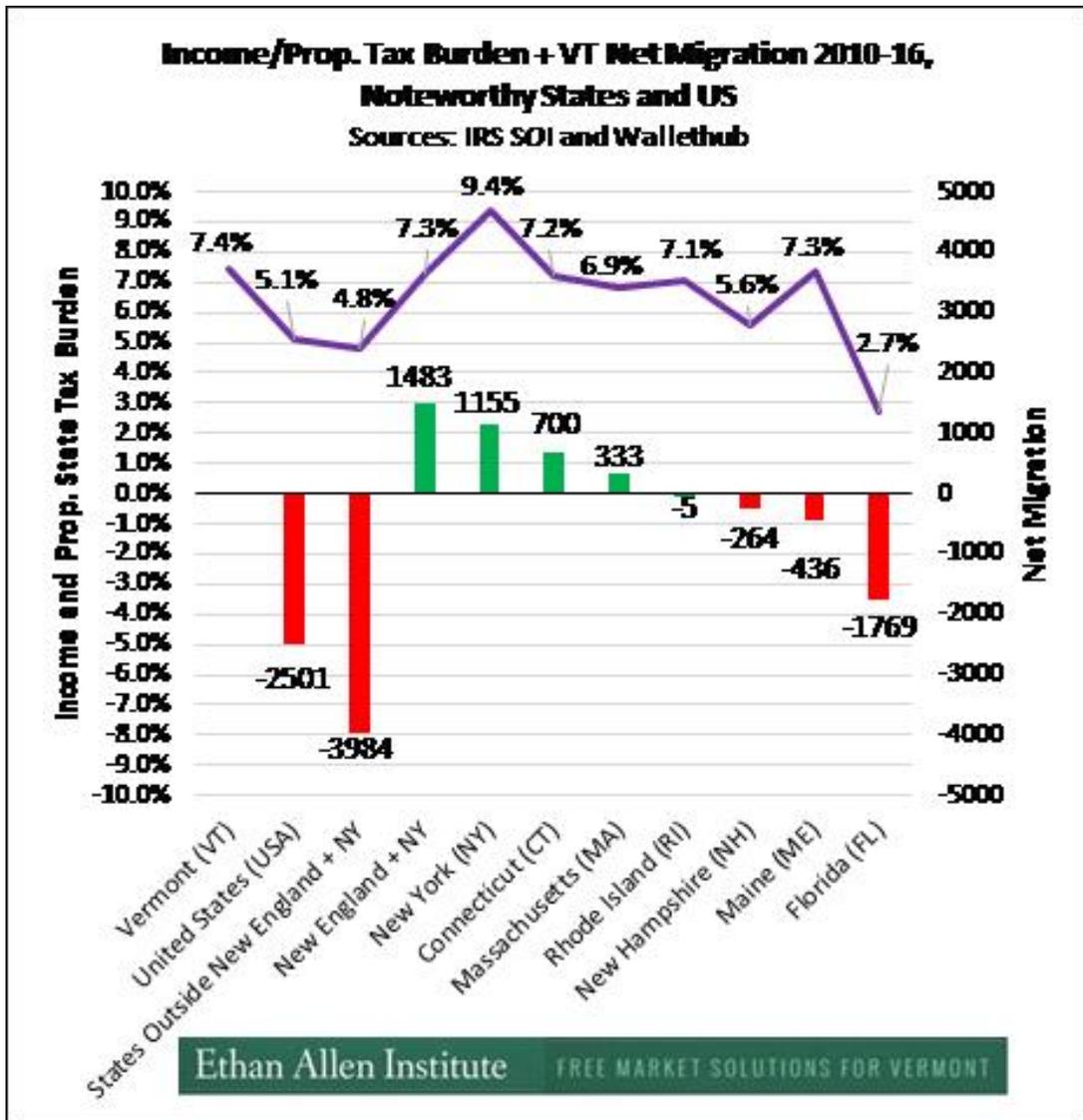


Ethan Allen Institute

Newsletter – October 2019 (Printer Edition)

Top Story: High Taxes and Impacts on Migration



By David Flemming

Vermont lost more than twice as many people to distant, less taxed states than it gained from mostly neighboring states that were taxed about the same as Vermont. That's what the migration data from the Internal Revenue Service's [Statistics of Income \(IRS SOI\)](#) and tax burden data from [Wallethub](#) tells us.

