred-stock deals unless the Feds change the rules. Secretary Henry Paulson should have been on top of this. And the Bushies assumed that the banks would lend the money, rather than hoarding it or buying other banks as they are doing. Like former Federal Reserve Chairman Alan Greenspan with his fantasy about enlightened corporate self-interest, it must be tough when you can't distinguish ideology from reality.

Getting borrowers and lenders to work together by setting up government trustees to re-do mortgage terms when mortgage bond administrators are conflicted was proposed in the New York Times op-ed "Mortgage Justice is Blind" on Thursday. In addition to addressing the fundamental issues underlying this crash, this approach requires no bailout money, so those people who were prudent won't have to bail out those who weren't (or pay for Paulson's Wall Street buddies' lunches.)

Steve Pomerance

Udall's scary health insurance policy

Beware Mark Udall's health care policy. He evaded a simple question in the Camera's Candidate Profile: "Should the federal government follow the lead of Massachusetts and have a mandatory health care plan?" His Web site clarifies: "I believe a requirement for health insurance coverage ... will increase the distribution of health care costs over the entire population."

He's right, but this is wrong for consumers. Mandatory insurance forces you to pay for other people's health care at the expense of your own. When politicians force you to buy insurance, they decide what policy is acceptable, not you. They could pander to special interests by mandating that your insurance include expensive benefits you may not want.

Consider Massachusetts. The Boston Globe reports that residents whose insurance does not meet regulations "could face a hefty tax penalty." Too bad for those who like their current policy.

Would Udall want this, or Massachusetts' other problems? Massachusetts authorities will "probably cut payments to doctors and hospitals" and "reduce choices for patients," reports the Globe. It also reports that "the wait to see primary care doctors in Massachusetts has grown to as long as 100 days."

Udall also supports expanding SCHIP, government-controlled insurance for kids. For every 10 kids in SCHIP, six drop private insurance. That's unfair competition. Worse yet, SCHIP is a "low-wage trap" that punishes recipients for increasing their income. But for politicians, SCHIP expansion can help create a generation who votes for politician-controlled medicine from cradle to grave. Just get them addicted as children.

Brian Schwartz

Palin's energy independence plan

Sarah Palin is seeking to rally her "drill-baby-drill" base with the slogan of energy independence. And it may be a shrewd tactic since many Americans even outside the so-called GOP base are understandably concerned about the long-term trend of rising gasoline prices and dependence on foreign petroleum.

But it's an entirely specious claim.

Unless Gov. Palin wants to really become a socialist by requiring that U.S. petroleum companies sell only to Americans, the global free marketplace she wholeheartedly supports will allow any extra light sweet American crude to be exported to the highest bidder. Thus, as the developing world continues to demand more gasoline, petroleum will be exported abroad. Indeed, all independent studies indicate that opening up U.S. public lands to further drilling would have very little impact on U.S. prices at the pump.

Furthermore, as Mark Udall points out, U.S. oil companies already have myriad existing-yet-unused drilling rights on American soil. They would rather import from elsewhere more cheaply. So unless her government would seek to place a great deal more control over the U.S. petroleum industry by forcing companies to drill here even when they would prefer not to, and restrict the resulting gasoline sales to American consumers, Palin's plan is plain pablum.

Julian Friedland

Spreading a little wealth

A Gary McCoy Halloween cartoon hitting my e-mail box may make you laugh. It goes like this: A man opened the door to three trick-or-treating little children on his porch. He said, "Look how much candy you have! I'm going to take half and give it to the kids too lazy to go trick or treating for themselves!" The little witch said, "Oh crap, a Democrat."

If you're not laughing, maybe you're justifying. Some kids are too sick to go out for their own candy. Others have unsafe neighborhoods or can't get to neighborhoods with candy. Also, some parents can't take their children out at all. The list goes on.

If redistributing the wealth of candy is so important, leveling the playing field in political campaigns should be a no-brainer. Both McCain and Obama promised to accept public campaign funds to level that field. McCain kept his promise. Obama didn't.

One result is Obama accumulated so much money he aired a half-hour ad on several TV stations on Wednesday. He didn't offer and wouldn't have liked "the man" to give some of his "candy" to McCain. Apparently, Obama's redistributing wealth only applies to taking money for his causes.

Shirley Scoville

Every vote should count

Building confidence in the U.S. election is central to our nation's democracy. That is how people choose their leaders and hold them accountable. If elections are defective, the democratic system is at risk. The above are words borrowed from the Report of the Commission on Federal Election Reform that met in September 2005 at American University, Washington, D.C., and was co-chaired by Jimmy Carter and James A. Baker III.

Here we are on the eve of the 2008 presidential election and the worthy recommendations of the Commission have largely been ignored.

It recommended a five point program to create a modern electoral system:

- A universal registration list that would be accessible to the public and available nationally. Such a list should be controlled by states and not by local jurisdictions.

- A "real" single ID card as a uniform voter system that would simplify and encourage voter registration and participation.

Those without photo ID would receive provisional ballots that would be counted after signatures were verified.

- States rather than local jurisdictions should be responsible for encouraging voters to register and for making voting easier in accessible locations.

- An auditable paper trail and improved security of the voting systems when electronic voting machines are used. The Commission also called for alternative technologies for counting ballots. This included independent testing of voting machines and software source codes under the direction of a Federal agency.

- The creation of electoral institutions that are impartial, non-partisan, independent and professional.

Marc Raizman

(The Camera's editorial advisory board members are: Rick Beaufait, Anne B. Butterfield, Adam Bliwas, Jimmy Calano, Ed Byrne, Clay Evans, Julian Friedland, Brian Lewis, Steve Pomerance, Marc Raizman, Brian T. Schwartz and Shirley Scoville.)

