

Ethan Allen Institute

Newsletter – April 2018 (Printer Edition)

Top Stories

Mark Steyn to Star at EAI's 25th Anniversary Gala!

Internationally known, best-selling author, television commentator, and frequent guest host on the Rush Limbaugh Show Mark Steyn will be the keynote speaker at the Ethan Allen Institute 25th Anniversary Celebration.

He's brash, brilliant, and drawn to controversy like a moth to a flame. For decades, Mark Steyn has dazzled readers around the world with his raucous wit and brutal honesty. "Mark Steyn is the funniest writer now living." - John O'Sullivan, editor-at-large of National Review

THURSDAY, APRIL 26TH

**At the DoubleTree by Hilton Conference Center
(Formerly the Sheraton South Burlington)
6:00pm social hour. Dinner & Program 7:00 pm.**

Reserve Your Seats today

Call 802-695-1448, email EAI25@ethanallen.org
or order online at ???

- Individual Tickets: \$100 with RSVP, deadline is April 16, 2018 (\$125 at the door if space available)
- Early Bird Tables: \$700 for table of 8. Deadline 3/26/18
- Entree choices include beef, salmon, or a vegetarian pasta

Become a Sponsor

Silver - \$1000. Includes two tickets to dinner and two tickets to private pre-dinner reception with Mark Steyn.

Gold: \$1200. Includes eight tickets to the dinner and two tickets to private pre-dinner reception with Mark Steyn.

Platinum: \$3000, includes eight tickets to the dinner and eight tickets to private pre-dinner reception with Mark Steyn.



(Sponsor's Reception with Mark Steyn will take place from 6:00 – 7:00 pm)

Mark Steyn on Canadian Health Care: [

Canadian health care leader] Roy Romanow justifies the state's monopoly on health care on the grounds that "Canadians view Medicare as a moral enterprise, not a business venture." Well, if they do, they're very mistaken. Medicare isn't a moral enterprise: what's moral about removing a citizen's responsibility for his and his dependents' health care and entrusting it to the state? If free citizens of advanced, wealthy economies are not prepared to make provision for their own health care, what other basic responsibilities are they likely to forego? Socialized health care redefines the relationship between the citizen and the state. Even if it worked – even if it wasn't a decrepit, SARS-spreading sinkhole – it would still be bad in its softening effect on the citizenry.

But, of course, it doesn't work. In April this year (2005), Gérald Augustin of Rivière-des-Prairies, Quebec went to the St. André medical clinic complaining of stomach pain. He'd forgotten to bring his Medicare card, so they turned him away. He went back home, collapsed of acute appendicitis, and by the time the ambulance arrived he was dead. He was 21 years old, and he didn't make it to 22 because he accepted the right of a government bureaucrat to refuse him medical treatment for which he and his family have been confiscatorily taxed all their lives. Clinic director Rouslene Augustin says it's the policy to refuse all patients who don't have their cards with them. No big deal, he wasn't anything special, no-one in her clinic even remembers giving him the brush.

Mark Steyn on Climate Change.

Commentary: A Better Model for Primary Care

By John McClaughry

The legislature is debating how fast to propel the state into the new adventure of universal coverage for primary health care services, "whether the services are publicly financed or covered by health insurance or other means ... [made] affordable for all Vermonters, such as through income -sensitized, State-funded cost-sharing assistance."

The current proposal (S.53) directs the Green Mountain Care Board and the usual "stakeholders" to deliver a report by January 2019, followed by a "draft operational plan" a year thereafter. The single payer advocates are furious that the bill doesn't decree single payer primary care right now.

Let's make this easy to understand: the Green Mountain Care Board plus numerous "stakeholders" (all of whom will be advocates and most of whom will be protecting their livelihoods) will produce a report recommending which primary health care services and benefits, produced by which providers, will be distributed to which people, and at whose expense.

