**Lighting the Torch!**

This year’s seventy-fifth anniversary has allowed us in the Delbarton community to reflect on what makes this school so great. For us at The Forum, it was our school’s motto, “Succisa Virescit,” that came to mind. Despite our little “break” last year, Delbarton’s The Forum is back and better than ever. We hope to maintain our strong commitment to encourage political awareness and involvement for all Delbarton students. To demonstrate the commitment of our fearless writers last year despite the hiatus, we are making our September 2014 issue the “Welcome Back” issue, which will include all those articles that you all missed last year. Included are many “blasts from the pasts,” namely regarding the Trayvon Martin shooting. So although we apologize for the year apart, we are starting fresh with a renewed effort to inform and embody a fruitful discussion of major news.

We hope you enjoy this inaugural issue of *The Forum*...

Justin Hsieh and Tom Abel

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**A Note from the Faculty Moderator:**

You may notice that several of the articles in this issue are written by “Author unknown” or “Anonymous.” This is not our typical policy at *The Forum*; we much prefer that authors receive credit for their hard work and thought processes. Nonetheless, several of the writers last year submitted their articles without their names attached to the article itself, and thanks to last year’s ‘hiatus’ and the graduation of the editors who accepted these articles, we no longer know the authors’ names. While we regret that lapse, we felt it was better to publish these articles than to omit the hard work their authors put into them. We hope you understand.

-Kevin Conn

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**Reflection on 9/11**

*Dylan LeDonne*
The tragic events of September 11, 2001, have had profound impacts on the United States that reach far beyond the loss of life intended by the terrorists. While the September 11 attacks killed thousands of Americans and struck fear in the hearts of people around the world, the U.S. government’s “War on Terror” has destroyed our country’s most basic democratic ideals and values creating social and political ripple effects. First, America’s occupation of Iraq and Afghanistan has not only cost thousands of lives, but has also strengthened suspicions about the motives for our military actions and hurt the government’s credibility. Moreover, America’s use of the attacks as a pretext to allow the National Security Administration to spy on its own citizens under the guise of national security is an abuse of power and a violation of the Fourth Amendment. In addition to the NSA’s surveillance, state and federal governments have enacted a variety of laws that have restricted basic civil liberties and social freedoms. While Al-Qaeda succeeded in a single attack on American soil, our government’s response has had an
even greater and lasting negative impact on our society and ideals.

The U.S. military response to September 11 has cost American lives and resources, with no benefits to show for it. In response to the attacks of September 11, President Bush ordered the occupation of Iraq and Afghanistan for the stated purpose of curbing the power of terrorist organizations in those regions, and seizing the weapons of mass destruction that Bush believed Saddam Hussein had.\footnote{Marjorie Cohn, Iraq. “A War of Aggression. No WMDs, No Connection to Al Qaeda,” \textit{Global Research}, Last Modified March 19, 2013, http://www.globalresearch.ca/iraq-a-war-of-aggression-no-wmds-no-connection-to-al-qaeda/5327548.}

Ten years later, the war in Iraq finally ended with no weapons of mass destruction found and 4,500 American lives lost.\footnote{Corky Siemaszko, “After 10 years and 4,500 American lives lost, blood is still being shed in an Iraq yearning to be free from violence and corruption,” \textit{NY Daily News}, Last Modified March 19, 2013, http://www.nydailynews.com/news/national/ten-years-start-iraq-war-blood-shed-article-1.1293531.} Without the WMD’s, Bush’s stated objective for the war in Iraq was called into serious question. Moreover, documents released from former Vice President Cheney’s Energy Task Force revealed maps of oil lines and oil rigs in Iraq that were prepared six months before 9/11 and two years before the Iraq war.\footnote{Cohn, Iraq. “A War of Aggression. No WMDs, No Connection to Al Qaeda.”} In addition to other evidence, the discovery of these maps has increased suspicions that U.S. economic interests in securing oil reserves were the invasion’s true motives. Due to the government’s questionable motives for entering and perpetuating the war, our own people no longer trust the information being provided by the government.

Not only did 9/11 give a pretense for the “War on Terror,” it provided the U.S. government with a justification to spy on its citizens through the National Security Administration. Whistleblowers like Thomas Drake in 2005, and more recently Edward Snowden in 2013, have provided evidence that the government has lied to its people and is constantly engaging in surveillance of its citizens and gathering data through email and text messaging without a warrant. Although the government claims the information gathered by the NSA is used to prevent national security breaches, much of the intelligence is
used for domestic cases rather than national security reasons. Domestic agencies such as local police forces and the DEA are now using this data to target people within the United States for crimes like drug possession and trafficking. According to one DEA agent, the agency would use data gained from surveillance to target a truck, then use a routine traffic violation to stop the truck, search it and pretend the drugs were found from the traffic stop. The Fourth Amendment protects Americans from being searched without a warrant and stopped without probable cause. Through the NSA, the U.S. government has ignored these basic constitutional protections and violated its people’s fundamental rights.

Beyond the NSA’s surveillance, legislation passed since 9/11 has also been used to undermine America’s basic civil liberties and social values. While Americans tolerated the passage of the Patriot Act in the name of avoiding future terrorist attacks, out of a total 1,755 stops under the Patriot Act, only 15 stops, or less than one percent of all stops, were for suspected terrorist activity. One hundred twenty two stops were for fraud, and 1,618 were for drug activity. The misuse of the Patriot Act has contributed to the growing distrust of the government. Moreover, on September 17, 2001, New York passed the strongest anti-terror law in the nation in one day without any public input. The law provided an extremely broad definition of terror, which has been applied to a variety of crimes like racketeering and gang violence, in order to obtain easier convictions. Existing laws have also been enforced more aggressively in New York to restrict the ability to hold demonstrations. This stricter enforcement has hindered New Yorkers’ First Amendment rights to free speech and protest, as well the free expression for which the city is known. The New York stop and frisk policy, which allows police to stop and search anyone for

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5 Dan Carlin, Show 258-Snow Storm.