Between 2010 and 2016 Vermont lost nearly 7000 people on net to 41 states. 1 in 4 of these Vermonters moved to Florida, home of the 0% income tax and balmy beaches. What makes this interesting is that comparing these side by side with the “state and local tax burden.” While we already know that Vermont has one of the highest property tax rates in the country, the tax burden metric gives us a better idea of how much in taxes we are actually paying, since tax deductions can skew the numbers.

Competing with the rest of the country outside of New England is a different story. We lost 3960 people to Florida, North Carolina, Colorado, California and South Carolina who all have lower tax burdens, ranging from 2.7% in Florida to 6.3% In California(!).

That said, we did gain nearly 3000 people from the remaining 8 states. Thankfully for us, legislators in our neighboring states are even more zealous about high taxes. We gained 1155 migrants from New York, which places a 9.4% combined tax burden on property and income, a full 2 percentage points higher than Vermont’s 7.4%. That said, Vermont still has the highest combined income and property tax burden in New England: 7.4%.

Aside from New Hampshire (5.6% tax burden, to whom we lost 264 people), most New England states have a similar income and property tax burden. That goes from 7.1% (R. Island) to Vermont’s 7.4%. We gained 328 people on net from New England as a whole. Overall, it appears that when you are already being taxed exorbitantly, you may as well live in a beautiful state. Vermont has the “taxed exorbitantly” and “beautiful” bases nicely covered, but those taxes still hurt us overall.

-- *David Flemming is a policy analyst at the Ethan Allen Institute.*

Commentary: Climate Activist Hypocrisies Exposed

By John McClaughry

As this Global Climate Strike week moves forward, let me share an interesting perspective on the “defeat climate change” movement from somebody who believes in all the climate apocalypse hype – but seems to have suddenly awakened to the interests promoting it.

Michael Donnelly is a forty-year veteran of environmental activism. He is a longtime friend of left wing film producer Michael Moore and his director Jeff Gibbs, who have just released a documentary titled “Planet of the Humans”. Donnelly calls it “the most dismaying Eco-documentary of the century.”

Since the facts about Earth’s impending human-caused fate were clear, at least to them, Donnelly and Gibbs couldn’t understand “why are we losing?” Their conclusion is that “we have been following corporation/foundation-financed Democratic Party-tied misleadership.”

“Forget all you have heard about how Renewable Energy is our salvation. It is a myth that is very lucrative for some. [Take] feel-good stuff like electric cars, [the current Big Idea of Vermont enviros]. Such vehicles are actually powered by coal, natural gas... or dead salmon in the Northwest”. (That seems to be a reference to Big Hydro).

The Planet film correctly explains how “all alternative energy itself is fossil-fuel based... Solar panels themselves are made with metallurgical coal and quartz – both

derived from blowing up mountains... The same with wind and even hydro and nukes as the essential major ingredient in the creation of cement and steel is coal.

“None of these technologies existed nor could they exist, without fossil fuels. The grid cannot even operate without fossil fuel-derived steam-generated baseloads. In the spring when the hydro is surging, the Bonneville Power Administration cuts off wind power and still has to keep the Boardman Coal Plant (Oregon’s top carbon polluter) running in order to balance the baseload.”

Then comes the dagger: “We have to hold the bad actors on ‘our’ side’s feet to the fire, as well, if we are to survive this one.” The film shows Bill McKibben Al Gore, Richard Branson, and Robert Kennedy Jr. speaking to environmentalists, and then clips of them speaking to industry about all the profits to be made.” Michael Bloomberg “basically bought the Sierra Club with tens of millions in donations tied to the Club promoting one of his cash cows, fracked natural gas, as the ‘Bridge Fuel to a Green Energy Future.’”