The Board and its stakeholders are, however, unlikely to examine how the cost of primary care can be brought down, while at the same time better serving patients,

improving health, reducing reliance on expensive medical interventions, and making the practice of medicine more rewarding.

The most rapidly proliferating model for doing this is Direct Primary Care. DPC is built upon the direct relationship between primary care doctor and patient. DPC clinics are “cash only” – no third party payer like Blue Cross or Medicare. This eliminates the maddening complying, negotiating and pleading with third party payers that typically consumes as much as 40% of primary care practice revenue.

DPC patients pay a monthly membership fee. Practices of course vary, but usually the fee covers almost unlimited access to your doctor, extended, relaxed visits, an annual physical exam, diagnostic and procedure benefits at no extra cost, and slightly above wholesale prices for laboratory testing and pharmaceuticals. DPCs typically arrange for discounted prices at rehab services and independent imaging centers for X-Rays, CT scans, and MRIs. Some even make house calls.

One of the leading DPCs, Atlas MD of Wichita, Kansas, sets its fees at \$50/month for adults 20-44, \$75/month for adults 45-64, and \$100/month for adults over 65. Each child is an extra \$10/month. Employers, especially if self-insured, may pay the membership fees as an employee benefit.

A typical DPC patient would also buy a wraparound high deductible insurance plan coupled with a Health Savings Account, into which the patient, the employer or both can make tax-free contributions up to \$1350/year (\$2700 family). For lower income families, states could design Medicaid waivers to allow payment of the membership fees.

If a DPC patient develops a major health problem requiring surgery or hospitalization, the DPC will usually suggest a cost-effective provider. The Surgery Center of Oklahoma and Ocean Surgery Center (Torrance, California) have gained national attention for posting their all-inclusive prices for a wide range of surgical procedures including recovery and medications.

According to a survey by The Physician’s Foundation, many doctors are dissatisfied with the burden of dealing with third party payers, including the government. The survey found that doctors complained of “too much regulation and paperwork” (79%), “loss of clinical autonomy” (64%), and “erosion of the physician-patient relationship” (54%). The DPC model relieves doctors of these annoyances.

An important benefit of the DPC model is better patient health, measured by fewer hospitalizations, fewer ER visits, fewer specialist visits, and fewer surgeries compared to traditional patient populations.

So why aren’t we moving rapidly toward Direct Primary Care coupled with independent specialist centers, paid for by HSAs, and backed up by high deductible health plans? Partly because there’s a learning curve, but also because large medical centers see their profits threatened by low-overhead cash-based clinics and specialist practices focusing on patient satisfaction and wellness.

In addition, opponents have argued in some states that DPCs are insurance plans, bringing them under insurance regulation and preventing patients from paying membership fees from their HSAs (whose funds may not be used to pay premiums). Another roadblock is Certificate of Need (CON) regulation, the great shield of every dinosaur health care monopoly.

To date, there are two DPCs in Vermont: in South Burlington (Frank Landry MD) and Manchester Center (Keith Michl MD). There will be more – unless primary care is swept into yet another government program designed and dominated by threatened “stakeholders”.

- John McClaughry is the founder and vice president of the Ethan Allen Institute

Commentary: Illegal Votes in Victory Raise Statewide Questions

By Rob Roper

The vote fraud case in Victory, Vermont, concluded with eleven “voters” being removed from the town checklist. For this small, Vermont community it meant a full 13 percent of registered voters were illegitimate, and these illegitimate votes were more than enough to alter the outcomes of elections.

What’s truly alarming about this case is that the root problem had more to do with election officials – either stubbornly ignorant or flat out corrupt — than with the non-resident voters. It’s hard to blame the out-of-towners who were told repeatedly and defended by those in charge that what they were doing was okay. As Judge Thomas Devine stated in his decision, “... this is a situation where the facts as found by the BCA do not support the legal conclusion of residency.” In other words, the election officials did not understand the law, and, as a result, allowed many people to vote illegally.

