



More on framing: *Don't Think of an Elephant! Know Your Values and Frame the Debate*, George Lakoff, 2004  
*The Little Blue Book: The Essential Guide to Thinking and Talking Democratic*, George Lakoff & Elisabeth Wehling, 2012

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# HEALTHCARE MESSAGE BOX

## What WE say about OUR position:

Medicare-For-All universal health insurance is the most moral and cost-effective way to provide healthcare for all Americans. It is also the best way to promote sustained economic growth.

## What OPPONENTS say about OUR position:

~~People need to take responsibility for their own care. We don't want freeloaders abusing the system and getting care at taxpayers' expense. It's socialized medicine/ govt takeover of healthcare.~~

## What OPPONENTS say about THEIR position:

~~Market-based solutions promote competition and drive down the cost of care for everyone. Individual consumers can shop the plans and prices best for them. Trust the free market.~~

## What WE say about THEIR position:

Healthcare is not an ordinary commodity you can shop. Patients are rarely privy to complex pricing or in a position to negotiate. One major illness or injury can bankrupt a family. For-profit insurers are incentivized to deny care.

## RESOURCES

Medicare-For-All Documentary: [FixItHealthcare.com](http://FixItHealthcare.com)

Medicare-For-All Resources: [HealthOverProfit.org](http://HealthOverProfit.org) and [PNHP.org](http://PNHP.org)

Medicare-For-All Savings Calculator: [hcfat.org](http://hcfat.org)

General Health Data & Analysis: Kaiser Family Foundation at [kff.org](http://kff.org)

Health Comparison by Country: [OECD.org](http://OECD.org)

and [CommonwealthFund.org](http://CommonwealthFund.org)

"The American Healthcare Crazy Quilt": [ConnectTheDotsUSA.com](http://ConnectTheDotsUSA.com)

Steven Brill, *America's Bitter Pill*, 2015

Talking Democratic: Lakoff & Wehling, *The Little Blue Book*, 2012

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# MEDICARE-FOR-ALL

## Healthcare is a human right.

Everyone's life and freedom depends on having access to quality healthcare, regardless of a person's ability to pay. The most efficient and effective way to guarantee this right is to expand and enhance our existing Medicare program to all Americans.

Health is a life-and-death issue, not a commodity to be rationed based on one's financial situation.

You are not truly free if you have a serious illness or accident and cannot afford the treatment because private insurance premiums and out-of-pocket costs (deductibles, co-pays, etc.) are too high.

You are not truly free if you have to sell your home or go bankrupt to keep a family member alive.

When greedy, for-profit insurance middlemen deny you care in order to maximize return for their shareholders and CEOs, they deny you life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness. They also interfere in the doctor-patient relationship.

Some frames here are from George Lakoff's *The Little Blue Book*, 2012, pgs 38-41



# MEDICARE-FOR-ALL

## Saves Lives • Saves Money

*"Of all the forms of inequality, injustice in health care is the most shocking and inhumane."*

— Martin Luther King, Jr

*"Unless you are protected by Medicare, the health care market is not a market at all. It's a crapshoot. People fare differently according to circumstances they can neither control nor predict... (T)hey have little visibility into pricing, let alone control of it."*

— Steven Brill  
"The Bitter Pill"  
Time, March 4, 2013

Thanks to ACA protections and tax credits, Megan (a cancer survivor) has insurance, but the premiums, deductibles and co-pays are still too high. She hopes to make it to Medicare in five years.

• **Universal:** Extends Medicare – the federal insurance program that currently covers seniors and the disabled — to every person living in America. Gets young and healthy into the same risk pool as older and sicker.

• **Comprehensive:** Enhances existing Medicare to include not only inpatient, outpatient, ER, Rx, mental and rehab, but also dental, vision, hearing, chiropractic, podiatry, medical devices, prenatal and longterm care.

• **Simple & Cost-Effective:** Say goodbye to the maze of predatory, for-profit insurance premiums, deductibles, co-pays and medical bills. Relieves families from the stress and destruction of medical debt.

• **Freedom & Choice:** Go to any doctor or hospital in the entire U.S. Coverage follows you when you move, change jobs, retire, etc.

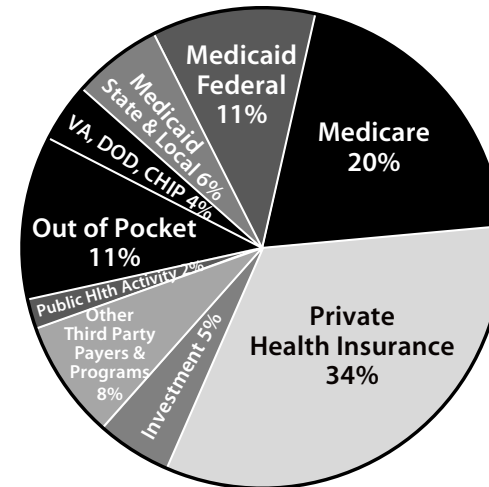
• **Good for Care Providers:** Relieves hospitals, doctors and other care providers of the burden and expense of dealing with multiple bureaucracies for revenue.

• **Good for Business:** Gets the insurance burden and cost off the backs of businesses, making them more competitive in the global market. Frees entrepreneurs from job lock.

• **Good for the Economy:** Federal negotiating power and single, simplified administration reduce costs and rein in healthcare inflation.

• **Big Savings for 95% of Americans:** Modest employer-side payroll tax **replaces** all premiums and out-of-pocket costs. Average family **SAVES** nearly \$7,000/year!

Too many payers and risk pools lead to huge waste and fragmentation in U.S. healthcare



2016 Total Spending = \$3.3 Trillion  
\$10,348 per person

Payers by Type of Entity

Fed Govt: 28% State & Local Govts: 17%  
Households: 28% Businesses: 20% Other Private: 7%

**65% of health spending is already tax-financed:**  
direct govt spending + indirect tax subsidies

Source: Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services,  
Office of the Actuary, National Health Statistics Group (cms.gov)

*"For God's sake – every single other industrialized country in the entire world has universal health care. Why can't we?  
How many more people have to die?  
How many more sacrifices on the altar of Almighty Greed?  
Any health care system that denies necessary care on the basis of wealth is evil.  
It doesn't matter how you micromanage it, or tinker with it. It's evil.  
Forget about the tinkering.  
This is America, not Myanmar... End of story."*

— Former U.S. Rep. Alan Grayson

Compared to other peer countries, U.S. spends far more overall = 1/6 of the economy

2015 per person:  
U.S.: \$9,451  
Denmark: \$4,943  
Canada: \$4,609  
U.K.: \$4,003  
OECD Avg: \$3,453 (2013)

**A Political Winner:**  
**60% Support Medicare-For-All!**

A growing number of Americans believe government must guarantee everyone has health coverage.