7 Donna Lieberman, “Infringement on Civil Liberties After 9/11,” NY Law School Law Review,
suspicious activity, has resulted in racial profiling and increased racial tensions as 85% of those stopped under this law are minorities. In the name of security, these new laws have resulted in significant restrictions on Americans’ civil liberties and undermined our social ideals without any evidence they have made us safer.

The intent of Osama bin Laden and his fellow Al-Qaeda members for the 9/11 attacks was to strike fear into the hearts of Americans and disrupt our way of life. The action taken by the government have aided in completing Al-Qaeda’s goal of disturbing our political and social systems. Through the dubious motives for the war in Iraq, the lack of any benefit for the costly war in Afghanistan, the massive infringement of Americans’ civil liberties, and disruption of our social ideals, the government has accomplished a more basic violation of American trust and values than the terrorists themselves. If the United States government continues these tactics Osama bin Laden’s mission will have been accomplished -- the freedom and way of life American citizens used to enjoy will cease to exist.

**NSA Go Away**

**Derrick Yao**

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NSA takes away an intrinsic right of all American citizens, which is privacy. According to the Guardian on July 13, 2013, “A top secret National Security Agency program allows analysts to search with no prior authorization through vast databases containing emails, online chats and the browsing histories of millions of individuals, according to documents provided by whistleblower Edward Snowden.” This program is called XKeyscore and is able to record and access nearly everything that a typical person does on the Internet. Moreover, Edward Snowden explained the power of this program, “I, sitting at my desk, could wiretap anyone, from you or your accountant, to a federal judge or even the president, if I had a personal email.” The NSA, however, has denied these allegations in a recent statement to the Guardian, “NSA activities are focused and specifically deployed against – and only against – legitimate foreign intelligence targets in response to requirements that our leaders need for information necessary to protect our nation and its interests.” Even with this qualification given by NSA, the thought of a program that can essentially track your every move while on the Internet is very unsettling. Even further, the NSA blatantly lied when responding to Edward Snowden statement above by claiming, “He's lying. It's impossible for him to do
what he was saying he could do,”9 which makes it difficult for an American citizen to trust the word of this government agency.

Moreover, European leaders were also appalled by these supposed actions undertaken by the NSA. For example, Peter Schaar, German data protection and freedom of information commissioner, stated regarding the accusations towards NSA, “The U.S. government must provide clarity regarding these monstrous allegations of total monitoring of various telecommunications and Internet services. Statements from the U.S. government that the monitoring was not aimed at U.S. citizens but only against persons outside the United States do not reassure me at all.” According to Reuters, the European Union has been attempting to assert its citizens' rights to privacy in the United States for nearly a decade, but the NSA and its programs are currently undermining this process. Mark Watts, a partner in London law firm Bristows, specializing in privacy and data compliance, further explained this phenomenon, “You hear more concerns in Europe than in the U.S., about the Patriot Act in particular. PRISM just enhances those concerns.” Therefore, important people outside of the United States are even more worried about the effects of NSA on the privacy of a citizen.

All in all, the NSA is a slippery slope that will almost certainly lead to even more violations of Americans’ privacy. The NSA currently has the technology, in the form of PRISM and XKeyscore, to essentially track each and every American’s actions on the Internet and on the phone. NSA has gone too far because it has undermined the rights of all United States citizens.

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Trayvon Martin and the Fight against Profiling
By Unknown

On July 13, after George Zimmerman was found not guilty in the murder of Trayvon Martin, black and white Americans alike took to the internet to voice their opinions on the verdict and trial. While different sides argued over the rightfulness of the verdict and the evidence in the presented, other parties engaged in a discussion about profiling in America, specifically racial profiling and its role in Trayvon’s death. Although racial profiling is a majorly controversial act in the justice system it is not the only type of profiling. Profiling exists in any characteristic of a person from race, where black and latino drivers are twice as likely to be arrested or searched as white drivers during a routine traffic stop[9], to gender, where males are more likely to be searched and cited than females,[10] and everything in between. The effects of profiling affect various aspects of life including everyday human interaction, the actions of police, and the social development of American society. The assumptions and stereotypes that produce profiling also develop leeriness and sometimes hatred of a specific group which discourages interaction and culture mixing. Without interaction it is nearly impossible to understand another culture’s beliefs and disprove the stereotypes that someone may believe to be accurate. Profiling’s negative effects on police activity have stirred the most controversy due to the rise of police brutality and unjust harassment specifically towards minorities who are deemed suspicious based on their race, religion, or general appearance. Although profiling only mostly leads to an arrest, harassment, or avoidance of a group it can lead to many other extreme events including hate crimes or even death as seen in the Trayvon Martin case. Social growth will only stem from the acceptance of others despite their appearance or beliefs and now is an extraordinary time to start. To combat profiling it is imperative to see the world, interact with different people from various backgrounds, and educate others who may believe that stereotypes are factual representations of
groups. The fight against profiling has been ongoing, but sadly ignored by the majority of the country who do not feel that they can make much of a difference. Become a difference maker. Fight against injustice and inequality locally and nationally. Help establish a new norm of acceptance and understanding in America. Anyone could have been Trayvon Martin, but it is up to us to make sure that no one ever will be in the future.

