

**Third Saturday Seminar 2008-2009**

**Humanity at a Crossroads**

**Session 07**

**21 March 2009**

**“Your Money or Your Life”**

*The Problems Associated with Healthcare in America*

**Peter McGehee, MS, MBA**

**ALL Program, Montgomery College, Conroe, Texas**

**“...we are the leaders we've  
been looking for.”**

*Grace Lee Boggs*

**“Do not call for black power or  
for green power. Call for brain  
power.”**

**Barbara Jordan**

**“You don't ever want a crisis to go to waste; it's an opportunity to do important things that you would otherwise avoid.”**

**Rahm Emanuel**

**Rahm Emanuel**

We have it in our power...

**"We have it in our  
power to begin the  
world over again."**

**Ronald Reagan quoting Thomas Paine**

**January 18, 2008 Bill Moyers talks with Harvey J. Kaye**

# **Desire**

**If you want the American  
Dream you must take  
back the Constitution**

## Program for TSS Meeting 21 March 2009

- 9:30 am Introduction & Current Events (30 Minutes +/-) –  
*Curt Gibby*
- 10:15 am – Problems associated with healthcare, Peter  
McGehee
- 10: 45 10 minute break
- 10:40 am *Peter McGehee* Discussion Continues
- 10:55 am- Closure – Feedback
- 11:00 am Session ends
- Next Session 18 April 2009, “Find your inner Hero”, *Curt  
Gibby*

# **Disclaimer**

**The following presentation consists of material from many sources in addition to my own work and experience. I usually try give appropriate attribution for this material, but may have overlooked some. In many cases an Internet link to the source material is provided in order to allow you to better put these excerpts in context.**

**The inclusion of materials and the facts, opinions and ideas contained within them, does not in any way mean that I personally endorse or disavow any of them in whole or in part; but, that it is of importance to the discussion.**

**If you have any questions please contact me.**

**Curt Gibby <[gcgconsult@n-star.com](mailto:gcgconsult@n-star.com)>**



## **To Any Members of Law Enforcement**

If there are any members of law enforcement here in any sort of official capacity and not in a uniform recognizable as one of law enforcement we ask that you identify yourself or selves, your agency, department or organization and your official reason for being here.

Rest assured that we are engaged in no illegal activity, but we are aware of, value and have faith in our Constitutional rights.

In any case you are welcome to stay and participate as a member or guest of the Third Saturday Seminar. But, if at any time you consider anything you see or hear happening or about to happen is or will be putting any one or all of us in jeopardy of breaking the law as you understand it, we request that you advise us of that situation .

This is consistent with your obligation as a peace officer or agent to protect and serve the people. Anything else will be a betrayal and you will be derelict in your duty. It will result in harm to those you are obligated to protect.

**The donuts are free to law enforcement.**

# PSAs (Public Service Announcements)

Thing's you might be interested in.

# **ALL Political Affairs lecture series**

***NEW* -- LWV series on Local Government Issues**

**The series will be held on Thursday afternoons 1-3 in Room 121 of the University Center from March 26<sup>th</sup> through April 30<sup>th</sup> (except for April 16<sup>th</sup> ). Room 121, The University Center.**

**The series is sponsored by the League of Women Voters to inform voters about those county government entities with publicly elected boards of directors. Board of directors' elections for contested positions on the MUDs and the Community College District take place in May, 2009. Helen Bostock, League of Women Voters – Montgomery County, is the coordinator for the series.**