The Victory BCA argued that non-residents were eligible to vote because they had an “intent” to establish a primary domicile in the district at some point in the future. These “voters” included second homeowners from Connecticut, an adult child of a Victory resident who lived and worked in Burlington, and a couple who owned a camp in Victory, but lived primarily in Montpelier. However, Vermont law clearly defines a resident as:

“a natural person who is domiciled [not was or will be] in the State as evidenced by an intent to maintain [not establish] a principal [not secondary] dwelling place in the State indefinitely and to return there when temporarily absent, coupled with an act or acts consistent with that intent.” (Bracketed comments added.)

Judge Devine’s ruling in Victory clarifies the obvious, “...domiciled requires having residence ‘coupled with an intention of remaining indefinitely,’ and neither residency or intent alone is enough to establish it.” As such, it is the job of local election officials to determine that a potential voter is A) currently domiciled in the district in which they would like to vote, and B) that they intend to maintain that residence as their primary domicile as evidenced by action. The Victory BCA did not do this.

Which raises the big question, is this fundamental misunderstanding and misapplication of Vermont election law isolated in little Victory, or is this a common belief and practice among BCAs and election officials throughout the state?

I will say here that it is the latter. Here’s just one reason why:

Remember when Garrett Graff attempted to run for lieutenant governor after having lived and worked in Washington D.C. for over a decade? To qualify for that ballot there is a four-year residency requirement, and, as VT Digger reported at the time, “While Graff has lived in Washington, D.C., for nearly a decade, he recently quit his job

at Politico and moved to Burlington with his wife. He said he has remained a registered voter in the Green Mountain State ... ‘If someone is able to vote for office, they should be able to run for office,’ said Graff.” ([VT Digger, 1/27/16](#))

Sound logic. But, as we know in accordance with Judge Devine’s ruling, Graff was not and never was able to legally vote in Vermont after he established a primary domicile in D.C. Yet, despite these very public comments in a statewide debate over someone seeking the second highest office in state government, nobody batted an eye at the fact that Graff had been voting illegally in Vermont as a non-resident for over a decade. Not local election officials, not legislators, not the Secretary of State, not the press, not even his potential opponents!

Why not? Because they all incorrectly believed Graff was right about his voting status.

The loosely interpreted “future intent” or “intent to return” is the standard that has been applied – and applied wrongly — to Vermont’s voter checklist on a statewide level for at least a decade. This has allowed people who do not reside in our communities to influence the outcomes of or local elections. First, we need to find out how widespread this problem is. Is it the 13% level of Victory? It’s a small town, but not as hot a second home destination as many other Vermont communities. And then we need to get to work cleaning up our voter lists and correcting this injustice.

- *Rob Roper is president of the Ethan Allen Institute.*

Events

April 7. EAI President Rob Roper will give a presentation on Carbon Tax legislation to the Lamoille County Republican Committee, 8:30-11:00 am at the Charlmont Restaurant, Morrisville, Vt. If you would like to have this or another EAI presentation in your community, email rob@ethanallen.org.

April 26. Mark Steyn to Star at EAI’s 25th Anniversary Gala!

News & Views

Thank the Rich on April 15th. UVM Economist Art Woolf reports that that in 2016 “more than 80 percent of [Vermont’s] income taxes are paid by the 76,000 taxpayers – out of more than 315,000 – who earn more than \$75,000. Only 10,000 filers reported an income of over \$200,000. But those taxpayers paid 40 percent of all the state’s income taxes. And the 488 Vermont taxpayers with more than \$1 million of income paid 13 percent of all the income taxes paid by Vermont residents.” Maybe we should enact some policies that encourage these folks to stay, and others like them to come to Vermont. Saying thank you would be a good start.

Governor Scott on Education Finance “Reform”. “As the Legislature moves forward with an education funding formula change in H. 911, I want to be clear: Without reforms to continue to improve efficiency and right-size our system, this bill does little but change the pocket Vermonters are paying from, while increasing the capacity to raise taxes even more significantly and unsustainably in the future.... “Reducing property tax bills only to make up the difference by collecting more from Vermonters’ paychecks, is not what they’ve asked for and it is not relief.