An April 2017 Economist/YouGov poll found that 60% of all voters, including 75% of Democrats, 58% of Independents, 46% of Republicans (and even 40% of Trump voters) support Medicare-For-All.

# MINIMUM WAGE MESSAGE BOX

## What WE say about OUR position:

No one who works full-time should live in poverty. Minimum wage laws protect workers from exploitation by the greedy, powerful few. Plus, when workers have a little extra money, they spend it in the economy, creating more jobs.

## What OPPONENTS say about OUR position:

~~Minimum wage laws cause businesses to lay off low-skilled workers — especially teenagers seeking work experience — and replace them with robots. No way to calculate a fair minimum: If \$15/hr, why not \$100/hr?~~

## What OPPONENTS say about THEIR position:

~~Let the free market set wages. Individual workers can negotiate their own wages based on merit, skill and hard work. If an employee wants higher wages, he/she should work harder and get more skills.~~

## What WE say about THEIR position:

How much someone gets paid often has more to do with power than hard work. Greedy corporations and bosses exploit desperate workers who have few options and little power to complain or negotiate.

## RESOURCES

Minimum Wage Activism: [FightFor15.org](http://FightFor15.org)

Economic Policy Institute: [epi.org](http://epi.org)

"Raising the minimum wage to \$15 by 2024 would lift wages for 41 million American workers," April 26, 2017

"Why America Needs a \$15 Minimum Wage," Fact Sheet, April 26, 2017  
EPI Family Budget Calculator

Living Wage Calculator: [LivingWage.mit.edu](http://LivingWage.mit.edu)

Talking Democratic: Lakoff & Wehling, *The Little Blue Book*, 2012

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# MINIMUM WAGE

## Freedom and justice require decent work at decent pay.

Reasonable minimum wage laws protect Americans by guaranteeing that everyone who works full-time will not live in poverty. The greedy, powerful few should not be allowed to exploit desperate workers.

To support our families and our communities, we must ensure all workers can maintain a decent standard of living that allows everyone to pursue happiness and the American Dream.

When we require fair wages, workers can buy more goods and services, which in turn stimulates businesses to increase their sales and then hire more workers, continuing the virtuous cycle of prosperity for all.

It is immoral in the richest country on Earth to pay less than a fair and living wage. We must not create a permanent underclass of Americans, laboring at poverty wages so that very profitable corporations and wealthy CEOs can exploit and take advantage of them.



*"All labor has dignity."  
"It is a crime for people  
to live in this rich  
nation and receive  
starvation wages."*

— Martin Luther King, Jr

*"No business which  
depends for existence  
on paying less than  
(decent) living wages  
to its workers has  
any right to continue  
in this country."*

— Franklin D. Roosevelt

## How to Set a Reasonable Federal Min. Wage

Analogous to setting  
reasonable speed  
limits on our roads,  
we look at data across  
the country for what  
it costs for an average  
size family to afford  
a safe, modest rental  
home, healthcare,  
nutritious food, etc.  
and divide that by  
40 hrs/week. A good  
ballpark is \$15/hr.  
States and cities can  
set theirs even higher.

# FIGHT FOR \$15

## Arizona Increases Minimum Wage Starting 2017

Proposition 206 (the Fair Wages and Healthy Families Act), which was a ballot initiative approved by over 58% of Arizona voters in Nov 2016, gradually increases the minimum wage from \$8.05 in 2016 to \$12.00/hr by 2020 (it is \$10.00/hr in 2017). After 2020, it will automatically increase annually by cost of living.

## "Why I'm on Strike Today: I Can't Support Myself on \$7.85 at Burger King"

By Willietta Dukes,  
*The Guardian*, August 29, 2013

*Excerpts: "Before Burger King, I worked at Church's (Chicken) for 12 years, starting at \$6.30 and ending at just a little more than \$8 an hour... I've worked in fast-food for 15 years, and I can't even afford my own rent payments. We just want fairness and to be able to provide for our families... I know what it feels like to be truly afraid – afraid of having your children go to bed hungry, or having your heat turned off in February, or being evicted from your home... Burger King says they can't pay employees like me higher wages because it would force them out of business. Yet last year it made \$117 million in profits and its CEO took home \$6.47 million."*

## GET THE FACTS

- More than 90% of minimum wage workers are 20 years old or over. Average is 36 years. 28% are parents.
- If the federal minimum wage had kept up with inflation since peaking in 1968, it would be \$9.68/hr (instead of \$7.25). If it had kept pace with productivity, it would be nearly \$19.00. Instead, that extra income shifted to the Top 1%.
- Raising the minimum wage to \$15 by 2024 would lift wages for 41 million Americans (= 29% of the workforce). 40% of black workers and 34% of Hispanic workers would get a raise.

epi.org

## Low Wages Cost Taxpayers \$150 Billion/year in Corporate Welfare

Walmart employees must rely on food stamps and Medicaid to survive and work at the stingy retailer. That adds up to a federal subsidy of \$6.2 billion per year — averaging \$900,000 to \$1.75 million per store and \$4,400 per employee — enabling Walmart to boast a profit of \$16 Billion.

*"This is the question the Right has to answer: Do you want smaller government with less handouts or do you want a low (or no) minimum wage? Because you cannot have both. If Colonel Sanders isn't going to pay the lady behind the counter enough to live on, then Uncle Sam has to. And I for one am getting a little tired of helping highly profitable companies pay their workers."*

— Bill Maher

*"When did the  
American dream  
become this pathway  
to indentured  
servitude, this  
economic death spiral  
where workers get  
paid next to nothing,  
so they can only  
afford to buy next  
to nothing, so  
businesses are forced  
to sell cheaper  
and cheaper s\*\*t?"*

— Bill Maher

*"Money is like  
manure": Pile it up  
and it just stinks;  
spread it around and  
it makes things grow.*

— Based on quote by  
Thorton Wilder

*"I used to work at  
McDonald's making  
minimum wage.  
You know what that  
means when someone  
pays you minimum  
wage? You know  
what your boss was  
trying to say? It's like,  
'Hey if I could pay  
you less, I would, but  
it's against the law.'"*

— Chris Rock



# ORGANIZED LABOR MESSAGE BOX

## What WE say about OUR position:

Unions and collective bargaining help balance the power between workers and management so they have a voice and seat at the table to negotiate good wages and benefits and safe workplaces.

