

Socialist Vanguard

April, 2017 Newsletter

Issue # 80

Edited by Dave Schall

Presenting Democratic Socialist Viewpoints

Senator Ron Johnson: A Deficit Hawk's Shortsightedness

The following are excerpts from responses to emails focusing on drastic cuts to the Great Lakes Restoration Initiative (GLRI). Sending this message seemed to be a wasteful, as Wisconsin borders two Great Lakes and representatives should be supportive of GLRI (even Wisconsin's Governor has spoken out against the proposed cuts).

"Because discretionary spending must be appropriated by Congress each year, that is what the annual spending debates are about.

The Congressional Budget Office produces long-term projections of the debt and deficit. Its most realistic projection shows the deficit over the next 30 years will total more than \$100 trillion. This is unsustainable.

This mountain of debt and the irresponsible spending that worsens it every year now threaten the hopes and dreams of future generations. This is immoral. We must stop. I am willing to work with anyone who is serious about addressing the number one problem facing our nation by prioritizing spending on the core functions of the federal government and limiting its scope to a sustainable level." *Ron Johnson, US Senator*

"The Great Lakes are the sources of drinking water for 40 million people, and hold 90 percent of our nation's supply of fresh water. Jobs, recreation, and tourism all depend upon a healthy and flourishing Great Lakes ecosystem. Yet invasive species, toxic pollution, growing dead zones, and beach closures threaten the health and productivity of these irreplaceable bodies of water.

I care deeply about protecting our Great Lakes, especially, our neighboring Lake Michigan. The recreational, environmental, and economic benefits of these lakes are tremendous. The Great Lakes face a number of challenges that require a coordinated response from federal, state, and local officials.

You may be interested to know that I signed on to a letter to President Trump, requesting that he provide \$300 million for the GLRI in his Fiscal Year 2018 budget request. I have also signed on to a letter to Chairman Calvert and Ranking Member McCollum of the Interior and Environment Appropriations Subcommittee asking for full GLRI funding in the 2018 Interior, Environment, and Related Agencies Appropriations bill. Be assured, I will continue to closely monitor the appropriations process moving forward as it pertains to GLRI funding." *F. James Sensenbrenner, Member of Congress*

Sensenbrenner, who has been in Congress for almost 40 years often adopts disagreeable positions on issues, shows pragmatism by recognizing Wisconsin's location and dependence on a healthy Great Lakes. Johnson is beginning his second term and claims he is not a politician. Johnson demonstrates the dangerous shortsightedness of focusing only on budget deficits while opposing raising taxes. Johnson brags about bringing a business background to Washington, yet his company (which is prosperous, but not very big) could not grow under his focus. Most companies, when they face tough times, do not cut back on spending, while they may seek to become more efficient, they borrow money, spend money to promote their products, diversify their business, and other methods to grow their business.

Deficits pose a problem. Government unlike for-profit businesses, have fewer means of solving their problems, but divestment is not one of those solutions any more than it is a realistic solution for private corporations. The government has one advantage over private companies. Governments do not need to show a profit and do not have to worry about not being able to sell their products if their price rises. Borrowing from an old cliché, "we get what we pay for". In a democracy, our votes should be most important in determining what our government's do. As citizens it is our responsibility to understand the issues and to make responsible decisions when going to the polls or using other means to influence fellow citizens and our government. We need to educate our fellow citizens of issues and of how a democratic government should work!



If we fail to protect the Great Lakes, our drinking water, food sources and other economic benefits will disappear and it will not matter what the deficit is! **We need to demand that our representatives in government look past the bottom line on budgets and to make decisions based on the COMMON GOOD! DS**

Words for thought

"Latin American history shows that populist nationalism is a recipe for national decline."

The Economist

Is Risking War Really Getting Tough?