Legacy of Trayvon Martin
By Unknown

It took place in a quiet Florida suburban neighborhood - the infamous case everyone now knows - an incident where a minor’s life has been forever lost - a case where the accused was given the verdict of not guilty. Perhaps that description fits a well-known case, the Trayvon Martin murder case. After the verdict of not guilty was handed down to George Zimmerman, people all across the country had a wide variety of reactions. Reactions of shock, depression, relief spread across a nation that was not quick to forget about the story of an African American child who was shot to death while his only means of defense were his Skittles and Ice Tea. It seemed that the majority of America was rooting for the prosecution and wanted to see Zimmerman punished for his actions. However, as the case went on there was one law, which is also used in fifteen other states that kept Zimmerman’s hope alive. The “Stand Your Ground” law was the only real hope that Zimmerman had. For those who are not familiar with the law the overall idea is that lethal force can be taken, if need be, in acts of self defense. Zimmerman stated that there was a fight, and he feared for his life, so he thought it was his right to use lethal force against Trayvon Martin. A crucial fact the prosecution used to try and neutralize the argument was that Zimmerman followed Trayvon with a loaded gun, even though Trayvon had done no wrong at the time. The prosecution said that since Trayvon did not seek out a fight that it was Zimmerman’s fault for the whole incident escalating to the point that it did. However, since Zimmerman felt his life was in danger,
according to the law, it did not matter who started the entire incident. This caused there to be less shock when Zimmerman was found not guilty.

Legally speaking a valid argument could and was made in Zimmerman’s defense. However, what if this law is wrong? It has happened before dating back hundreds of years, from banning slavery, to in some places legalizing the use of recreational marijuana and gay marriage. The American legal system has made changes to push to a better and more fair society. If the US can realize that laws need to be changed in some cases, then why has this law not looked at more closely? George Zimmerman started a fight, and when it looked like he was losing, he shot a seventeen year old to death. There are sixteen states that have a “Stand Your Ground” law, and that means there are sixteen states you can go to pick a fight, almost lose the fight, shoot your opponent, then after all that still have a chance of walking away from the whole thing with no consequences. Granted there are differences in every case but the principle still stands, and that is in some states there may be an excuse for murder! There has to be a way these laws can be altered, because in some cases they are a good idea. For example, if someone breaks into your house with a weapon, then that is viable reason to use lethal force. It was confirmed by lawmakers that this is what the law was meant for, but now the law meant to protect the defenseless can be twisted to allow someone to take another’s life if he starts a fight and feels like he is losing. To all of you lawmakers in Washington, to all of you politicians in America, the only question I have is why? Why is Trayvon Martin’s killer allowed to walk with no repercussions? Why are politicians who want to help people focused on the financial state of the families when there is a legal excuse to kill off one of the family members? Why aren’t politicians working to fix the Stand Your Ground law? Any answers? Going once, going twice, and still none of it makes any sense. American Politicians, revise this law so people can live to see another day.
Perspectives on Trayvon Martin
By Josef Johnson

“We must learn to live together as brothers or perish together as fools.” – Martin Luther King Jr.

As the Zimmerman verdict was delivered, in an era that many people consider “post-racial” society, black Americans received yet another insinuation that we are not proper members of this society.

Sitting at my couch as I heard the verdict, a hazy sense of disillusionment overcame me as I struggled to grasp the reality of the situation. Was I surprised with the actual verdict? No. But a part of me wanted to believe that I could walk alone through a Sanford, Florida or Mendham, New Jersey without the fear of being dehumanized or even shot because I look different. President Obama and many other black males (including myself) have taken up the cry, “I am Trayvon,” an expression that could not be any truer despite our glaringly different backgrounds. Under certain circumstances, I could have ended up fighting the gun-wielding man who seriously threatened me; I could have used my wrestling background to subdue him; and my cold, lifeless body could be the one pictured in the futile trial that almost failed to occur. In 2014, I will attend one of the most prestigious universities in America, and George Zimmerman could have shot me in the heart just the same. I would like to think that more of my classmates would have attempted to see the black community’s frustration if black Americans were crying “I am Josef” instead.

Regardless of your approval of the verdict, the fact remains that the entire altercation and subsequent shooting resulted from Zimmerman’s lethal combination of racial prejudice and a gun. Perhaps, the popular media claim that Trayvon was only armed with skittles and an iced tea is unfair, but I staunchly believe that he was killed because he was armed with race and centuries of misunderstanding. I personally cannot pretend to fully understand why so many white Americans choose to disregard the discussion of race because even more of them fail to understand the amount of anguish and abandonment Blacks feel at that apathy. I implore the skeptics to utilize their access to recent history and consider the
events to which we have likened the tragedy: Emett Till, Medgar Evers, and countless others. While the killing of Trayvon Martin is not as horrific as the aforementioned tragedies, it still commands the same solemnity and reflection. Such serious consideration is necessary because Martin’s death is the manifestation of racism in the twenty-first century. Ultimately, for America to grow stronger from the tragedy, it must reconceive the definition of racism.

Upon the deliverance of the verdict, many black mothers, including my sister, shared that they were embracing their young sons a little tighter because of the truly virulent reality of racism in our country. My father saw a more pragmatic approach: he sat me down and gave me the same speech he has dictated to me for years. He warned me that as a black male, I will constantly encounter hostility because I share a skin tone with the malicious murderer they saw on the news or the drug dealers they watch in episodes of *Law and Order*. He reminded me that it is nearly always a necessity to accommodate other people’s fear with excessive submissiveness and passivity to avoid confrontation. Fundamentally, he cautioned to me that I must severely censor my self-expression because it may make others feel uncomfortable; that if I wear a hoodie in a white neighborhood, my death could be a justifiable part of “God’s plan.” In essence, it is not enough to teach black men to be honest, hardworking, and virtuous, because that will not be enough to quell unjustified misconceptions.