I’m pleased that some on the Left have (at last) perceived the hypocrisies and self-interested motives of “the Climate Campaign industry”. And it doesn’t bother me that profit-motivated entrepreneurs step forward to invest in products and services that the public wants.

Take an historical example: shipbuilding in WWII. America entered a war. The government needed ships. Henry Kaiser built a mammoth shipyard in Richmond, California and turned out 1,490 “Liberty Ships”. Kaiser made money (and also pioneered employee health care coverage), and America won the war. Fair enough.

The key point here is that Kaiser didn’t lobby Japan to bomb Pearl Harbor, so he could build ships and make money. In the modern climate example, the “Climate Campaign Industry” spends untold millions lobbying the public and the government to set up and fill a feeding trough of special deals to enrich the Industry.

The classic example is the current cornucopia of subsidies for Big Wind – notably the 2.3 cents per kwhr Production Tax Credit – and Big Solar. Without the taxpayer-financed lifeblood of those fiercely lobbied subsidies, there wouldn’t be enough demand to enrich a renewable energy “Industry”.

Here’s an apt conclusion from a major industrialist:” If the market signaled that consumers value energy from solar panels more than energy from oil and gas, the solar energy industry wouldn’t need to pursue profits by political means, in seeking subsidies from energy consumers and taxpayers. The solar power industry, like every business, should strive to profit by economic means instead of coercive ones.” That’s from Charles G. Koch, from his book *Good Profit* (2015).

Donnelly, who despises the Koch Brothers as the incarnation of capitalist evil, tells us that the Koch Brothers are hypocritically “the top beneficiaries of tax subsidies to promote solar.” The truth is that the Koch Brothers have outspokenly opposed solar subsidies, and their grassroots political arm, Americans for Prosperity, has actively battled against those subsidies in Washington and in the states.

In any case, Planet of the Humans will do a service by exposing the hypocrisies of the climate-crazed Left, and the inescapable fact that the Renewable Industry is founded on cheap fossil fuels. Its solution? Donnelly says only that the film “opens up the discussion”, and he can’t bring himself to utter the word “nuclear”.

- John McClaughry is vice president of the Ethan Allen Institute

Commentary: Education or Indoctrination?

By Rob Roper

The week of September 20-27 has been dubbed by several activist, special interest, and lobbyist organizations as a “Global Climate Strike and Week of Action.” The idea is to convince a bunch of people to walk off their jobs, block traffic, picket offices and businesses, and generally disrupt the rest of the citizenry from being able to function in their daily lives – effectively holding peace, tranquility and freedom of movement hostage in exchange for a radical “Green New Deal” type agenda.

The big problem here is that the shock troops in this strike are expected to be public school students who will march out of class in order to participate in the mayhem. In many cases, if not most or all, the kids will be taking part with the encouragement and facilitation of teachers and administrators on the public dime. This is not okay.

First of all, the kinds of demonstrations being called for, along the lines of what we’ve recently seen with the blocking of the Strolling of the Heifers parade, shouting down business on the floor of the State House, and stopping traffic in Montpelier, are illegal. Those taking part are subject to arrest. It is totally irresponsible for public school officials to aid and abet their students in breaking the law.

In addition to potential legal jeopardy, instigating physical confrontations with people and machines, which is what you’re doing when you block traffic or otherwise stop someone from going from point A to point B, can be dangerous. Some activists could take things too far, or unwilling victims of the protest might overreact resulting in violent injury. Again, school officials charged with keeping children safe should not be involving students in this kind of activity.

And lastly, what we’re witnessing here is the abandonment of an educational mission in favor of political indoctrination. It’s not just climate change. Over the past year we have seen elementary, middle and high school students encouraged by their teachers to walk out of class over gun control, racism, gender politics – anything to get out of learning (and apparently teaching) algebra.