As Trump nears the end of the “100 day honeymoon” that greets most incoming presidents, he has drawn much criticism with few successes. Recently he has borrowed a trick practiced by Bush presidents, Clinton, and Reagan. Namely, when the polls are down, take military action. Reagan successfully invaded Granada along with several other military operations. Both Bush presidents took on Saddam Hussein. Clinton would enforce the “no-fly zone” in Iraq and engage in military action in the former Yugoslavia. These actions resulted in a “rally around the president. Trump’s reacting to the use of chemical weapons in the Syrian civil war/revolution by using missiles bomb an airbase brought him praise and he followed it up a couple of days later in Afghanistan by dropping “the mother of all bombs” on an underground hiding place of Afghan trouble makers.

These actions met with praise from many quarters, including many Democrats for the get tough, decisive action. The corporate controlled media praised the efforts. Few media outlets joined the Russian authorities and Syrian leader Assad by questioning the true origins of the chemical weapons. Given the track record of the corporate media and the political leadership regarding Iraq’s alleged ownership of weapons of mass destruction and other (to borrow a phrase from

Trump) “fake news”. There is good reason to question the accusations that it was Assad who used chemical weapons.

One must also question the motives of why did Trump choose to opt for such dramatic actions. Were they “get-tough” reactions to issues in Syria and Afghanistan? Were they actions trying to send a message to the North Korean administration, which is threatening to develop and use nuclear weapons? From existing evidence of Trump’s competency, the last possibility is very unlikely. North Korea represents a most serious problem facing the world. The North Korean leader, Kim Jong-un, appears to be concerned more about maintaining power than in looking out for the well being of North Koreans. Jong-un seems even more reckless than Trump.

Tough talk and military actions has led to mass destruction in many parts of the Mideast. We should not be taking military action to protect USA oil interests and to act as Israel’s protector, we should have been promoting peace and measures that would promote more equality and true democracy, not allowing for more ruthless demagoguery and hatred. **This would be the best deterrent to the terrorism that seems to spread from this region! DS**

Dues Time!

It is time to pay 2017 dues to the Socialist Party of Wisconsin. Dues are \$10/year (members with limited incomes may pay dues as low as \$5/year.). Make checks payable to the **Socialist Party of Wisconsin**.

In Wisconsin, More GOP Hypocrisy

A cornerstone of the Wisconsin Republicans in their support of much of their legislation has been to let local governments make decisions instead of the states. At the beginning of the Walker administration there were cuts and freezes in state aid to education as well as caps placed on spending and taxing caps placed on local school boards. In defending these actions, the GOP legislators said that taxpayers would be able to decide for themselves through local referenda whether their school district could increase spending or taxes above the caps set by the state.

We have lived with the state imposed frugality, and witnessed larger class sizes, deteriorating education infrastructure, which are being accompanied by a decline in the state ACT scores. Many school districts have held referenda to get approval for extra spending and raising taxes. To the tax cut proponents out there many of the school referenda pass.

A GOP State Senator, Dewey Stroebel of Cederburg, along with several other tax-cutter lawmakers have introduced several bills that would restrict, prohibit and/or punish local school boards if they opt to ask their constituents directly to approve an increase in spending above the state imposed restrictions.

Underlying the referendum issues is one of fairness. Our method of funding public schools has long drawn fire because it creates inequality. Wealthier districts can afford higher taxes and thus spend more on schools; poorer districts have fewer resources to spend. Wisconsin many years ago tried to remedy the problem by developing a formula for state aid to local school districts. This was also accompanied by efforts by Governor Tommy Thompson for the state to provide 2/3rds of state support for schools (the state reneged on this commitment). The “tax relief” measures passed by the Wisconsin legislature in 2011 reduced state aid. The allowance of referenda reintroduced the old system that created inequality, as wealthier districts can better afford to pass tax increases.

If Stroebel and his pals wanted to increase state support for schools, banning referenda would have some merit. However, there is no provision for increased state aids tied to the proposals. These are additional efforts to undermine local control and further decimate the state’s public schools. **The GOP has no right to claim that it is protecting local taxpayers! DS**

SP-Wisconsin Local Meeting: Saturday, May 6 at 1:30 p.m. at the Washington Park Library, 2121 N. Sherman Blvd., Milwaukee

Socialist Party of Wisconsin

**2025 N. Martin Luther King Dr #305– Milwaukee, WI 53212 – Phone: 414-332-0654
email: demsocvanguard@gmail.com**