Currently, my greatest hope is that the skeptics of racism can at least humor my supposed paranoia. I pray for the day when people who dismiss racism begin to consider the reality of a world in which the kindest people often have inherent yet unobtrusive suspicion of men like me. I do not believe George Zimmerman is a monster. I am simply aware that he is the unfortunate product of a person born in a racial society that exudes misunderstanding and distrust. Correcting laws can only yield a limited combatant to racism; to truly achieve racial acceptance, we must correct our mindsets.
Disgraced: Obama, Holder, and the Media’s Persecution of George Zimmerman
by Unknown

George Zimmerman should never have even gone to trial. He was not just “not guilty”, he was innocent. His judgment may not have been perfect, but in the context of the law, there was no case to be made against Zimmerman. That is what the Sanford Police found in their investigation and that is what the jury ultimately found. The only reason this case was brought to trial was because of the political pressure brought on the Sanford Police Department by President Obama, Attorney General Holder, and the media. The way Zimmerman was treated was nothing short of a complete disgrace. There are no winners in this case, but if a silver lining can be taken, it is that our system of justice did not break when confronted with extreme pressure from the most powerful people in the country trying to advance their agenda and convict an innocent man.

The facts of what happened the night that Trayvon Martin was shot are anything but clear. The facts and testimony that were presented, though, fully exonerated Zimmerman. George Zimmerman had a broken nose and multiple lacerations to his head. There was eyewitness testimony that placed Trayvon Martin on top of Zimmerman, straddling him, and beating him up “Ground and pound…MMA Style.”

That is not the only evidence that proved Mr. Zimmerman’s innocence, but that alone is more than enough to put reasonable doubt in to play. The Sanford Police had that evidence, and that is why they did not arrest Zimmerman until they had no other choice.

The Sanford Police finally had to arrest Zimmerman because of the pressure brought on them. Rioters, enraged and misinformed by the divisive words of people like Al Sharpton, Congressman Bobby Rush, and many others, gathered and protested outside the Department’s Headquarters and throughout

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Florida. The Department of Justice, led by Attorney General Eric Holder, even helped organize and fund some of these race riots. President Obama needed a racial wedge issue because of the tough re-election campaign he had coming up, and he decided to seize upon this tragedy. Shortly after Trayvon’s death, he said, “If I had a son, he would look like Trayvon.” This was not an impartial statement, and instead of professing our system of justice, the President clearly sent a message that the public prosecution of Zimmerman was acceptable. It was made to continue to gin up outrage over the death of Mr. Martin, which, although tragic, was no different from many deaths that happen in America every year. There was no reason, besides politics, that this case had to become a national issue. The media realized this case could be used to help the President, and they would use this case to drive the narrative that America is a racist country. They wanted this to be a case where a white man targeted and hunted down a black man, and murdered him in cold blood. They were trying to put a square peg into a round hole, and they were determined to make it fit. Although Zimmerman is as “White” as President Obama is, the AP, CBS, the New York Times, Reuters, the Boston Globe, and PBS all described Zimmerman as “White” or a “White Hispanic.”

The media did everything they could to make Zimmerman look like a racist murderer, even though the only facts we have about Zimmerman’s feelings towards African Americans are that he mentored black children for free on the weekends, took a black woman to his prom, and defended a black homeless man who alleged abuse by the police. The media didn’t care. NBC News and the New York Times were both caught doctoring the 911 call of Zimmerman to make it appear that Zimmerman, unsolicited, told the operator Martin’s race, when in fact the 911 operator specifically asked him Martin’s race. Additionally,

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CNN claimed on air that Zimmerman had made a racial slur against Martin when on the phone with the operator. That was proven false. ABC News and MSNBC both claimed that Zimmerman was uninjured the night of the crime. The head lacerations and broken nose proved them wrong, too. All of these repulsive, clearly partisan events occurred before Zimmerman was arrested. The media and the Obama Administration were putting the pressure on, and, ultimately, the Sanford Police had to succumb and arrest Mr. Zimmerman.

The narrative that the Obama Administration and the media tried to advance in wake of a clear case of self-defense was nothing short of despicable. Mr. Zimmerman was falsely made out to be a lying white racist, who targeted Trayvon Martin because he was black, stalked him, confronted him, and murdered him. None of that is supported by any of the facts or evidence. They didn’t care. Fortunately, the jurors did.

**Don’t Raise the Minimum Wage**

Ben Janacek

The proposal to raise the minimum wage is a classic example of a policy with good intentions, but bad results. Since 1995, there have been eight major studies done on the effects of the minimum wage,
and all but one found that it had no effect on poverty. The fundamental principle here is that when you increase something’s cost, you get less of it, and that certainly holds true when it comes to labor. As Mark Wilson from the CATO Institute points out, “While the aim is to help workers, decades of economic research show that minimum wages usually end up harming workers and the broader economy.” In fact, Wilson says, “Minimum wages particularly stifle job opportunities for low-skill workers, youth, and minorities, which are the groups that policymakers are often trying to help with these policies.” For example, black teenage unemployment was about equal to that of white teenagers in the 1950s. After years of increasing the federal minimum wage, black teenage unemployment is now around 40%. Walter Williams, an economist from Philadelphia, said about working in the slums in his youth that, “The real value of early work experiences is much more important than the little change a kid can earn. You learn how to be prompt, respect and obey superiors, and develop good work habits and attitudes that can pay off in the future. There is a self-respect and pride that comes from being financially semi-independent.”