## What OPPONENTS say about OUR position:

~~Union thugs use strong-arm tactics to force everyone to pay into their protection racket. They also unfairly inflate the price of labor. Public-sector union workers are lazy, overpaid and too costly for taxpayers.~~

## What OPPONENTS say about THEIR position:

~~Individual workers should be rewarded based only on their own hard work, skill, ingenuity and negotiating ability. That's what American freedom and individual responsibility are all about.~~

## What WE say about THEIR position:

Individual hard work and skill do not necessarily translate into fair compensation. Greedy corporations and bosses exploit desperate workers who may have few options and little power to complain or negotiate.

## RESOURCES

**Economic Policy Institute (epi.org)**

Unions & Labor Standards Research

The State of Working America Data Library

EPI Wage Calculator (What if your wages had kept pace with productivity?)

**UnionStats.com • Inequality.org • Unions4Workers** (on Facebook)

Labor Unions: **cwa-union.org • aflcio.org**

"Dude, Where's My Job?": **ConnectTheDotsUSA.com**

Talking Democratic: Lakoff & Wehling, *The Little Blue Book*, 2012

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# ORGANIZED LABOR

## United we bargain. Divided we beg.

Due to the huge power imbalance between workers and corporate owners, the best way for workers to negotiate fair wages, good benefits and safe workplaces is by bargaining together as a group. Labor unions protect individual workers from exploitation.

"If CEOs have the right to negotiate multi-million dollar compensation packages, then working people have the right to negotiate together for fair wages and benefits."

"It's time to restore some balance between management and working people, starting with making sure working people have a voice and a seat at the table."

"Every time a CEO cuts himself a bonus check for \$25 million, he's cutting the paycheck of 25,000 workers by \$1,000 apiece. If that isn't un-American, I don't know what is."

"You don't build a middle class by cutting the pay and benefits of teachers, who are struggling like the rest of us, or by pitting working people against each other."

All quotes from Drew Westen's presentation:  
"Speaking American: Winning the Argument" (June 2012)



## Americans can thank unions for:

- The Weekend
- 8-Hour Workday
- 40-Hour Workweek
- Overtime Pay
- Minimum Wage
- Paid Vacation
- Sick Days
- Safety Standards
- Child Labor Laws
- Employer Health Benefits
- Retirement Security
- Unemployment Insurance
- Worker's Comp
- Family & Medical Leave Act

*"Labor is the superior of capital, and deserves much the higher consideration."*

— Abraham Lincoln

*"Capital organizes and therefore labor must organize."*

— Theodore Roosevelt

*"Health care benefits and pensions are part of the pay earned by workers."*

— George Lakoff

*"Through collective bargaining and grievance procedures, (labor unions) have brought justice and democracy to the shop floor."*

— John F. Kennedy

*"When you destroy unions, there will be no standard at all, nobody left to negotiate decent jobs for the middle class."*

— Senator Bernie Sanders

*"(Right-to-work legislation) does nothing for working people, but instead gives employers the right to exploit labor."*

— Eleanor Roosevelt

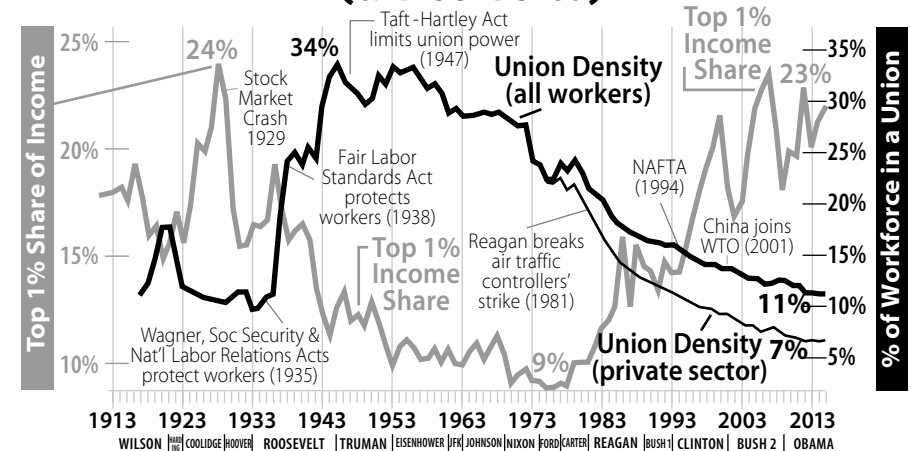
## Unions: A Smart Investment

Carl worked 40 years as a repairman for the phone company where he was also a member of Communication Workers of America (CWA) union. At the end of his career, he was earning \$29/hour (up to double that with overtime pay), had good health coverage for his family and five weeks paid vacation, plus sick days.

An impatient manager once ordered Carl and his co-workers to jump in an unsafe pit and start splicing cut cable. They knew the union would defend them if they waited for the hole to be shored up.

Carl retired with a modest pension of \$2,000/month to supplement his Social Security and 401k investments. And the union continues to fight to protect his retiree health benefits. The price of union membership — just two hours of pay per month and strike solidarity — was a smart investment for Carl and his family.

## As union membership drops, Top 1% takes larger slice of income pie (& vice-versa)



As union density dropped from 33% to 11%, middle class share of all income dropped from 53% to 45%.

Sources: Colin Gordon (graphs at Public.Tableau.com) for Center for Economic & Policy Research (cepr.net)  
Based on data from Historical Statistics of U.S., UnionStats.com & World Top Incomes Database (wid.world)

## What Difference Does A Union Make?

### Union

1. Wages, benefits and working conditions are protected by a legal contract.
2. A contract spells out how much each worker earns.
3. Unions negotiate raises for everyone. Members vote on it, and if they feel it's unfair, they can vote it down.
4. If you are unfairly disciplined, unions provide due process to protect against unscrupulous supervisors.
5. If you don't like something at work, you can work together with your union to change it.

### No Union

1. Management can change wages, benefits and working conditions unilaterally, at whim.
2. No one knows how much anyone else earns. Unfair treatment and favoritism exist.
3. If you want a raise, you must plead your case to a supervisor or manager.
4. As an at-will employee, if you are unfairly disciplined, you are on your own. You get no due process or representation.
5. If you don't like something at work, you are at the mercy of management.