If these students were being exposed to all sides of these issues, weighing the evidence pro and con, reaching their own conclusions, and then protesting on their own time, that would be one thing. But that’s not what’s happening. They are being told one side of the story, and other arguments are either absent or, worse, being mocked by the people in charge. That’s not education, that’s propaganda.

What we will witness on September 20 and the following week is public schools being willingly co-opted by special interest groups so that children can be exploited by adults in order to push a partisan political agenda. This comes at the expense of the children’s real education. They are not being taught how to think, they are being told what to think, and then what to do.

Is this really what we are paying some of the highest property taxes in the nation and, by some estimates, \$22,000 a year per child for? Brainwashed children pouring out of their classrooms to disrupt our daily lives on behalf of political lobbyists? For parents and taxpayers, there’s a hefty combination of insult and injury wrapped up in this equation! For the children, it’s just a sad waste of their true potential.

The solution to this problem is statewide, parent driven, school choice with the money following the child. If you want a school to turn your kid into a left-wing activist

playing in traffic, fine. But if you don't, as a parent you should have the right and the ability to choose a school that reflects your values and priorities. Parents who think schools should be focused on teaching their children reading, writing, math, etc. (and are wondering why our student proficiency levels stink) should speak out and demand the right to move their children somewhere else.

The public school system is a monopoly, accountable in reality only to the politicians who control the flow of tax dollars into its coffers. This unhealthy dynamic is at the root of why we are seeing an increasingly political agenda replace traditional education in our public schools. It's time to break up that monopoly and make the schools accountable not to politicians, but to parents and students through school choice. Something to think about when you're stuck in traffic on the way to work because a dozen eighth graders have chained themselves together in the middle of the highway.

- Rob Roper is president of the Ethan Allen Institute. He lives in Stowe

Events

October 16. Rob Roper will speak to the Milton Republican Town Committee from 6:30 pm – 7:45 pm, location TBD. .

February 29. Rob Roper will speak to the Pawlet Republican Town Committee from 2:00 pm - 4:00 pm at the Modern Woodmen Hall in Wells.

To Schedule an EAI presentation in your community, please email rob@ethanallen.org.

News & Views

VT Businesses Struggle with Lack of Labor. “According to July data from the Vermont Department of Labor, the state's unemployment rate is 2.1 percent, while the national rate is 3.7 percent. With unemployment in Vermont much lower than the national average, the demand for workers is outpacing the number of people available to fill the open positions. Lowry said he hopes the shortage doesn't last forever, as closing his doors means losing customers and money.” [WPTZ, 9/19/19](#)

Climate Data Fraud. This You Tube (12:51) by meteorologist Tony Heller convincingly shows how the US Government Climate Assessment Report (2018) cherry picked NOAA data to make it look like everything is getting worse rapidly. He lays the Report's truncated graphs over the complete NOAA data graphs to prove how the Report cut off data before the lowest year, then drew a scary upward trend line to terrify viewers. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=8455KEDitpU&feature=youtu.be>

“Climate Anxiety” is Real. Stated Reasons Are False. CNN and other outlets are claiming young people are suffering from “Climate Anxiety,” based on a paper put out by the American Psychological Association. “One professor claimed a student spent two hours crying after learning about global warming.” Nice job, professor! Maybe this is

because public schools, activist groups, the media politicians are spending copious amounts of time, energy and resources not educating but scaring the living daylights out of children in order to further their political agenda. The adults here are the true psychopaths. The APA should study that.

The Political Weaponization of Public Schools. “This Friday, in advance of the United Nations Climate Summit, students across the country will walk out of their schools as part of a Climate Strike. In New York City, the Department of Education has given its stamp of approval to the walk-out and won’t mark it as an absence, making it less “a strike” and more a coordinated effort by the school system to force political action on children.... Children are our future, goes the adage. Shouldn’t they have a say in what happens to their planet? But what “say” are they having by marching around with signs — repeating slogans and talking points spoon-fed to them by ... adults?”