The majority of people earning the minimum wage are either teenagers, which constitute 49% who currently don’t need to support themselves, or someone who has another family member earning an income, as well. The value in the job is not necessarily the money, which is nice, but the fact that it provides them a starting point for future success. It allows young people to get a foot in the door, so to speak, so that they can climb the ladder in society. One of the biggest problems in our country is youth unemployment, which has been around 16% recently. Enacting policies, such as raising the minimum wage, that will increase that crisis it the wrong path to take. For the very few who are trying to support themselves or a family on the minimum wage, they are usually classified as being in “poverty.” However, today’s poverty measurement does not take into account any government assistance. Therefore, the real amount of money people have is usually above the poverty line. Only 17% of the 1.8 million workers are full-time full-year employees and only 21% are heads of their family. Just 4.7% of people are over 25 years old, work full time, have children, and earn the minimum wage. These people shouldn’t be neglected,
which is why we have welfare and a safety net. Raising the minimum wage wouldn’t be compassionate, it would increase the odds that these people would lose their job. From a political perspective, bringing up the issue of raising the wage is usually a positive, as it is easy to get the general public on board with a message of “higher wages.”

However, economically, the policy is a detrimental one. Businesses rarely absorb the increased costs, whether they be in capital or, in this case, labor, via decreased profits. They either cut costs or transfer them on to the consumer. With labor usually being a company’s largest cost, it would make sense that raising wages would translate into fewer jobs. In an economy as sluggish as this one, raising the minimum wage dramatically, to $10.10, would only hurt businesses more and slow down the economy. A recent CBO study supports this idea. It stated that if the minimum wage were in fact raised to $10.10, the United States economy would lose around 500k jobs. As Milton Friedman said, “The people who are hurt most by higher minimums are the most poverty stricken.”

Take Puerto Rico and American Samoa as two examples of what happens when the minimum wage is forced upon their relatively low skilled labor forces by the federal government. In Puerto Rico, when the minimum wage was enacted at 25 cents in 1938, they lost 120k jobs and their unemployment rate increased to 50%. More recently, American Samoa suffered a similar fate. In 2012, they were scheduled to have a 50 cent increase in the minimum wage. In response, Governor Tulafono of American Samoa testified before Congress and said, “We are watching our economy burn down. We know what to do to stop it. We need to bring the aggressive wage costs decreed by the Federal Government under control…Our job market is being torched. Our businesses are being depressed. Our hope for growth has been driven away.” Now, the effects wouldn’t be as dramatic in the United States because we are more skilled and have much fewer people around the poverty level. However, for those people here who aren’t skilled, like teenagers, or those without much education, the effects would be damaging. The same principles apply here that apply in Puerto Rico or American Samoa.
A study in 1995 by the congressional Joint Economic Committee published a comprehensive study of 5 decades of research on the minimum wage. The effects they concluded that could be directly or indirectly tied to it included, “Increasing the likelihood and duration of unemployment for low-wage workers, particularly economic downturns, Discouraging part-time work and reducing school attendance, Encouraging employers to cut back on fringe benefits, and Encouraging employers to hire illegal aliens”, among many other effects.

In addition to increased joblessness, an increase in the minimum wage would lead to higher prices. For example, a 2004 study concluded that for every 10 percent increase in the US minimum wage, the price of food rises by 4% and overall prices rise by .4%, which help to offset the benefit in higher wages that those who haven’t lost their job would receive, especially among the poor, who are disproportionately affected by inflation.

Milton Friedman said, “The minimum wage law is most properly described as a law saying employers must discriminate against people who have low skills.” Although the intention behind an increase in the minimum wage to $10.10 may be well intentioned, the actual effects of such an action would be damaging to entry-level workers with relatively little skill looking for a job, as well as to the consumer in the form of higher prices. We need to make it easier for people to find jobs, not harder.

http://www.fee.org/the_freeman/detail/the-minimum-wage-good-intentions-bad-results - axzz2uHK8T2LN
http://www.nationalreview.com/corner/340644/raising-minimum-wage-tired-bad-proposal-veronique-de-ru
gy
0k-jobs/

Raise the Minimum Wage
By Jack Lynch
Ask any middle class American what they think of international labor outsourcing – the transfer of labor for American businesses from the continental U.S. to foreign nations – and they will almost undoubtedly inform you of their dislike for the practice. They will, rightly, tell you that outsourcing takes away American jobs and puts American consumers at risk of the problems stemming from poor government regulation of manufacturing overseas. And yet, ask these same middle class American if they would be willing to work for minimum wage in a cell phone manufacturing plant or a telecomm call center and they will likely decline. And why would they not? Even operating at the current American minimum wage level of $7.25 an hour, they would not be able to keep a family of just two above the national poverty line, much less a family of three or more.  

The reason that the United States is no longer a labor giant like India or China is that Americans are unwilling to hold jobs that offer such a low quality of life. As unemployment hovers around 7.3%, employment positions remain unfilled in low-wage areas. A quick craigslist search of solely central New Jersey food and beverage service jobs offers hundreds of positions at low wages, with employers eagerly looking for applicants. But when such jobs are unable to support a family in any kind of meaningful fashion, workers are unwilling to take them.

In previous generations, minimum wage jobs were able to support whole families and offered legitimate employment opportunities. Today, 12.3 million Americans work minimum wage jobs while also supporting a family of two or more. By definition, these workers are unable to remain above the poverty line.

Critics of a raise to the minimum wage argue that a wage hike would increase everyday costs for Americans and would lead business owners to reduce their labor forces, resulting in higher unemployment. But real-world application of higher minimum wages outside the United States shows few downfalls. Australia, which possesses the highest federal minimum wage of any nation on Earth, at $16.88 USD,  

14 [http://www.whitehouse.gov/raise-the-wage](http://www.whitehouse.gov/raise-the-wage)  
more than twice that of the United States’, has an unemployment rate lower than in the U.S. Moreover, many nations with lower federal minimum wages than the U.S., like Spain, still have a higher cost of living.