— Unions4Workers



# PUBLIC RESOURCES MESSAGE BOX

## What WE say about OUR position:

Gov't has a moral duty to provide/protect basic necessities — roads, clean air/water, health, education, security, economic stability — for all its people. A robust Public enables decent life and private success.

## What OPPONENTS say about OUR position:

Big gov't is always wasteful, bureaucratic and inefficient. We can't afford to provide public services or repair our crumbling infrastructure — we must cut spending. Too many regulations stifle the free market and kill jobs.

## What OPPONENTS say about THEIR position:

Private enterprise is always best suited to drive down costs, provide choice and divide up resources. Lower taxes and less regulation unleash market competition, which generates more benefits for customers.

## What WE say about THEIR position:

Securing of basic necessities and protections should not depend on the size of your wallet. They should be shared equally. In such a "hostage" situation, corporations gouge and cut corners, at the expense of the public.

## RESOURCES

Talking Democratic: Lakoff & Wehling, *The Little Blue Book*, 2012, pgs 64-82

"Two Questions about Trump and Republicans that Stump Progressives," July 1, 2017: [GeorgeLakoff.com](http://GeorgeLakoff.com)

"...How Not to Handle Infrastructure," Aug. 23, 2017: [ibtimes.com](http://ibtimes.com)

"U.S. Is One of the Least Taxed Developed Countries," April 10, 2017: [itep.org](http://itep.org)

Infographics on the Federal Budget: [cbo.gov](http://cbo.gov)

Congressional Progressive Caucus' "The People's Budget" 2017: [epi.org](http://epi.org)

"Budgets and Deficits and Debt, Oh My!": [ConnectTheDotsUSA.com](http://ConnectTheDotsUSA.com)

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# PUBLIC RESOURCES

## Public investment enables private success.

Decent private life and private enterprise depend upon robust public investment in infrastructure, security, education, health, research and economic stability — no one is "self-made." Privatization of vital resources is public theft to benefit the wealthy few.

"Citizens care about other citizens, and work through their government to provide public resources for all — resources required for the wellbeing and freedom of all."

"Government has a moral duty to protect and empower its people. Private corporations have no such duty to citizens, which is why maintaining a robust Public is absolutely necessary to ensure everyone's well-being, prosperity, and safety."

"(Predatory) privatization is the replacement of elected governments with unelected corporate governments, which run more and more aspects of American life for their own profit, not for the public good."

All quotes from George Lakoff (See *The Little Blue Book*, 2012, pgs 64-82)



# What Belongs in the Public Sphere?

The basic necessities for a decent life and functioning society should be the domain of public investments and protection, not profit-seeking. Taxes are the dues we pay for a caring, modern, civilized country.

— Quote: Preamble to U.S. Constitution

**"...establish justice, insure domestic tranquility,**

Criminal & civil justice system; Protection laws for consumers, workers, children, investors and environment (clean air & water, climate); Patent/trademark office; Monopoly busting; National bank; Disaster relief and protections.

**provide for the common defence,**

Military, foreign diplomacy, border security, support for veterans.

**promote the general welfare, and secure the blessings of liberty to ourselves and our posterity..."**

Infrastructure (roads, bridges, water & sewer systems, energy grid, mass transit, communication systems); Healthcare financing; Education (pre-K – college/tech training); Parks; Post office; Basic research; Economic stability & financial aid (Social Security, affordable food/housing/energy, jobs guarantee, universal basic income).

*"We have abandoned the common good. We have been stripped of our rights and voice. Corporations write our laws and determine how we structure our society."*

— Chris Hedges

*"That's the standard technique of privatization: defund, make sure things don't work, people get angry, you hand it over to private capital."*

— Noam Chomsky

## Examples of Market Failures & Profit's Perverse Incentives

- Private health insurers strive to deny care and sick people to boost profits.
- For-profit prisons lobby for draconian drug and immigration laws to fill beds. Taxpayers must guarantee them revenue.
- To make lots of money, the military industrial complex perpetuates endless war and useless weapons (e.g. the \$400 Billion F-35 boondoggle).
- Private toll roads are inefficient and unfair, as well as unprofitable in rural and low-income areas.

## GET THE FACTS

- America is one of the LEAST taxed developed countries, making far less public investment than peer countries.

**2015 Taxes as % of the Economy**  
(All Federal, State & Local Taxes Combined)

**United States: 26.4% of GDP**

Federal = 18.2% + State/Local = 8.2%

Denmark: 46.6%	France: 45.5%
Finland: 44.0%	Sweden: 43.3%
Norway: 38.1%	Germany: 36.9%
Japan: 32.0%	Canada: 31.9%

**OECD Average: 34.3%**

- U.S. also diverts far more taxes into policing the world and corporate welfare, while other countries invest in universal healthcare and pre-K – college education.

oecd.org & itep.org

## American Social Contract

***"There is nobody in this country who got rich on his own. Nobody."***

*"You built a factory out there — good for you! But I want to be clear. You moved your goods to market on roads the rest of us paid for. You hired workers the rest of us paid to educate. You were safe in your factory because of police forces and fire forces that the rest of us paid for..."*

*Now look, you built a factory and it turned into something terrific or a great idea — God bless! Keep a big hunk of it. But part of the underlying social contract is you take a hunk of that and pay forward for the next kid who comes along."*

— Senator Elizabeth Warren

***"Corporations are not concerned with the common good."***

*"They exploit, pollute, impoverish, repress, kill and lie to make money. They throw poor people out of homes, let the uninsured die, wage useless wars for profit, poison and pollute the ecosystem, slash social assistance programs, gut public education, trash the global economy, plunder the U.S. Treasury and crush all popular movements that seek justice for working men and women. They worship money and power."*

— Chris Hedges

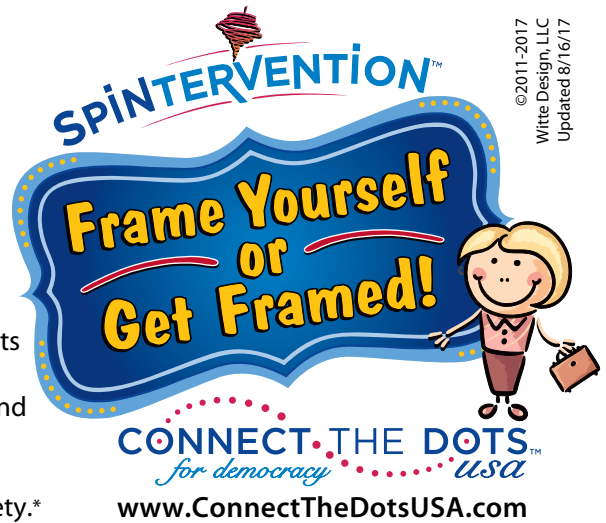
*Corporations enjoy the legal privilege of limited liability for shareholders — a privilege granted by We The People. We cannot then allow them to control public resources/ functions or endanger the citizenry. People before Profits.*

# REFRAME IT!

## Quick Reference Guide

Progressives need to be talking non-stop about how...