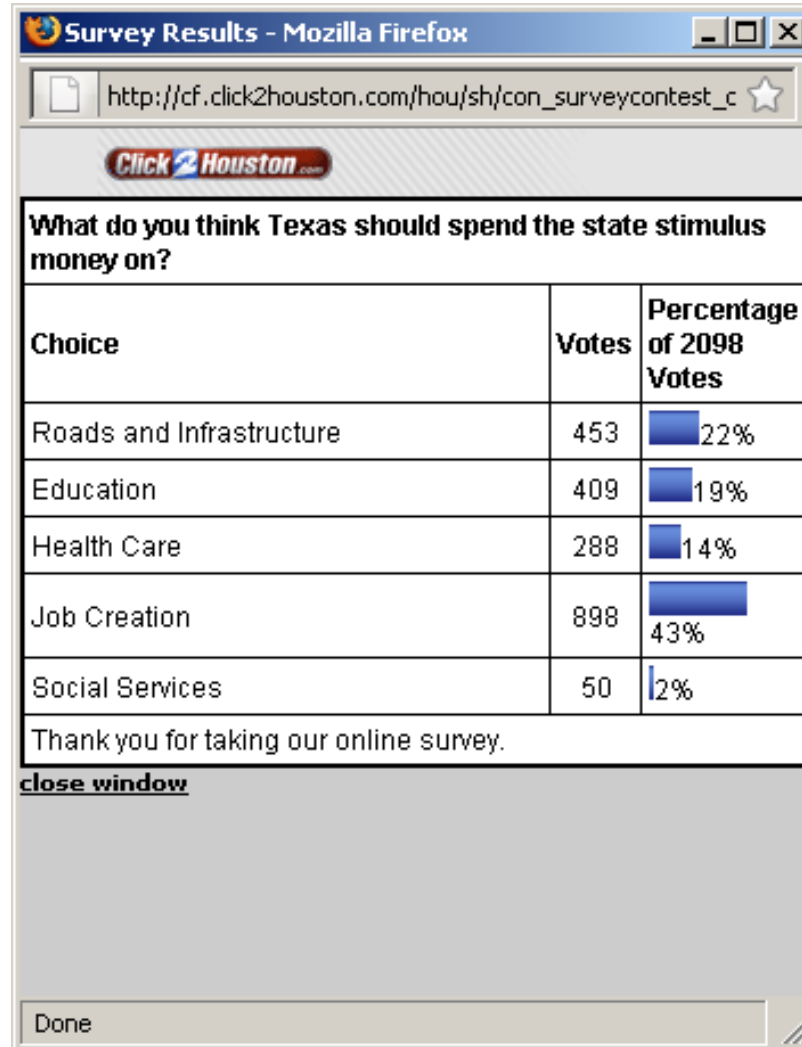
**<http://www.montgomery.lonestar.edu/all>**

# Current Events

21 February 2009

**Don't***be***Panic***ked!*

# How would you like to be stimulated?



# Stimulus - Billions or Trillions?

## \$787 billion may not be enough for grand plans

By MICHAEL COOPER

NEW YORK TIMES

Feb. 14, 2009, 9:21PM

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Yahoo! Buzz

There is no shortage of big dreams or grand schemes as the U.S. struggles to rebuild itself for the 21st century. But from a public works perspective, the \$787 billion stimulus package is unlikely to transform the physical fabric of the nation as the New Deal did when it built hundreds of airports, tens of thousands of bridges, and hundreds of thousands of buildings and miles of roads.

The final plan devotes more than \$100 billion to public works projects — but that is only a fraction of the \$2.2 trillion that the American Society of Civil Engineers says is needed to put the nation's

infrastructure into a state of good repair.

And much of it is likely to be spent on small needs sprinkled throughout the 50 states — repaving a road here, painting a bridge there — rather than on bigger, more transformative — but slower — projects.

To put the scope of the spending into perspective, think of it this way: The stimulus bill will devote about \$50 billion to transportation projects, which is about what the federal government authorizes for transportation every year.

The money will be welcome, but hardly enough to transform transportation. And since many local governments have curtailed their own construction programs to save money, in some places the stimulus may end up simply keeping public works at their pre-recession pace.

### A long wish list

Californians want finally to bring high-speed rail to the United States. Planners want to build bridges to Canada from Detroit, a tunnel for trucks to the Port of Miami and a new one for trains between New York and New Jersey.

Transit systems want to expand, ports want more capacity, and freight train companies want to untangle bottlenecks on the tracks.

But even with the biggest push for infrastructure spending in years, most of these big-ticket projects are unlikely to get very far from the stimulus alone.

Some may not qualify for aid at all.

Others will get modest down payments, which they hope will be enough to keep them going.