The “Largely Unenforceable” Magazine Limit. The Vermont Attorney General’s office does not support the ban on magazines holding more than fifteen bullets, as passed by the House, determining that the provision would be “largely unenforceable,” because it would be “extremely difficult” determining if particular magazines were purchased before the limit went into effect or after. (VT Digger)

Sen. Sears on House Gun Control Efforts. “I’m really sick and tired of their BS over there.” ([VT Digger, 3/29/18](#))

Astroturf Protestors. “After the deadliest school shooting since the mass shooting at Sandy Hook School in 2012 – students have banded together to lead marches in our nation’s capital and in communities around the country. They will demand that lawmakers make students’ lives and safety a priority and pass common-sense gun safety legislation.” That’s from a March 2 news release from Michael Bloomberg-financed “Everytown for Gun Safety”, which “will make available up to \$2.5 million – 500 grants of \$5,000 – to support organic, local sibling marches in communities big and small around the country. The goal of the grant program is to ensure that sibling marches around the country have operational resources to organize these powerful events.... The grants can be used to support operational needs for successful marches (i.e. permits, equipment rentals, signs and banners, and transportation).

Vermont’s Green Energy Fallacy. “In 2016, the state Legislature was given an independent report that revealed Vermont’s electric customers actually buy zero percent of the wind energy and just 0.4 percent of photovoltaic solar energy produced in the state. Moreover, the report found, “the state’s electric sector greenhouse gas emissions had doubled over a historic 10-year period.” That is a very different picture from the one painted by Vermont utilities and lawmakers touting the state’s green energy progress and promoting Vermont as a renewable energy leader.” ([Times Argus, 3/15/18](#))

Don’t Let the Doorknob Hit You. David “Big Wind” Blittersdorf, the owner of All Earth Renewables, ardent champion of the renewable-industrial complex, and a major donor to VPIRG’s endless crusades, has announced his imminent departure from Vermont, saying he’s “trading Vermont for states that will let him do his part to stop climate change.” (WCAX 3/27/18) Perhaps he will relocate to China and underwrite a people’s march to shut down China’s new coal plants, many of which (at 1100 Mw) annually produce more CO2 than the entire state of Vermont. Happy trails!

Senate Drops Independent Health Center bill: On March 1 the Senate Health and Welfare committee decided to drop further consideration of a bill to regulate and tax independent medical centers, that threaten to undersell higher-priced hospitals

(S.278).”The decision was good news for surgical center advocates. Amy Cooper, who manages the proposed Green Mountain Surgery Center project in Colchester, said the bill threatened to derail a planned 2019 opening.” (VTDigger 3/1/18) It’s also good news for all Vermonters who want an alternative to paying inflated prices for services at UVM Medical Center.

Minimum Wage Consequences. A JFO report delivered to the House on March 21 forecasts that the Senate minimum wage increase bill (S.40) would cause annual disemployment of 2,250 jobholders for the years 2028 through 2040, which accounts for a 0.5 percent reduction in total Vermont jobs per year, and and disemployment as a share of minimum wage jobs of 3.3%. This is who the law is supposed to help! They also project a 0.3 percent loss to state gross domestic product. (EAI)

A Blow Against Bureaucracy. A year ago, the Department of Motor Vehicles mandated a computerized car and truck inspection system that had the unhappy effect of forcing inspection stations to reject vehicles for having non-safety shortcomings thought unseemly by some bureaucrat. On March 16 the Senate, responding to citizen outrage, put the brakes on this meddlesome bureaucratic burden (S.272), thanks to Senators Mazza, Kitchel, Brock, Westman and Flory. (The vote was 28-0).