Looking within the United States, higher hourly wages still produce economic success. While Wal-Mart warns of an increase in everyday prices if the minimum wage increases, competitor Costco has been paying its employees a minimum wage of $11.50 for years, leading to a low turnover rate and happier employees. As a result, while Wal-Mart employees went on strike for higher wages in the past year, Costco thrived. Costco CEO Craig Jelinek told Business Insider “Instead of minimizing wages, we know it’s a lot more profitable in the long term to minimize employee turnover and maximize employee productivity, commitment and loyalty.”

The United States will never be able to compete with nations like China and India in terms of providing cheap manufacturing and labor, unless we are willing to blatantly exploit millions of impoverished Americans. Instead, by raising the minimum wage, the United States could recreate itself as a place of trustworthy, high quality manufacturing, fueled by the work of Americans who would now be able to support a realistic lifestyle with a minimum wage job.

Unemployment has two sides: employers unwilling to hire, and laborers unwilling to work. Lowering the minimum wage, or failing to adjust it for inflation, takes into account only the employers’ perspective. So it becomes a question of two evils: raise the minimum wage and hurt profits among business owners, or lower the wage and hurt low-income employees. If you believe that corporate profits are more important than America’s working poor, then you should disagree with any increase to the minimum wage. But if you believe that it is more essential for a day’s work to produce money for a day’s

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16 http://www.washingtonpost.com/blogs/wonkblog/wp/2013/08/19/the-u-s-has-a-7-25-minimum-wage-australias-is-16-88/
http://www.tradingeconomics.com/australia/unemployment-rate

17

living, then you should agree that the federal minimum wage deserves an overhaul. Congress should support President Obama’s proposed minimum wage increase from $7.25 to $10.10. Cheap labor is not the answer to the unemployment crisis. Americans want and need quality jobs that will allow them not only to survive but to become consumers within the American economy.

Ukraine
Derrick Yao

What started out as an anti-government protest in Ukraine has turned into a power struggle between two of the most powerful nations in the world: the United States and Russia. Demonstrations began on November 21, 2013, and were instigated by a refusal of the Ukrainian government to integrate with the European Union. Specifically, Former President Yanukovych rejected a proposal by the European Union in favor of stronger ties with Russia. In response to this rash decision, thousands of Ukrainians rushed into Independence Square within Kiev for peaceful protests. As time passed, there were several developments. For example, on January 16, 2014, the Ukrainian Parliament passed anti-protest laws. These laws, however, led to the exact opposite effect. On January 22, 2014, two protestors died from
gunshots wounds: the first deaths on these demonstrations. The violence ultimately culminated a month later on February 20, 2014, when in a 48-hour span 77 people were killed and nearly 600 were wounded.

The implication of these events has extended further than the number of deaths in Ukraine. Indeed, Vladimir Putin wants to make Russia a global economic player, one that is able to rival economic superpowers such as the United States and China. Moreover, Putin sees Ukraine as a key tenet in his lofty plan to gain power. In the status quo, many Ukrainians work in heavy industry, which supplies the Russian markets. Putin has and is continuing to take impetuous measures to insulate his power in Ukraine. For example, on March 20, 2014, Ukraine’s UN representative Yurii Klymenko stated, “Russia is on its way to unleash a full-blown military intervention in Ukraine's east and south. Annexing Crimea was only the start of the Ukraine crisis.” Klymenko also warned that the Russian invasion of Crimea was only the “initial stage of the world-scale military play orchestrated by Moscow.” Even with a catastrophe imminent, President Obama has taken few steps to avoid this invasion. On March 20, 2014, Obama extended financial sanctions to 31 of Putin’s allies and to a bank near Kremlin. Unfortunately, historically sanctions have failed. The most recent example can be seen in Iran. Although sanctions were able to cripple the Iranian economy, the government still managed to continue their nuclear program with the help of countries that did not support American sanctions. Furthermore, even if one believes that these sanctions were successful it was due to the fact that these sanctions had the support of superpowers such as Russia and China. Obviously, in this case the United States does not have the support of Russia. Therefore, Obama undoubtedly needs to take further action, beyond economic sanctions, if he wants to avoid a possible war with Russia.
The Ukraine Crisis
Alex Zhang

Political news of the Ukrainian crisis has been diverse and, at some times, overwhelming. The background of the current situation in Ukraine can be traced back to the “Orange Revolution” of 2004. This brought into power the “All-Ukrainian Union” party, an extremely nationalist party which had the backing of a large portion of the Ukrainian population; a short era of economic prosperity followed, earning the “Fatherland Party”, as it was quickly dubbed by Ukrainians, popularity and political influence. Later, after the 2008 financial crisis, Viktor Yanukovych, of a pro-Russian political party was elected and immediately put the popular former prime minister Yulia Timoshenko in jail; he later amends the Ukrainian constitution to increase presidential power. All the while, Ukraine had been deteriorating economically; Moody’s and S&P both assigned the country an extremely low credit rating. To attain loans, Ukraine must borrow from one of two sources of capital: The EU, or Russia. Last November, Yanukovych outraged Ukrainian citizens by choosing to deal with Russia. Furthermore, as a response to protests, he instituted various anti-protest laws restricting the freedoms of speech and assembly. As protests continued, citizens from the entire political spectrum united in the desire for Yanukovych’s impeachment. However, Yanukovych ordered police to actually increase their use of force, and more citizens were
killed. Still, the protesters managed to gain power, forcing Yanukovych and much of his cabinet to flee. In late February, a military force appeared in Crimea. While the Ukrainian government claimed that the soldiers were Russians, Russian president Vladimir Putin claimed that the force was Ukrainian. But what does Russia stand to gain from intervention in Crimea? There are several reasons for Russia’s involvement which helped determine the allegiance of the troops. First, Crimea is a region which is mostly composed of ethnic Russians. Putin claims that it “has always been an inalienable part of Russia”. Second, Russia seeks to gain economic power with the annexation of Sevastopol, a former Soviet port. Ultimately, Putin announced the annexation of Crimea after a referendum held there yielded a vote of 97% of residents in favor of joining Russia.