# Stimulus Bill

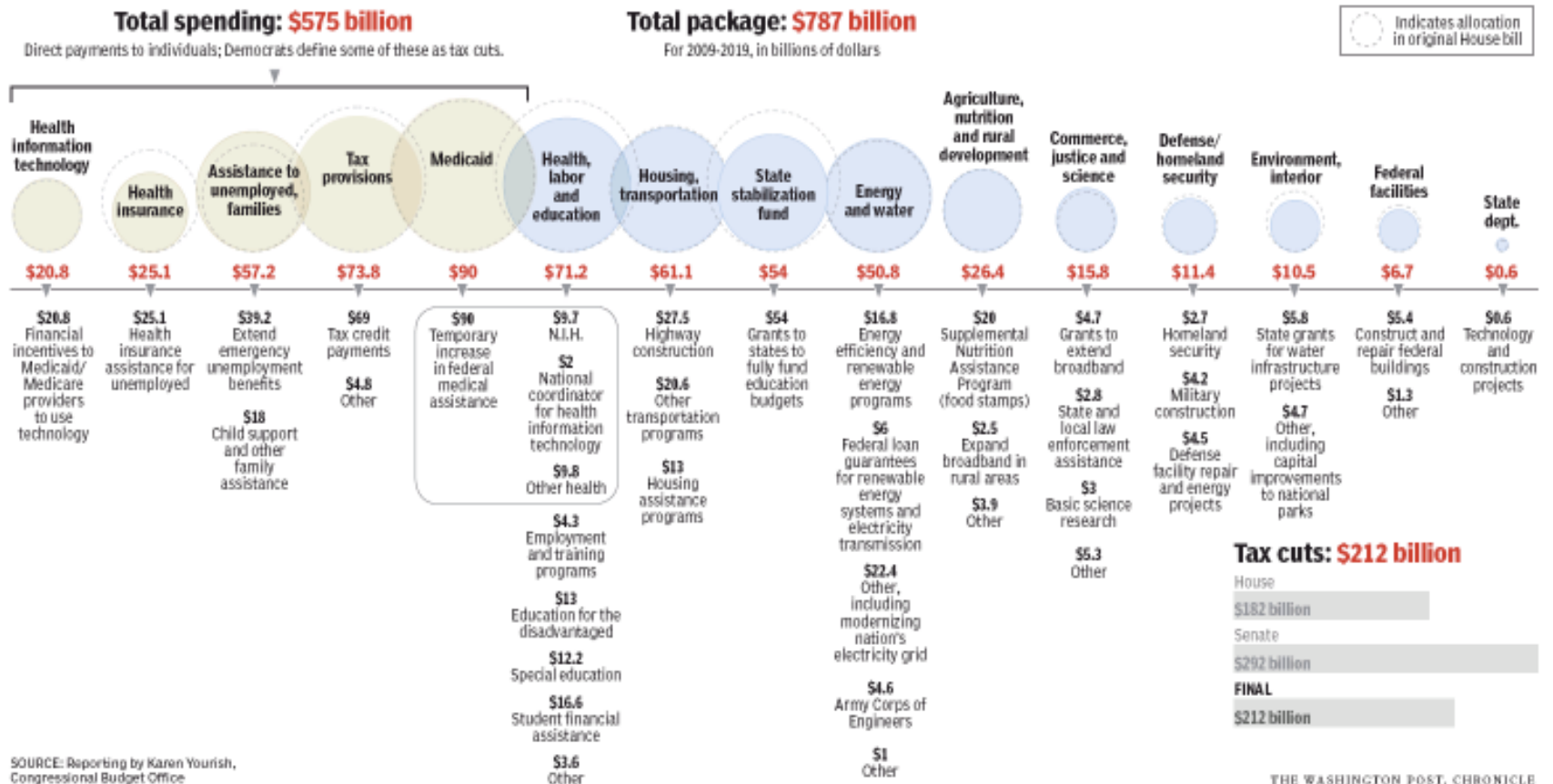
Sunday, February 15, 2009

## THE STIMULUS BILL

\*\*\* HOUSTON CHRONICLE A3

### A BREAKDOWN OF THE FINAL BILL

After months of negotiations, an economic stimulus package is headed for President Obama's signature. The final bill is a trade-off between spending sought by House Democrats and trims demanded by three Senate Republicans in exchange for their support.



# Travel Warning

## Spring Break Meets 'State of Undeclared War' on U.S.-Mexico Border

Violence on U.S.-Mexico Border Hampering Travel and Trade With U.S.

By JASON RYAN

March 10, 2009



18 comments

Spring break and sunshine await, but today a congressional panel examined myriad reasons it still may not be safe to travel to Mexico.