Individual Insurance Mandate: The House has passed a bill (H. 696) to impose an individual mandate to purchase health insurance and create a working group to figure out how to punish noncompliance. Here’s what the 2005 Health Security Act proposed for just that purpose: “Individuals who are not otherwise covered, and who refuse to participate in the Plan, will be sanctioned by some combination of denial of motor vehicle registration, drivers’ license, homestead property tax exemption, hunting and fishing licenses, and enrollment in any school or college in the state.” Happily, that proposal was not passed, but that’s coming if H.696 is enacted.)

Congressman Peter Welch on Ethanol Subsidies. “We’ve now had more than a decade of experience with it, and it had the best of intentions. But it has turned out to be a well-intended flop. It actually doesn’t cut down on greenhouse gas emissions, it expands them. It’s had a significant impact on overplanting in fragile areas of the corn belt. It has had significant impacts on small engines. And it’s also had a significant impact on feed prices ... and there is a lot of evidence it has increased the cost of food.” ([RedState, 3/12/18](#)) Now, if only he’d realize that this describes most government programs!

This is a Serious Canary in the Coal Mine. Writing on his Facebook page, Cairn Cross of Fresh Tracks Capital, a venture capital company dedicated to identifying and supporting entrepreneurial businesses opportunities in Vermont, opined, “I’ve come to the conclusion that Vermont simply wants to regulate all progress of any type. I used to think I would live here forever but I am not so sure of that anymore.”

Something for the Fossil Fuel Haters to Consider. Industrialization “has been good for humanity. It has fed billions, doubled lifespans, slashed extreme poverty, and, by replacing muscle with machinery, made it easier to end slavery, emancipate women, and educate children. It has allowed people to read at night,

live where they want, stay warm in winter, see the world, and multiply human contact. Any costs in pollution and habitat loss have to be weighed against these gifts.” – Steven Pinker, quoted in [Scientific American](#). And, we would add save the whales and allow for the reforestation of the earth.

Birthday Message from Mr. Jefferson: “A wise and frugal government, which shall restrain men from injuring one another, which shall leave them otherwise free to regulate their own pursuits of industry and improvement, and shall not take from the mouth of labor the bread it has earned - This is the sum of good government.” (Inaugural Address, 1801)

Book of the Month

The Vanishing American Adult

Our Coming-of-Age Crisis – and How to Rebuild a Culture of Self-Reliance

By Sen. Ben Sasse

As we watch a bunch of teenagers driving the national policy discussion around a key pillar of the Bill of Rights, Ben Sasse’ *The Vanishing American Adult* is a particularly compelling read. The alarm the former university president and now Republican Senator from Nebraska sounds is that we are experiencing a “coming of age crisis” in which “We are living in an America of perpetual adolescence....”

Sasse contends that the millennial generation does not know how to transition into adulthood; something that he witnessed regularly in his interactions with college students. More alarmingly, the older generations don’t seem to know how to teach our children how to be adults. “It’s our fault more than it’s theirs.” This is a critical problem that must be solved if we want to continue as a successful nation of happy, well adjusted, self-reliant, productive citizens.

The solutions Sasse recommends are grounded in re-establishing the values and common culture that our country was founded upon, particularly family, nurturing a strong work ethic, service to the community, and real education as opposed to the way our schools work today. What he offers throughout the book are examples of how he and his wife are trying to do to teach their own four children. Whether these choices are right for everyone is debatable, but Sasse is right to raise the issue. Somebody has to start this discussion.

A big culprit in this crisis, according to Sasse, is the “school-centric” system and its growing role replacing the family as the primary vehicle for raising children. Sasse points out that what we are really doing is isolating children for their entire pre-and-early-adult lives in a bubble populated almost entirely with people who are near-exactly their own age. As such, kids have little opportunity to learn from or understand the perspectives of a variety of adult members of their wider community. If you have no experience seeing and interacting with adults doing adult things, such as jobs, running a household, raising children, etc., odds are you’re never going to learn how to be an adult.