**Bill vs. Eva: the Battle for New York’s Charter Schools**

*by Billy Schroeder*
Bill de Blasio officially became mayor of New York City on the first day of 2014. He is the first Democratic mayor of New York City since 1993, when David Dinkins was Mayor. Although de Blasio campaigned on a platform of universal Pre-K, it is a different education issue that is dominating the headlines of his new administration. His bold move to close three charter schools has ignited protests and launched a harsh television ad campaign against him. This decision has become the defining move of his early term as mayor.

From 2010-2013, de Blasio was the NYC Public Advocate. During his tenure, de Blasio was open to voicing his opinion. He criticized the Mayor at the time, Michael Bloomberg. He repeatedly disparaged Bloomberg and his team. He had a strong opinion about various topics: he supported taking Metro Cards away from students and raising taxes to fund more Pre-K programs. He condemned Bloomberg’s NYC School Chancellor, Cathie Black, for not sending her own children to public schools. Many thought he had great ideas, but it was not until after he was elected that these “ideas” began to have a negative impact on New York City.

Bill de Blasio mentioned in September that he did not support the expansion of charter schools, but never got too specific with his views. This did not affect his mayoral election result, as he defeated Republican Joe Lhota by a landslide. Not many realized that once de Blasio was sworn in, his opinion on charter schools affect the lives of many New Yorkers.

Bill de Blasio is not shy. He voices a strong opinion about controversial topics, which is why he was elected mayor of New York City. However, sometimes he takes it too far. In Brooklyn, de Blasio was arrested, along with around a dozen others, for protesting the closing of a local hospital. De Blasio can voice his opinion, but getting arrested seems to take it too far. Despite this, many supporters saw this act as “brave” and “courageous.” He takes traditional liberal stances on most issues, but it is with the charter schools that he has taken it too far.
Charter schools are “set up as alternatives to traditional public schools. [They] operate under private management systems. They promote small class sizes, often academically outperform public schools in the area, and encourage more innovative approaches to teaching.”

According to the New York Department of Education, there are 70,000 kids attending charter school and about 55,000 New York City kids on wait lists to get into charter schools. For every one charter school seat, about 5 kids apply. Every charter has a random lottery near the end of the school year to determine which kids get into the charters for next year. It is clear why parents are turning to charter schools for their children. They want a better education than the public schools provide, and statistics on enrollment back it up. The National Center for Education Statistics shows how interest has spiked and why. From the 1999-2000 school year to the 2010-2011 school year, the number of students enrolled in charter schools increased from 0.3 million to 1.8 million students.

As for academic value, NYC charters thrive. According to the New York Department of Education, 79% of charter schools had better overall test scores than their “peer school”, or the public school closest to the charter. In the 2012 school year, charters scored around 11 percentage points better than their peer schools in ELA [English - language arts], and 3 percentage points more in math testing. Both public and charter schools’ test scores dropped in the 2012-2013 school year because of new tests given.

Charter schools have been nothing but success, so it is hard to see Bill de Blasio’s view on things. They have great teachers that offer an alternative way of teaching. Charters randomly select students, resulting in a diverse student population. Some charter students are still learning English and others have learning disabilities, yet charters continue to bring great academic triumph to all. As mayor, de Blasio usually has

19 Fox News
20 New York Department of Education
21 National Center for Education
22 New York Charter School Center
23 NY Charter School Center
the last word on many issues, but Eva Moskowitz is making sure de Blasio does not get the final word on charter schools.

Eva Moskowitz is the CEO of Success Academy, a group of charter schools in New York. When Mayor de Blasio closed three of Moskowitz’s schools, she did not want the powerful mayor to win. Yet, there is not much Moskowitz can do.

De Blasio has moved this issue past politics and into the lives of NYC school children. Forcing nearly 200 Harlem kids out their charter schools is just wrong. But how will this controversy end? Moskowitz tried to gain as much support as possible to start. After a couple small rallies and threats to sue de Blasio, she got an important figure to join her fight to save charter schools, Democratic Governor Cuomo. Cuomo held a rally in Albany, with the help of Moskowitz, attracting 7,000 supporters on the same day de Blasio held a rally for his universal pre-K plan with only 1,000 people.24

The pro-charter side of this battle has a lot going for it: the governor’s support, 7,000 supporters, and the facts. It is hard to defend against these statistics. Governor Cuomo recently announced he is close to getting a legislative solution to de Blasio’s attack on charter schools. De Blasio was forced to defend himself on liberal news network MSNBC, when he was on the program Morning Joe for a 30-minute interview. He had the audacity to say, “I was never against charters”. When the most liberal news station publicly criticizes a fellow liberal, it is obvious support is plummeting for Mayor de Blasio. The pro-charter side of this pressing issue has brought out its best weapon: the kids. Mayor de Blasio has brought this past a political quarrel and he has made this an issue about inner-city kids getting a good education.

24 Daily News
Recently Arizona Governor Jan Brewer vetoed an anti-gay bill masked as an attempt to protect religious freedoms. The bill proposed that business owners have the right to deny service to patrons on the basis of sexuality, and other more minor reasons, if the sexuality of those being turned away were following a practice that the business owner did not agree with. In other words, in Arizona, people would be able to discriminate by citing religious beliefs. This bill marks the most recent attempt at a pushback against gay marriage and LGBTQ rights in the United States. The *Washington Post* of February 26, 2014 pointed out that the debate over these issues has intensely heated up, but is not likely to be solved quickly.
or easily. The Washington Post goes on to say that one of the biggest hot button issues when discussing LGBTQ rights is gay marriage and whether or not it should be legal in the United States. With the debate raging a much as it is we must ask the question on everyone’s mind, what is the best solution to the debate over gay marriage in the United States. The answer, as we will clearly see, is to completely abolish the legal institution of marriage and replace it with Civil Unions that can be obtained between any two people. We see this is the answer for two main reasons. First, because it appeases those who are anti-gay marriage and second, because it satisfies those who are pro-gay marriage.