Federal police take a suspect into custody in connection with a shooting in Tijuana, Mexico, last...

(Guillermo Arias/AP Photo)

FONT SIZE A A A

✉ EMAIL

🖨️ PRINT

👤 DIGG

➕ SHARE

"We are in a state of undeclared war on the southern border,"

Rep. John Culberson, R-Texas, told Department of Homeland Security officials today.

A subcommittee of the House Homeland Security panel heard from government officials about whether various U.S. government agencies are doing enough to quell violence on the U.S.-Mexico border. Concerns have consumed college campuses and student travel offices as well as lawmakers on Capitol Hill because rampant violence has killed about 7,000 people since the start of 2008. There have been 1,000 murders



# Do Terror Alerts Keep Us Safe



## IntelligenceReport®

March 1, 2009



### Do Terror Alerts Keep Us Safe?

President Obama once referred to the Homeland Security Advisory System as "the color-coded politics of fear," and now his administration is taking a close look at the five-tiered public-alert system.

The threat-advisory chart was unveiled six months after the 9/11 terrorist attacks, and critics have charged ever since that threat-assessment decisions have as much to do with political expediency as with national security. After changing hues 10 times in its first two years, the chart fell into limited use following the departure of Homeland Security chief Tom Ridge and the system's other champion, former Attorney General John Ashcroft. Ridge later said that use of the system was driven by others in the Bush Administration, sometimes over his objections.

The national threat level has not changed from yellow ("elevated") since January 2004, though specific advisories were issued several times for the financial and transportation sectors. The threat level for the aviation sector has been at orange, or "high," since the 2006 arrest of several terrorism suspects charged with plotting to blow up planes flying from Britain to the U.S.



<http://www.parade.com/news/intelligence-report/archive/do-terror-alerts-keep-us-safe.html>

# Light Rail

THURSDAY, MARCH 5, 2009

★ ★ ★

VOL. 108 • NO. 143 • \$1.00

## THE COST OF EXPANSION

The Metropolitan Transit Authority of Harris County unanimously approved a \$1.46 billion contract with Parsons Transportation Group Inc. Wednesday. The contract covers four new light rail lines:



	North	Southeast	East End	Uptown
<b>Length</b>	5.28 miles	6.56 miles	3.34 miles	4.77 miles
<b>Total cost</b>	\$387 million	\$441 million	\$349 million	\$282 million
<b>Cost per mile</b>	\$73 million	\$67 million	\$72 million	\$59 million

Source: Metropolitan Transit Authority

JAY CARR: CHRONICLE

# METRO OKs LIGHT RAIL CONTRACT

■ \$1.46 billion deal will add 4 lines, 20 miles of track at \$73 million a mile

By ROSANNA RUIZ  
HOUSTON CHRONICLE

The Metropolitan Transit Authority board of directors on Wednesday unanimously approved a \$1.46 billion contract for four new light rail lines, which would add 20 miles to its lone seven-mile line along Main Street.

Under the contract, which came after almost a year of

negotiations, Parsons Transportation Group is responsible for designing, building, operating and maintaining the new East End, Southeast, North and Uptown lines at an average cost of \$73 million a mile. Metro has said the lines will be complete by 2012.

A fifth rail line, the University line, and an intermodal terminal near downtown still are planned, but are not included in the contract.

# Ike wasn't done



## It took a 900-foot tanker to find a missing oil rig

Lost by Ike and able to evade sonar, structure finally found — when vessel crashes into it

By **ALLAN TURNER**  
HOUSTON CHRONICLE

**W**IDER than a football field and almost two-thirds as long, Enco 74 — a jackup oil rig positioned off the Louisiana coast — would seem a hard thing to lose. But, knocked off its moorings by Hurricane Ike's surging tide, lost it was. Until, at least, it was found by the SKS Satilla.

The 159,000-ton Norwegian tanker, carrying 41 million gallons of crude

repair, said Darrell Wilson, spokesman for the ship's owner, SKS Obo and Tankers AS.

The destruction of the Enco 74, three other drilling rigs and at least 52 oil platforms was a testament to the storm's fury as it moved across the Gulf of Mexico. Hurricane Ike slammed ashore at Galveston on Sept. 13 with 110 mph winds and a surge that inundated the city.