Media Climate Bias. Dr. Roy Spencer has posted an outstanding essay on "How the Media Help to Destroy Rational Climate Debate" (drroyspencer.com 8/25/19). Dr. Spencer was the co-founder with Dr. John Christy of the NASA microwave satellite global temperature measuring system at UAH-Huntsville for thirty years. This essay demolishes the media scare reports of "record temperatures" melting glaciers, burning forests, and sea level rise. Take fifteen minutes to read it.

Uselessness of Climate Policies Explained. “We could do everything perfectly well – EVERYTHING – and we’re still going to have a catastrophe nationally, internationally and around the world. Because 85% of the problem – 85% – is the rest of the world!” – Joe Biden

Identity Politics Is Destroying Liberal Arts Education. Jonathan Pidluzny, director of academic affairs for the American Council of Trustees and Alumni (ACTA), notes that employers nevertheless prize the critical thinking, communication skills and judgment cultivated by a liberal-arts education. “The English major was once a guarantor of effective, formal writing skills and the ability to comprehend and analyze the complex thoughts found within centuries of brilliant and challenging poetry and prose,” he told Campus Reform. “Its decline into the epiphenomena of popular culture and identity politics is a self-inflicted wound that has rocked its credibility.” WSJ 9/10/19

Liberal Lunacy vs. Reality. “As an analogy for the price of progressivism, it’s [the gender neutral bathroom push] close to perfect. Authorities impose an ideology onto reality; reality slowly fights back. The question is simply how much damage is done by this kind of utopianism before it crumbles under its own weight. Simple solutions — like a separate, individual gender-neutral bathroom for the tiny minority with gender dysphoria or anyone else — are out of bounds. They are, after all, reinforcing the idea that girls and boys are different. And we cannot allow biology, evolution, reproductive strategy, hormones, chromosomes, and the customs of every single human culture since the beginning of time to interfere with “social justice.” – Andrew Sullivan, [When the Ideologues Come for the Kids](#)

Victim’s Father Speaks Out on Gun Control. "To me, gun control would’ve been if they arrested him for punching his mother’s teeth out and he got a background.

Democrats put these policies in place that don't believe in holding kids accountable or arresting them while they're juveniles...so if they don't arrest them and they don't get a background, then they're able to purchase weapons legally and a background check is useless. They're not addressing mental health...or arresting these people when they make threats...those are the real issues. My daughter paid the ultimate sacrifice because of those Democratic policies and I've been hurt by the Democrats more than anybody in this country -- and I hold them responsible." - Andrew Pollack, father of Parkland shooting victim Meadow Pollack. ([Fox News](#))

Firearms for Defense. "A South Carolina man shot a drunken attacker. A disabled Florida senior was wounded by four armed men who broke into his home, but he used an AR-15 to kill two of them while sending the two others fleeing. A San Diego man killed an assailant who was stabbing his father. A North Carolina woman killed an ax wielding attacker. A Tennessee Uber driver shot a man who had fired on his vehicle, defending himself and his passenger. A Louisiana man shot an attacker attempting a carjacking. Others in Kentucky, New Hampshire, Arizona, and elsewhere merely brandished their guns or held would-be burglars at gunpoint and awaited police. (PP 8/19/19)

Good Point. Jon Stokes, writing in [Reason.com](#) (9/5/19) on "The Futility of a Gun Buyback." "Before you ask how many Americans will give up their guns, ask how many cops will even try to take them."

Who Buys Electric Cars? "A Congressional Research Service study found that nearly 80% of the [electric vehicle] credits were claimed by households with adjusted gross income of more than \$100,000." (WSJ 9/3/19) But not to worry about more subsidies for the well to do. Vermont legislators are determined to keep expanding subsidies to "help all Vermonters to benefit from electric driving including [of course!] Vermont's most vulnerable". (Act 59 of 2019).

Gov. Scott on Parental School Choice. "On the broader issue of school choice, I believe parents should not be forced to keep their children in a school that is not meeting their child's needs. School choice should be afforded to every parent and student in every school in every corner of Vermont. I will vigorously support legislation that would clarify Act 46 and, further, make school choice an option for all Vermont families." (CfV candidate interview, 7/26/16). When will we see this bold plan?