**1.** Private success depends upon robust public investment in infrastructure, security, education, health, research and economic stability — no one is “self-made”; **2.** The rich must pay their fair share for the enormous benefits they have reaped from prior and current public investments; **3.** Corporate welfare, Wall Street bailouts and military waste are the big spending culprits; **4.** Corporations keep wages low when profits are high, outsource American jobs, and control our lives and livelihoods far more than government does; **5.** Corporate regulation is public protection; **6.** Taxes are not an affliction but rather necessary public investments for civilized society.\*



### BIG Conservative Frames (Decoded)

**Tax Relief** (= Tax Evasion for the Rich) \_\_\_\_\_

**Small Govt** (= Corps Rule; Gut Social Progs & Regs) \_\_\_\_\_

**Free Markets** (= 1% Markets, Casino Capitalism) \_\_\_\_\_

**Free Trade** (= Corporate-Rigged Trade) \_\_\_\_\_

**Tax Cuts Create Jobs** (= Divert More \$\$\$\$ to Top) \_\_\_\_\_

**Job Killing Regulation** (= No Rules for the Rich) \_\_\_\_\_

**Debt Crisis** (= Austerity for the 99%) \_\_\_\_\_

**Govt Bureaucrats** (= Bash Unions, Divide Workers) \_\_\_\_\_

**Entitlements** (= Gut Social Security, Medicare, etc) \_\_\_\_\_

**Consumer-Driven Healthcare** (= Skimpy Plans) \_\_\_\_\_

**Tort Reform** (= License to Cut Corners) \_\_\_\_\_

**Voter Fraud** (= Voter Suppression) \_\_\_\_\_

**Pro-Life** (= Control Women's Bodies, Repress Sex) \_\_\_\_\_

**Death Tax** (= Create Oligarchy, Concentrate Wealth) \_\_\_\_\_

**Beware a Govt Tax** (= Starve Revenue) \_\_\_\_\_

**Privatize** (= Public Theft, Corporate Rule) \_\_\_\_\_

**School Choice** (= Public Theft, Resegregation) \_\_\_\_\_

**Corporations Are People** (= Corporate Rule) \_\_\_\_\_

**Worship Wealth** (= Prosperity Gospels) \_\_\_\_\_

**Union Thugs** (= Divide & Conquer Workers) \_\_\_\_\_

**Right-To-Work** (= Right to Exploit, Anti-Union) \_\_\_\_\_

**Illegal Aliens** (= Punch Down, Scapegoat) \_\_\_\_\_

**Raise the Retirement Age** (= Cost Shift to Seniors) \_\_\_\_\_

**Strong Defense** (= Endless Offensive Wars) \_\_\_\_\_

**War & Austerity** (= Wars Make the 1% Richer) \_\_\_\_\_

**Conservative** (= Regressive, Corporatist) \_\_\_\_\_

**Religious Freedom** (= License to Discriminate) \_\_\_\_\_

**Global Warming Is a Hoax** (= Shill for Big Oil) \_\_\_\_\_

**Freedom** (= No Rules for the Rich) \_\_\_\_\_

**Personal Responsibility** (= You're On Your Own 99%) \_\_\_\_\_

**Investors/Job Creators** (= Uber Rich, Donor Class) \_\_\_\_\_

**Liberal Media/Fake News** (= Unflattering Coverage) \_\_\_\_\_

**Class Warfare** (= 99% Are Fighting Back) \_\_\_\_\_

### Progressive Frames

**Pay Your Fair Share; Taxes = Dues for Civilized Society**

**Effective Govt = Better Future; Govt for the 99%**

**Broad Prosperity, Regulated Capitalism, Mixed Economy**

**Fair Trade for All Stakeholders**

**Customers Create Jobs; Tax Cuts Create Deficits**

**Public Protections; People/Planet-Killing Deregulation**

**Greed Crisis → Jobs Crisis; We Were Robbed!**

**Public Workers Are Our Heroes, Neighbors & Friends**

**Earned Benefits = Social Security & Medicare Part A**

**Medicare-For-All; Healthcare is a Basic Human Right**

**Public Protection Law**

**Make Voting Easy → More Democracy**

**Pro-Choice vs Anti-Choice (Govt-Forced Birthers)**

**Dynasty Tax; Lucky Sperm Club Tax**

**Beware a Corporate Jack**

**Robust Public to Secure Necessities of a Decent Life**

**No Taxpayer Dollars to For-Profit/Private Schools**

**People Before Profits; Corp. Charter is a Legal Privilege**

**Respect Sweat**

**Collective Bargaining Helps Balance the Power**

**United We Bargain, Divided We Beg**

**Economic, Political and Climate Refugees**

**Scrap the Cap, so Rich Pay Tax on All Their Income**

**Strong America Requires Investing Domestically**

**Peace & Prosperity**

**Progressive, Populist; Economic Social & Racial Justice**

**Equal Rights for All; Celebrate Diversity**

**Humans Cause Climate Chaos; There's No Planet B**

**Liberty & Justice for All; Fair Play, Fair Shot, Fair Share**

**Shared Responsibility; Pay It Forward**

**Beware Vulture Capitalists, Banksters, Merge & Purgers**

**Beware Corporate Media, Infotainment Complex**

**Rebuild the American Dream**

\*See *The Little Blue Book: The Essential Guide to Thinking and Talking Democratic*, George Lakoff & Elisabeth Wehling, 2012

# Bill Maher Explains the Power of Language Framing and How Democrats Must Take It Back from Republicans: March 21, 2014

Transcribed by BruinKid, DailyKos blog post on 3/23/14

**New Rule:** Democrats need to stop despairing about the gloomy midterm predictions, and realize there's actually a glimmer of hope, and it has to do with suicide. Let me finish. For decades now, liberals pushed the issue of **assisted suicide**, and it got nowhere. Then, they started to call it "**aid in dying**," and its approval shot up 20 points and it's now legal in 5 states. That's the power of language... If they called it "**death by chocolate**," they could get all 50! *(audience laughter and applause)*

Now, that success and the success that Democrats had in rebranding **gay marriage** as "**marriage equality**" means they have finally caught on to what Republicans learned a long time ago from their guru on words, deranged madman/friend of the show Frank Luntz. Frank is the genius right-wing wordsmith who taught Republicans to, instead of saying "**estate tax**," say "**death tax**." Instead of saying "**poor people**," say "**the takers**"...