Efforts to find the Enco 74, which had been anchored in 230 feet of water about 90

Please see **RIG**, Page A4





# Land Storage



GETTY IMAGES Crude-oil tank farms, like this one near the Wind Wolves Preserve, north of the Los Padres National Forest, in California, are said to be close to full, but how close to capacity they are is a closely guarded secret.

Picture 1 of 2



[Close]

# Waiting for the inventory to drop



AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE/GETTY IMAGES Oil tankers are anchored off Singapore in this August 2005 file photo. With oil prices hovering around \$40 a barrel, companies are stashing oil in rented tankers like these, hoping for global demand, and prices, to pick up once again. But renting the tankers can cost \$75,000 a day.

Picture 2 of 2



[Close]

# So, Why is the Price Still High?

**As demand declines, oil tankers lower anchors**

**Chris Kahn ASSOCIATED PRESS**

**Wednesday, March 4, 2009**

**NEW YORK**

Supertankers that once raced around the world to satisfy an unquenchable thirst for oil are now parked offshore, fully loaded, anchors down, their crews killing time. In the [United States](#), vast storage farms for oil are almost out of room.

As demand for crude has plummeted, the world suddenly finds itself awash in oil that has nowhere to go.

It's been less than a year since oil prices hit record highs. But now producers and traders are struggling with the new reality: The world wants less oil, not more. And turning off the spigot is about as easy as turning around one of those tankers.

# How safe are hospitals?



## In Hospital Deaths from Medical Errors at 195,000 per Year USA

09 Aug 2004

[Click to Print](#)

An average of 195,000 people in the USA died due to potentially preventable, in-hospital medical errors in each of the years 2000, 2001 and 2002, according to a new study of 37 million patient records that was released today by HealthGrades, the healthcare quality company.

The HealthGrades Patient Safety in American Hospitals study is the first to look at the mortality and economic impact of medical errors and injuries that occurred during Medicare hospital admissions nationwide from 2000 to 2002. The HealthGrades study applied the mortality and economic impact models developed by Dr. Chunliu Zhan and Dr. Marlene R. Miller in a research study published in the Journal of the American Medical Association (JAMA) in October of 2003. The Zhan and Miller study supported the Institute of Medicine's (IOM) 1999 report conclusion, which found that medical errors caused up to 98,000 deaths annually and should be considered a national epidemic.

The HealthGrades study finds nearly double the number of deaths from medical errors found by the 1999 IOM report *To Err is Human*, with an associated cost of more than \$6 billion per year. Whereas the IOM study extrapolated national findings based on data from three states, and the Zhan and Miller study looked at 7.5 million patient records from 28 states over one year, HealthGrades looked at three years of Medicare data in all 50 states and D.C. This Medicare population represented approximately 45 percent of all hospital admissions (excluding obstetric patients) in the U.S. from 2000 to 2002.

# Cause of Death

American hospitals are treating sicker patients with more complex, invasive techniques—and helping people live longer. But every year in these same facilities some 90,000 Americans pick up infections that kill them.

[http://bulletin.aarp.org/yourhealth/caregiving/articles/battling\\_superbugs\\_.html](http://bulletin.aarp.org/yourhealth/caregiving/articles/battling_superbugs_.html)



# According to the Leapfrog Group

<http://www.leapfroggroup.org>

## Patient Safety RATINGS

Progress Towards Meeting Leapfrog Standards



Start Over

Survey Info

Scoring Info

Search Results: Zip Code 77380 - Radius: **50 Miles**

**i** = More Information

Click to Change Treatment

### Overall Patient Safety Ratings

	Prevent Medication Errors	Appropriate ICU Staffing	Steps to Avoid Harm	Reduce Pressure Ulcers	Reduce In-Hospital Injuries	Managing Serious Errors	Transparency Indicator	Survey Results Submitted
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> <b>HOUSTON NORTHWEST MEDICAL CENTER</b> HOUSTON, TX							Other Reporting Efforts	6/30/2008
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> <b>CONROE REGIONAL MEDICAL CENTER</b> CONROE, TX							Other Reporting Efforts	6/30/2008
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> <b>KINGWOOD MEDICAL CENTER</b> KINGWOOD, TX							Other Reporting Efforts	6/18/2008
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> <b>ST LUKES EPISCOPAL HOSPITAL</b> HOUSTON, TX				Declined To Respond	Declined To Respond			10/31/2008
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> <b>METHODIST HOSPITAL, THE</b> HOUSTON, TX							Other Reporting Efforts	6/29/2008

# According to HHS.GOV

http://www.hospitalcompare.hhs.gov/Hospital/Search/compareHospitals.asp

HHS.gov

Improving the health, safety, and well-being of America

Hospital Compare - A quality tool provided by Medicare

<< [Back to Choose Hospitals to Compare](#)

## Compare Hospitals

Below are the hospital(s) you selected with their related information.