Book of the Month

Influence

Science and Practice

by Robert B. Cialdini

<http://the420formula.com/new/headshop/books/pdfs/influencecialdini.pdf>

Robert Cialdini's *Influence* has been on my reading list for a while. Written in 2001, it's a classic, and though some of the examples cited may seem dated, the principles of psychology and how some use "weapons of influence" to manipulate us are timeless. Although I started this book before the start of the recent Climate Strike, seeing these concepts in real-time action in relation to how schools, politicians, and the media are acting upon our children was eye opening.

The whole book is worth your time, but I'll focus on Chapter 3 in which Cialdini describes how the communist Chinese indoctrinated U.S. POWs during the Korean War. Witness the parallels:

The Red Chinese engaged in what they termed their "lenient policy," which was, in reality, a concerted and sophisticated psychological assault on their captives.... In fact, nearly all American prisoners in the Chinese camps are said to have collaborated with the enemy in one way or another.

It is important to note that the collaboration was not always intentional. The American investigators defined collaboration as "any kind of behavior which helped the enemy," and it thus included such diverse activities as signing peace petitions, running errands, making radio appeals, accepting special favors, making false confessions, informing on fellow prisoners, divulging military information, etc.

For instance, prisoners were frequently asked to make statements that were so mildly anti-American or pro-Communist that they seemed inconsequential.

Once these minor requests had been complied with, however, the men found themselves pushed to submit to related, yet more substantive, requests. A man who had just agreed with his Chinese interrogator that the United States was not perfect might then be asked to indicate some of the ways in which he thought this was the case. Once he had so explained, he might be asked to make a list of these "problems with America" and to sign his name to it. Later he might be asked to read his list in a discussion group with other prisoners. "After all, it's what you really believe, isn't it?" Still later, he might be asked to write an essay expanding on his list and discussing these problems in greater detail. The Chinese might then use his name and his essay in an anti-American radio broadcast beamed not only to the entire camp but to other POW camps in North Korea as well as to American forces in South Korea. Suddenly he would find himself a "collaborator," having given aid and comfort to the enemy. Aware that he had written the essay without any strong threats or coercion, many times a man would change his self-image to be consistent with the deed and with the new "collaborator" label, often resulting in even more extensive acts of collaboration.

Compare this to kids in school. Elementary school students are asked to make a poster about how climate change is killing polar bears. Later they're asked to write an essay about how climate change is impacting their community. They get rewarded with better grades and teacher praise if they adopt the "politically correct" positions, and punished, even mildly, if they don't. Then they're asked to read their essay to the class, or speak at a school assembly. Then they're asked to take part in a protest, blocking traffic.... Their

self-identities have been carefully and successfully manipulated so that they can be willingly controlled by their captors, um, rather schools which they are forced to attend.

Keep in mind, these techniques worked on adult soldiers who had been trained to understand and withstand interrogation. Imagine the power they have over children!

Read the book. The link provided here is to a PDF version Influence, so you can do so at no cost. It might help us save our kids, and also save you from falling prey to a skilled salesman or politician!

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

The Final Word

October Survey: Climate Strike

Did the Climate Strike acts of “civil disobedience” make you more likely or less likely to support the strikers’ agenda?

- More likely.
- Less likely.
- No difference, I didn’t support it before.
- No difference, I fully supported it before.

Go to: <https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/climatestrikeimpact> to take the survey.

September Survey Results: Are our public schools educating or indoctrinating our kids?

The week of September 20-27 has been designated as a time of “Global Climate Strike and Week of Actions” by activist/lobbyist organizations. The objective is to get students to walk out of school in order to disrupt traffic, block access to buildings, and otherwise bring things to a standstill in order to force action on a climate change agenda. Schools are actively encouraging/enabling students to participate on school time. Is this a case of education or the political indoctrination of students?

- This is a legitimate, educational use of tax dollars. 6.57% (9)
- This is political indoctrination, not education. 93.43% (128)