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George the 'Contractor'



Open forum

Sign stealing

What the sign stealing says about thieves

We see Obama/Biden yard signs all over, and they stay there. We have to put McCain/Palin signs in windows or on high fences, because that's the only way we can keep them from being taken. And we're still concerned that our properties will be vandalized! Doesn't that say a lot about our liberal friends?

KAY RICE
Louisville

Obama and Udall signs swiped, too

I was dismayed to read the recent letters to the editor complaining about McCain signs being stolen in Sunshine Canyon. I also live in the canyon and have had several Obama and Udall signs stolen and vandalized. The writer complaining about the theft of his signs assumed that this occurred because Obama and his supporters are oriented toward suppressing dissenting information. I have to admit that my initial reaction to the thefts of my signs was not very positive toward McCain supporters. In fact, I believe that there are a few supporters of both candidates who have behaved inappropriately and that is does not reflect the positions of either of them.

MARC VICK
Boulder

Judge Klein

Vote yes to retain Judge Klein

I was deeply angered by the cowardly, vengeful, anonymous advertisement in the Camera regarding the adverse possession case which recently came before the court of Judge James Klein. The ad recommended that he be removed from office because of his ruling on the case.

Judge Klein should actually be commended for sticking to his job of interpreting and enforcing the law as it existed. This man has demonstrated outstanding judicial skill, as well as a considerable amount of courage, in making and standing behind this ruling.

The law related to adverse possession is clearly both obsolete and unfair. But it's the job of the Legislative Branch, not the Judicial Branch, to revise or eliminate unfair and obsolete laws.

Meanwhile, Judge Klein should be retained in his current position. I urge everyone to vote accordingly.

BARRY COPELAND
Erie

Palin

Keep on talking, Gov. Palin

Sarah Palin's recent attacks on Barack Obama sparkle with irony, as she tries to remind voters of the candidate's past connection to his former

minister Jeremiah Wright. I wonder does it occur to Palin that she is one Achilles heel conjuring up the name of another not nearly so damaging as she is?

Palin has done more good for Obama than any one individual not on his team. Polls and appalled conservative detractors indicate this. It was as if after the Wright brouhaha, the McCain camp developed embarrassment envy and decided that it was unfair that they did not have their own cross to bear, and after much stomping and gnashing of teeth, someone brought up the name of the Alaska governor. Voilà, the campaign had its own tacky, one-woman vaudeville show.

So as an Obama supporter, I hope Gov. Palin continues to talk and talk (and, of course, never runs out of lipstick). With enemies like her, one barely needs friends.

JANET SINGLETON
Lafayette

No on 52

Sportsmen should not support 52

As Colorado heads to the polls, I would encourage all Colorado sportsmen to vote no on Amendment 52. This amendment will create a constitutional earmark that permanently hamstring the important Department of Natural Resources (DNR) programs that work on forest health, keeping species off the endangered list and battling aquatic invaders like zebra mussels.

Proponents want you to think that DNR has too much money already and that Amendment 52 would capture only the "surplus" oil and gas revenues in order to fund transportation projects along I-70. What they fail to mention is Amendment 52 will strangle the biggest source of funding for new state water projects, a program that is now underfunded.

That's why every major state water provider, including Denver Water and the Colorado River Water Conservation District, oppose Amendment 52. So do a roster of conservative Republicans as well as Club 20.

Here's the great irony: Amendment 52 will pull the plug on Colorado's water without providing a real fix for our transportation problems. What's more, not a single transportation district supports Amendment 52. That ought to tell you something.

Amendment 52 was born as a purely political effort by three ambitious politicians to undercut another measure aimed at oil and gas revenues, Amendment 58. Amendment 52's sponsors don't care how many other Coloradans get hurt so long as Gov. Ritter loses. It's a mean-spirited, short-sighted, political stunt that's gotten out of control.

We can't afford to have this political stunt written into our

state's constitution.

JOHN W. GALE
Boulder

Shaffer

Brandon Shaffer for District 17

I write this in response to the article about the Senate District 17 election (Oct. 11, "Longmont mom challenges incumbent senator"). In the heat of the national contests it is important that voters realize that real progress on energy, education and the economy begins at home. It is in that spirit that I urge the voters of State Senate District 17 to reelect Brandon Shaffer. Senator Shaffer, a native Coloradan, understands the values of hard work and personal responsibility. Senator Shaffer financed his education with an ROTC scholarship and served our country for four years in active duty with the Navy. It is that experience, holding the idea that "you get what you inspect not what you expect" that has made him a champion for accountability in our State Government.

Senator Shaffer is married to a public school teacher and is deeply committed to making our state a leader in education. He knows that in order for us to realize the potential of the new energy economy and make our state and economic powerhouse, we must prepare our workforce for the 21st century green collar jobs. Senator Shaffer is a graduate of the CU law school and is dedicated to justice. Unlike his opponent he supports a woman's right to choose, and the rights of all Coloradans to share life's wealth and challenges with a committed partner, regardless of orientation.

We must elect local leaders who understand the importance of investing in Colorado.

SHAWN COLEMAN
Boulder

More online

Most of the letters we receive are available on our letter-to-the-editor blog: www.dailycamera.com/blogs/letters-editor-blog

To Write the Forum

The Camera welcomes readers' letters. Timely topics of local interest are given first preference. All letters are subject to editing.

Our guidelines:

- Letters of 300 words or fewer will receive preference
- Name, full address and daytime phone required
- No anonymous or "open" letters
- No name-calling or ad hominem attacks
- Each writer limited to one letter a month
- e-mail submissions are processed more quickly than hard-copy letters. Plain text preferred over attachments

To reach us:

- Deliver or send letters to: Open Forum, 1048 Pearl St., Boulder, CO 80302
- Fax to 303-449-9358
- Phone us at 303-473-1354
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