And what Democrats need to do is start out-Luntzing the Republicans on all the issues. What's the difference between "**drilling for oil**" and "**energy exploration**"? Nothing, except one sounds like something assholes do, and one sounds like Indiana Jones. "**Health care reform**"? Everyone likes that. "**Government takeover of health care**": What are you, Hitler? What's the difference between **creationism** and **intelligent design**? Not IQ points. *(audience laughter)*

Being a Republican means starting with a bedrock principle, like rich people shouldn't pay taxes, or black people shouldn't vote. *(audience laughter)* And then, figuring out how to sell it to low-information voters, otherwise known as Americans. Did I say "**don't tax rich people**"? I meant "**encourage the job creators**." Did I say "**don't let black people vote**"? I meant "**clamp down on voter fraud**." Did I say "**bring back slavery**"? I meant "**phase out race-based freedom quotas**." *(audience laughter)*

Republicans are always confident they can move the needle on any issue because, A) they know they have the right words to make the hamster hit the pedal. And B) they have the discipline with those words. Perhaps you noticed how everyone on the right universally decided at the exact same moment that **Obama's "weakness"** is what "**emboldened**" Putin to take Crimea. And that's not a matter of great minds thinking alike, because for that, you would need great minds. *(audience laughter and applause)* No, that's because once the word is decided on, every single Republican, from the presidential contenders on down to the feces-throwers on hate radio *(audience laughter)*, all chant it like Rain Man over and over until it's beaten into our skulls.

Now I have no hope the Democrats will ever get that organized. But they could at least keep up the winning streak in the word game. Starting with, liberals must stop saying they "**believe**" in climate change or "**believe**" in evolution. Evolution is; it's not a matter of believing in it. *(massive audience cheering and applause)* I don't believe that water boils at 212°; that's how hot it is when it happens! It's not ideology, it's soup! *(audience laughter)*

But most of all, just remember, you win the word game, you win the issue. Jesus was for feeding the poor. Rename food stamps: "**Christ coupons**." *(audience laughter and applause)* **Marijuana legalization** should be called "**creating green jobs**."... And **solar energy** has always sounded way too gay for rednecks. Instead, say "**invade the Sun and take its oil**"! *(audience laughter and applause)*

# **“Speaking American: Winning the Argument”**

## **by Drew Westen, Westen Strategies, LLC**

**Presented at the Take Back The Dream Conference • June 20, 2012**

**Progressives, here are the most convincing things to say if you only have 6 seconds to make your point. These have been tested to persuade folks on the left, right and center. Paste them on the bathroom mirror or your smart phone, practice them, memorize them and work them into your conversations with friends, family members, neighbors and co-workers.**

1. I want to see the words “Made in America” again.
2. It’s time our major import was something other than oil and that our major export was something other than American jobs.
3. The best way to reduce the deficit is to put Americans back to work.
4. In tough times like these, millionaires should be *giving* to charity, not getting it.
5. Most of us don’t expect to be rich or famous, but we do expect a living wage and good American benefits for a hard day’s work.
6. You can’t have a vibrant economy without a vibrant middle class because someone’s got to build things and someone’s got to buy them.
7. When our elected officials are voting for or against a bill, they should be consulting their conscience and their constituents, not their campaign contributors.
8. If working and middle class people are going to take a hit in tough times, it should not be to pay for tax breaks for millionaires and oil companies.
9. It’s time we started increasing opportunity and stopped shrinking the middle class.

**And if you make the right comparison, even red-state Republicans will understand what organized labor is all about...**

1. If CEOs have the right to negotiate multi-million dollar compensation packages, then working people have the right to negotiate together for fair wages and benefits.
2. It’s time to restore some balance between management and working people, starting with making sure working people have a voice and a seat at the table.
3. Every time a CEO cuts himself a bonus check for \$25 million, he’s cutting the paycheck of 25,000 workers by \$1,000 apiece. If that isn’t un-American, I don’t know what is.
4. You don’t build a middle class by cutting the pay and benefits of teachers, who are struggling like the rest of us, or by pitting working people against each other.
5. It used to be in good times, management and labor sat down at the table to figure out how to divide up the profits so everybody got their fair share. Now they want to throw out the table.
6. Politicians who talk about “public employees” like they’re lazy, overpaid, and scamming the system ought to look in the mirror.

# **“Speaking American: Winning the Argument”**

by Drew Westen, Westen Strategies, LLC • Presented at Take Back The Dream 6/20/12

## **Effective Messaging: Tell a Coherent Memorable Story**

Connect with values, raise concerns, and end with hope. If it's emotionally inert, it's politically inert. If you don't feel it, don't use it. Create images in people's minds.

## **Sample Short Narrative: Speaking of the American Dream**

The American Dream used to mean something... that if you put in a hard day's work, you could expect good American wages, benefits and a better life for your kids. It meant we were a middle class country with middle class values of hard work, opportunity and fairness. Now we're in danger of losing the middle class as big corporations, CEOs and their lobbyists are writing all the rules. It's time we stopped rewarding companies that ship our jobs overseas. It's time we stopped giving tax breaks to billionaires and big corporations when working Americans are struggling to make ends meet.

## **Sample Short Narrative: Speaking of Government**

It's time politicians stopped running for or against government and started running it well. We need leaders who understand what happens when you let big business call all the shots. People who work full time should not be struggling to put food on the table or gas in their tanks. People who retire with a pension and benefits shouldn't find themselves with a handful of empty promises. True leaders don't sit back and hope things work out as big corporations outsource good American jobs to China, or double the price of gas. Leadership means knowing when to step back and when to step up to make sure the system works for people who work for a living.

## **Sample Short Narrative: Speaking of the Economic Collapse**

The economic collapse was not caused by Americans borrowing too much. It was caused by decisions made by bankers who decided they were going to create fraudulent loans that had balloons in them buried in the fine print that you needed a PhD to figure out. They then repackaged those as toxic assets that they could pass off, and Standards & Poor's and Moody's would give an A+ rating. And then they said, "Hey don't worry about it, AIG's got us covered in case it fails." Well, that was a great house of cards. The economic collapse was caused by fancy speculative schemes on Wall Street.