Instead, kids are learning their values – about work, sex, commitment, responsibility -- from their peers, who know little to nothing about these things.

Sasse also blames public policies that shield kids from work rather than encouraging it. He was shocked to see how many students arrive at college with little or no real work experience. This is in large part because of our growing “school centric” policies, but also policies that make it hard for young people to get jobs. He recounts a time when he arranged for his fourteen-year-old daughter to spend six weeks, unpaid, working on a cattle farm. When his social media posts chronicling her experiences artificially inseminating cows, shoveling manure, driving tractors received national attention, he received many warnings that this wonderful and transformational experience was a violation of child labor laws.

While Sasse goes out of his way to say he’s not advocating going back to the days of child sweat shops, if we want kids to become adults who appreciate hard work and possess a strong work ethic, we can’t shield them from work for their entire adolescent lives.

Sasse also spends a good deal of time on the importance of nurturing critical thinking through active travel and reading, the key word being “active.” Too much of what kids experience, he asserts, is passive consumption rather than active participation, whether that is visiting a foreign country or reading a book.

The *Vanishing American Adult* is a terrific book for parents looking for ideas for their own children, or for citizens who look at David Hogg and wonder what the hell happened to our country – and how do we fix it. I sincerely hope Ben Sasse runs for president some day.

- Reviewed by Rob Roper, president of the Ethan Allen Institute.

The Final Word

April Survey: Do We Have a Right to Our Own Money?

How much of our salaries/income should we as citizens have an absolute right to keep, free from all taxation? 0%? 100%? Something in between?

Town Meeting Week Legislative Survey Results

1. Do you approve or disapprove of the direction Governor Scott is taking Vermont?
Approve: 29.61% (143)
Disapprove: 54.45% (263)
No Opinion: 15.94 (77)
2. Do you approve or disapprove of the direction the Legislature is taking Vermont?
Approve: 10.83% (52)
Disapprove: 84.38% (405)
No Opinion: 4.79% (23)

3. Should lawmakers increase the VT state minimum wage from \$10.50 to \$15.00 per hour?
 - Yes. 21.27% (106)
 - No. 73.57% (359)
 - Don't Know. 4.71% (23)

4. Should VT lawmakers enact a Carbon Tax on gasoline (32¢/gal) diesel fuel, home heating oil (40¢/gal), natural gas, and propane (24¢/gal), with the revenues used to subsidize electric bills?
 - Yes. 5.33% (26)
 - No. 91.19% (445)
 - Don't Know. 3.48% (17)

5. Should VT lawmakers mandate that all employees participate in a paid family leave program financed by a new payroll tax on employees?
 - Yes. 12.94% (63)
 - No. 77.82% (379)
 - Don't Know. 9.24% (45)

6. Should VT lawmakers enact a "per parcel fee" on all Vermont land holdings to finance the clean-up of Lake Champlain?
 - Yes. 10.29% (50)
 - No. 81.69% (397)
 - Don't Know. 8.02% (39)

7. Should VT lawmakers enact stricter gun control laws?
 - Yes. 21.56% (105)
 - No. 75.77% (369)
 - Don't Know. 2.67% (13)

8. Vermont's taxpayer financed Pre-Kindergarten programs should be:
 - a. available to all children, regardless of income or special needs. 46.65% (216)
 - b. focused on helping low-income families and special needs children catch up with their peers. 53.35% (247)

9. Which of the following is a more important goal of education finance reform?
 - a. Lowering overall education taxes by decreasing overall spending. 76.76% (370)
 - b. Shifting how we pay for education from the property tax to the income tax, while maintaining current spending levels. 23.24% (112)

10. Which of the following describes the best way for Lawmakers to make Vermont “affordable?”
- a. Enact policies that will lower the cost of living, spur economic activity, and increase salaries. 86.75% (419)
 - b. Provide more generous welfare programs to subsidize the cost of living. 2.90% (14)
 - c. Other. 10.35% (50)