In the debate over same-sex marriage the negative side often cites religious standing for the illegitimacy of a same-sex marriage. The New York Times of February 22, 2014 noted that religious views were often cited in explaining why same-sex marriage should not be legal. In many cases those arguing against same sex marriage would cite the bible specifically Leviticus 18:22 which says, “You shall not lie with a male as with a woman; it is an abomination.” The arguments against same sex marriage only hold validity at all because of the religious nature of marriage as an institution. Take Mr. White’s Sacrament’s class or simply read the Catechism of the Catholic Church (Part Two, Section Two, Chapter Three, Article 7) where the sacrament of marriage is discussed. Catholicism is not the only religion that considers wedding a religious celebration all major world religions have religious marriage ceremonies and celebrations. What this shows is that marriage is an extremely religious event that during the transition from puritan colonies in New England and other religious influences on early America, the governmental system simply adopted the institution of marriage, despite its religious ties. This adoption has caused many problems throughout the history of the US but the issue appears to be coming to a head now with the debate of same sex-marriage raging. If the institution of marriage was removed from government and replaced with Civil Unions for all couples those who were previously against same-sex marriage would be satisfied. Since many of the misgivings tied to same-sex marriage have to do with the religious nature of marriage if this is removed form the question all together, those people would no longer have as strong
misgivings about allowing what would be same-sex civil unions.

However, the idea of same-sex couples being joined through civil union has been discussed before, yet supporters of same sex marriage have had reserves. In many cases having civil unions rather than marriage has seemed like an attempt to give same-sex couples second-class status. If, rather than just same-sex couples being joined through civil union, all couples were joined in this way receiving all the benefits that the law affords marriages currently there would be no difference and same sex couples would not be being treated as second class couples. However, another misgiving that those on both sides of the issue might have is what would happen to marriage. Simply put each religious institution could marry whomever they wanted. That way since the Catholic Church does not support same-sex marriage, it does not have to offer it, however if a same sex couple wanted to get married and not simply be joined by a civil Union they could get married in a church that accepts same-sex marriage. The BBC reported that in Scotland, which recently legalized gay marriage, churches could announce, or sign up, to show that they are willing to marry same-sex couples. If a similar system were put in place here all couples would be able to be married, and no one would feel forced to accept something they do not agree with on a religious level, so long as they agree with their religion.

Thus as we can see by looking back at what the best solution is for the debate over same-sex marriage, the answer is quite clear, Civil Unions across the board. By instituting Civil Unions for all couples and completely removing marriage from government and laws, we appease those who are against the legalization of gay marriage. Also, we satisfy those who are for the legalization of gay marriage. So, while the debate may rage on, as Arizona will not be the last battle ground for LGBTQ rights, we will know that there is an easy and appropriate solution to the question that has everyone so up in arms.

Westgate Mall Shooting
by Unknown
On September 21, 2013, a group of 10-15 masked gunmen walked into the upscale Westgate Mall in the capital of Kenya, Nairobi. Over the next three days, these gunmen began an intense battle with the Kenyan police and military within the shopping center. Over 1,000 shoppers were held hostage during the battle and at least 72 people were killed, according to reports by the Kenyan military. By September 24, 2013, the majority of the terrorist gunmen had been pushed out of the mall and the government had freed the remaining hostages.

The attack on the Westgate Mall in Kenya marks a bold message by the Somali terror group Al-Shabaab. A spokesman for the terror organization, Sheikh Ali Muhammad Rage, justified the attack as retribution for repeated Kenyan military intervention in Somalia, stating “If you want Kenya in peace, it will not happen so long as your troops are in Somalia.” Rage went on promise attacks in the future if the Kenyan military did not immediately cease operations in Somalia.

Harakat Al-Shabaab, Arabic for Movement of Striving Youth, has its origins from the Islamic Courts Union, a insurgent organization fighting against the Somali government. However, the two later split due to organizational disputes. Since 2006, the organization has waged war against the Somali Transitional Government, the commonly accepted and recognized government of Somalia. In an offensive in late 2010
the organization was able to seize most of the south of the country from the Transitional Government and implement their form of radical Sharia Law.

Kenyan military operations began in earnest in Somalia on October 16, 2011 with the beginning of operation Linda Nichi, which is Swahili for protect the country. The incursion into Somalia was prompted by the kidnapping of two Spanish women from a refugee camp they were working at by Al-Shabaab. Over the course of the operation several terrorist bases were destroyed by Kenyan airstrikes and the terrorist organization was largely driven out of southern Somalia and greatly weakened overall.

The attack in Kenya illustrates the fact that the problem Al-Shabaab presents to all parties in the region cannot be ignored any longer. The terrorist organization presents a clear and unavoidable blight on the region. For as long as Al-Shabaab exists, it is unlikely stability will return to southern Somalia and the likelihood of further attacks similar to the Westgate Mall attack become increasingly likely. The best course of action for these powers is to try and eliminate Al-Shabaab as a fighting force in Somalia. Another operation by surrounding African powers such as Linda Nichi has a strong possibility of ending the threat posed by Al-Shabaab. One can only hope that the government of Kenya acts quickly so that an atrocity like the Westgate attack may never happen again.