[Print this page](#)

Your Selected Hospitals	CONROE REGIONAL MEDICAL CENTER	HOUSTON NORTHWEST MEDICAL CENTER	ST LUKE'S COMMUNITY MEDICAL CENTER - THE WOODLAND
	509 MEDICAL CENTER BLVD CONROE, TX, 77304 (936) 539-1111	710 FM 1960 WEST HOUSTON, TX, 77030 (281) 440-1000	17200 ST LUKE'S WAY THE WOODLANDS, TX, 77380 (936) 265-4030
	<a href="#">Acute Care Managers &amp; Directors</a>	<a href="#">Acute Care Managers &amp; Directors</a>	<a href="#">Acute Care Managers &amp; Directors</a>

Hide Information Hospital Process of Care Measures [Wound Infection]

[Back to Top](#)

Hide Information Surgical Care Improvement Project Process of Care Measures

Hospitals can reduce the risk of wound infection after surgery by making sure patients get the right medicines at the right time on the day of their surgery. These measures show some of the standards of care. [Click here](#) to learn more about how to prevent wound infection. [Click here](#) to learn why Surgical Care Improvement Project Process of Care Measures are important.

Check the boxes next to the topics for which you would like to view correlating graphs or tables.

				<a href="#">View Graphs</a>	<a href="#">View Table</a>
<input type="checkbox"/> Select All	<a href="#">Reset Checkboxes</a>				
<input type="checkbox"/>	Percent of surgery patients who were given an antibiotic at the right time (within one hour before surgery) to help prevent infection	96% <sup>d</sup>	87% <sup>d</sup>		92% <sup>d</sup>
<input type="checkbox"/>	Percent of surgery patients who were given the right kind of antibiotic to help prevent infection	97% <sup>d</sup>	95% <sup>d</sup>		95% <sup>d</sup>
<input type="checkbox"/>	Percent of surgery patients whose preventive antibiotics were stopped at the right time (within 24 hours after surgery)	90% <sup>d</sup>	70% <sup>d</sup>		84% <sup>d</sup>
<input type="checkbox"/>	<b>New!</b> Percent of all heart surgery patients whose blood sugar (blood glucose) is kept under good control in the days right after surgery	92% <sup>d</sup>	92% <sup>d</sup>		88% <sup>d</sup>
<input type="checkbox"/>	<b>New!</b> Percent of surgery patients needing hair removed from the surgical area before surgery, who had hair removed using a safer method (electric clippers or hair removal cream, not a razor)	97% <sup>d</sup>	99% <sup>d</sup>		100% <sup>d</sup>
<input type="checkbox"/>	Percent of surgery patients whose doctors ordered treatments to prevent blood clots after certain types of surgeries	92% <sup>d</sup>	93% <sup>d</sup>		93% <sup>d</sup>
<input type="checkbox"/>	Percent of patients who get treatment at the right time (within 24 hours before or after their surgery) to help prevent blood clots after certain types of surgery	89% <sup>d</sup>	92% <sup>d</sup>		91% <sup>d</sup>

# Gupta turns down pay cut



## Gupta Withdraws as US Surgeon General Candidate

Allison Gandey

March 6, 2009 — CNN medical correspondent Sanjay Gupta, MD, announced Thursday he will not be pursuing the country's top public health job. He cites personal considerations as the reason for his decision.



Medscape

**Sanjay Gupta walks as surgeon general candidate, to stay on at CNN. Seen here with his dog, Bosco. (Photo by Jon Rou.)**

During interviews last night on *Larry King Live* and *Anderson Cooper 360*, Dr. Gupta told colleagues he has withdrawn his candidacy to spend more time with family and to continue practicing medicine and working at CNN.