## **Conclusions**

1. It's time we recognize that what we progressives believe is what the average American believes.
2. The way to move the center is not to move to the center. Instead, speak to the center about progressive American values.
3. It's time we stopped accepting whatever the leaders on "our side" are willing to offer just because the other side sucks worse. Democrats saying "We're only half as corrupt as the other guys" doesn't exactly warm the cockles.
4. Republicans' ideology fits well with being bought. They already believe rich people and powerful corporations ought to get all the wealth and privileges and write all the rules.
5. Our biggest deficit in America isn't budgetary. It's a deficit of courage.
6. The only grand bargain we need is for enough orange jumpsuits to put away the perpetrators of the Great Heist of 2008.



# **“Take Back The American Dream” Conference: June 18-20, 2012**

## **Other Notable Quotables & Progressive Framing**

### **Paul Krugman, Nobel Prize Winning Economist** 6/19/12

The “kitchen table/belt-tightening” metaphor is naturally appealing, but it doesn’t work because “We are not a household; we are an economy. And an economy is a very different thing from an individual family because we are each others customers. Your spending is my income. And my spending is your income. And if we both try to get ourselves in better shape by spending less, all that happens is we end up reducing all our incomes.” Keynesian economics is counterintuitive unless it is explained well.

### **Senator Sheldon Whitehouse** 6/18/12

Pull-back-the-curtain metaphor for combating right-wing spin: “Very often a lot of these very nice sounding ideas are sort of stalking horse for things we don’t so much like. They’ll say we need to balance the budget. Yeah sure, we need to balance the budget. That sounds like it makes sense. Pull back the ‘balance the budget’ curtain, what’s behind it? Get rid of Medicare. Nobody wants that, so they talk about balancing the budget. They talk about eliminating wasteful and obsolete regulation. Makes sense: If a regulation is wasteful and obsolete, we should get rid of it. Pull back the curtain — it’s really about getting rid of the Clean Air Act. So you just gotta remind people what their real agenda is and push through that first level of spin.”

### **Eric Schneiderman, New York Attorney General** 6/19/12

Transformational Politics = Changing Consciousness: “Over the last 25 years, the conservatives did an amazing job of transformational politics. They essentially convinced the American people of something that they had stopped believing since the 1920s — that the natural order of things is for there to be a small number of people with all the money and most people don’t have so much. Look at how they’ve changed the dialogue: When people talk about redistribution of wealth, they only mean taking it from the wealthy and giving it to working people or the poor. We’ve just seen 30 years of the most amazing redistribution of wealth from working people to the wealthy in history, but people don’t call it that. They’ve reframed the debate. They’ve transformed the way people think.”

“This (the economic collapse) is not something that happened because of some act of God. There’s no missing page of Genesis that says there are separate tax breaks for capital gains and carried interest. This doesn’t come from God. There is nothing in Leviticus that says you shouldn’t eat shrimp and you may not regulate derivatives. This is not stuff that has to be... The day the American people understand that this is just a bunch of people who decided to have public policy to redistribute all of the wealth in society to a very small number of people... It’s public policy, not Nature, not God. And we have the power to change it.”

### **Richard Eskow, Campaign for America’s Future** 6/19/12

“When we’re accused of class warfare, it’s like a guy steals your wallet and when you ask for it back, he says ‘Why are you so hung up on money? It’s about money all the time’... No that’s my wallet, and you have it. And basically that should be our message.”

# REBUILD THE DREAM

by Van Jones • June 23, 2011 • New York City

These are some highlights from his presentation:  
Full transcript and video at [RebuildTheDream.com](http://RebuildTheDream.com)

Below are highlights of a presentation by Van Jones, June 23, 2011 (video at [RebuildTheDream.com](http://RebuildTheDream.com))

Our message is pretty simple: We are being lied to. We cannot solve big problems in this country, while we're being misled about the facts...

## 1 Lie #1: America is broke.

We're broke, so maybe we can't afford Medicare. We're broke, so maybe we can't afford teachers to teach our children. We're broke, so maybe we need to lay off police officers, and firefighters, and nurses, and close hospitals, and take away heating assistance in the winter. Maybe we can't afford to fix roads, let the bridges fall down. Maybe we can't afford health care for poor people or the disabled. After all, we're broke, right? Right?

**Wrong...** You know, repeating the falsehood that America is broke is like telling people stuck in a burning building that all the exits are locked when they aren't. Just repeating the statement, over and over again, makes people feel helpless... We do not have to suffer like this, America. **Because we're not broke. We were robbed. And somebody has our money. And I mean: who has the money that used to be in our pockets, in our schools, in our retirement accounts?**

If "we" are broke, how come only some of us are suffering, while others enjoy wealth beyond the wildest dreams of any previous generation?... **The income of the rich has grown by almost 250% while the middle class is barely making 20% more than they did three decades ago.**

But we keep hearing from certain people: "Well, if you're falling behind, you're just not working hard enough. You must be lazy. Why don't you try harder?" So we did. Just to keep up, we put in more hours. One paycheck was no longer enough, so both parents started working, we got second jobs, third jobs. Then we said, screw it, we maxed out our credit cards, I know you did; I did too! We used our houses as ATMS. Because we were trying to make up for this growing shortfall between what we were contributing to the economy as middle class and working class folks – and what the average employer was giving back to this country in the form of wages.

Then, the crash came. And today, our country is almost unrecognizable. There are some people, good people, you know them, who, no matter how hard they work, no matter how much they follow the rules, they cannot succeed anymore in America. **And then there are other people, other folks, who, no matter how lazy they are, and no matter how many rules they break, are never allowed to fail. In fact, the media says they are "too BIG to fail."**

## 2 Lie #2: Asking the super-rich to pay taxes hurts America's economy.

Now. Pardon me. **You would think that, since so many corporations refuse to share their earnings through wages, they might at least be patriotic enough to pay back America in the form of taxes.** But no. They scream and howl. They say that asking the super-rich to pay taxes hurts America's economy. It would be a job killer!

Alright folks. Basic civics. Here we go: **Corporate taxes are not charity, and they are not theft.** Corporate taxes are a return on our investment, as Americans... American companies don't have to pay for the roads they use to ship their products out. Our tax money pays for those roads. America pays for those roads, so the businesses don't have to. That's a big expense that they don't carry on their books. That's an investment from us. They don't have to pay to set up their own court system, to enforce all those contracts, all that fine print. They don't have to create their own 911 emergency service. They don't pay to purify their own water or air. They don't have to teach anyone to tie their shoes, or to do algebra. Our tax money pays for public school teachers to do that work. America as a whole pays. We shoulder those big burdens so that America's businesses don't have to. **Which means what our businesses do pay out in taxes, they more than get back in services, support and stability — all keys to making a profit...**

*Continued on other side...*

*Continued from other side...*

**When you do well in America, you should do well by America. It's only fair.** It's a fair return on investment, after all, the American Dream is possible only when employers pay decent wages and fair taxes. But the problem is too many of our giant corporations don't want to do either...

But just because we'd all like to be rich some day, we can't just let the super-rich do whatever they want, like loot our nation's treasury and refuse to pay us a penny back...

See, our grandparents respected business people. But they didn't worship them. They didn't worship markets... Because they lived through the Great Depression. They knew what it was like to have the bottom completely drop out from underneath them. So in rebuilding America, the first thing they did was create the ideal conditions for a thriving middle class. There were three pillars.

**Pillar 1: Good government**, to help middle class people buy things together that we couldn't buy individually — like quality education for our kids, clean air and a safety net, some insurance against tough times. **Pillar 2: Good employers** — who, whether they wanted to or not, paid decent wages and fair taxes. **Pillar 3: Good citizens and community members**, actively involved in making our country stronger and more fair. Civil rights. Women's rights. Equal rights. And don't forget the unions. In 1945 more than a third of all American workers were union workers. Today? Just 13 percent. Look, whether you personally wanna be in a union or not — our grandparents respected unions, even when they didn't join them. **They knew that giving a voice to working folks was key to having an economy that could maximize profit without minimizing people...**

So while they were building these pillars: they put protections in place, guard rails, so those bankers couldn't run their own train off the rails again — and run over America's working families in the process. They put rules in place and guardians at the door to keep the big bankers from turning Wall Street into a casino and gambling with America's future, ever again.

And page by page, we let them tear the wisdom, and the genius and the good sense of our grandparents and great-grandparents from our lawbooks... "Oh, we're just gonna deregulate this here, make a little mo money... privatize that there, make a little mo money... deregulate everything ...don't mind us." **Just like the 1920s. Privatize the gain, socialize the pain. No rules for the rich. No rights for the poor. Socialism for the super-wealthy; Darwinism for the working people.** Same as before... Same disaster... We voted in 2008 for peace and prosperity, not war and austerity.

### **3 Lie #3: Hating on America's government and wrecking America's infrastructure is patriotic.**

The worst part of all of this, for me, is the way that the people championing the dismantling of the American Dream paint their efforts all "red, white and blue." **They want to paint their wrecking ball "red, white and blue" and expect us to stand here saluting while they destroy the country...** Of course, they always cleverly hide that fact. They say it, "Oh, we hate 'the government,'" or the "federal government." But Excuse me, sir. My dad served in the military. **Last time I checked, the "federal" government was also known as "America's government."** So how do you get to be a patriot, trashing America's government all the time?... That's some cheap patriotism if you ask me! The time has come for a deeper patriotism.

### **4 Lie #4: The lie we tell ourselves: The lie that we are helpless.**

The Pledge of Allegiance does not stop with the word "liberty." **As Americans, we like to say the whole pledge: "liberty" yes! But "liberty and justice for all."** Justice for all... My problem with the other brand of patriotism is not that it's too patriotic. It's that it's not patriotic enough. It doesn't embrace the full set of American values. Deep patriotism does. Cheap patriotism thinks that America is just our economic performance. **Deep patriots say: Don't make America that small.** We have achieved more than that in this country. We are remarkable because we've also achieved outstanding environmental performance, outstanding labor standards, outstanding consumer protections.

**No, our nation is not broke and our fighting spirits cannot be broken... Let's stand together, work together and continue the fight: For liberty and justice for all.**

# CONNECT THE DOTS™ *for democracy* USA

FUN VISUAL BASICS FOR THE BUSY MAJORITY™



## "Dude, Where's My Job?"

Millions of Americans are unemployed or underemployed. We see the rich getting richer while everyone else is working harder for less money and going more into debt. Let's figure out where our jobs and wages went and, most importantly, how to get them back.



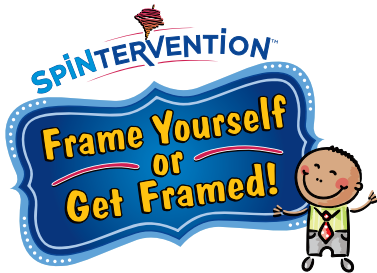
## "Budgets and Deficits and Debt, Oh My!"

We hear talk of trillions over here and billions over there, of government shutdowns, of cutting \$100 billion from domestic, non-defense, discretionary spending. What the heck is that anyway? You might be thinking "Wait, I might actually like that stuff... is a \$100 billion cut going to hurt?" We'll find the answer and tame the budget beasts.



## "American Healthcare Crazy Quilt"

All other industrialized democracies when faced with challenges in their healthcare systems have found different ways to cover everybody while spending far less than America does and getting better overall results. We've actually blended together versions of all these "foreign" systems into a costly, confusing, inefficient, bureaucratic "crazy quilt." Let's examine the problems in our healthcare system and see how the Affordable Care Act addresses those problems and where it falls short. For the real healthcare solution, check out "Medicare-For-All: Saves Lives, Saves Money, So Simple."



## "SPINtervention: Frame Yourself or Get Framed!"

When we use or negate long-entrenched "conservative" language like "tax relief," "entitlements" and "right-to-work," we've lost the argument before it's even begun. While many Americans may call themselves "conservative," they consistently support progressive values like fairness and justice and policies like Social Security, Medicare, ending the wars, and increasing taxes on the rich. So it's about time we fix what's broken about our political language and change the conversation.

## "Get Out The Vote: Democracy Depends On It!"

If voter turnout is a reflection of the health of a democracy, then America's democracy is severely anemic. When we drill down on the turnout numbers by race, age and income, we start to see why our country is working better for some groups and not so much for others. Democracy is not a spectator sport: You can't win the game if you don't play, or if you sit out every other election. Then we'll take a look at what's driving voter apathy and what's behind the recent wave of voter suppression laws sweeping the country.



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