Dr. Gupta's wife, Rebecca Olson Gupta, is expecting the couple's third child. Dr. Gupta said he has concerns about how much the job would have taken him away from family.

He also learned that it would be difficult to pursue a surgical career in the post, and Dr. Gupta said he is not prepared to give that up. "I only learned this as the process unfolded," Dr. Gupta said on CNN. "It was a very difficult decision to make, and I'm honored to have been considered."

Dr. Gupta was not available this morning for an interview with *Medscape Neurology & Neurosurgery*.

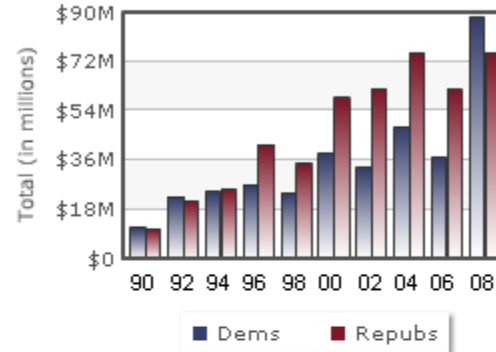
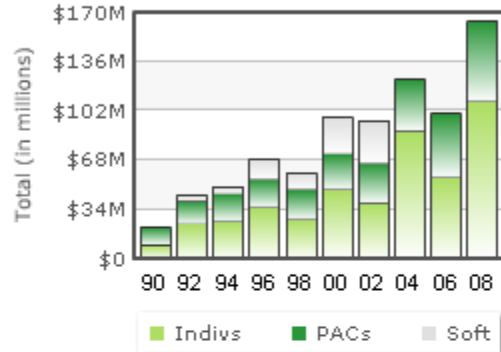
His decision opens the door for new candidates. Gail Rosseau, MD, from the Chicago Institute of Neurosurgery and Neuroresearch, in Illinois, was on a

short list for the job late last year. Dr. Rosseau is director of cranial base surgery and is a respected author and lecturer. She is 1 of 300 female neurosurgeons nationwide.

# Health Professionals Contributions

Totals Background Money to Congress Contributors Recipients PAC Recipients News

## Health: Long-Term Contribution Trends



**Industries in this Sector:**  
 Health Professionals

**Pick another Sector:**  
 Health

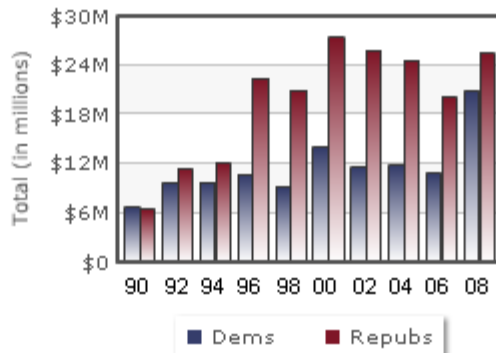
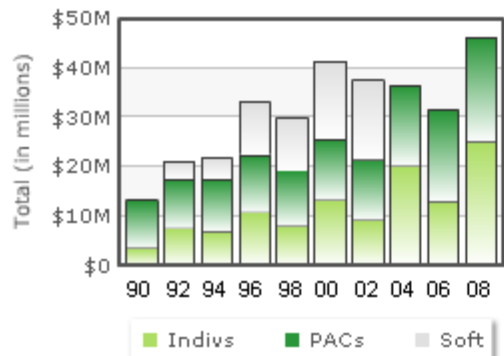
**Search for an industry:**

**Save/Share:**

Election Cycle	Total Contributions	Contributions from Individuals	Contributions from PACs	Soft Money Contributions	Donations to Democrats	Donations to Republicans	% to Dems	% to Repubs
2008*	\$163,801,251	\$108,454,470	\$55,346,781	N/A	\$88,133,373	\$75,275,788	54%	46%
2006*	\$99,795,905	\$55,849,874	\$43,946,031	N/A	\$36,813,272	\$61,886,850	37%	62%
2004*	\$123,724,738	\$88,122,205	\$35,602,533	N/A	\$48,205,828	\$75,153,882	39%	61%
2002	\$95,458,220	\$38,438,925	\$27,391,216	\$29,628,079	\$33,083,352	\$62,088,987	35%	65%
2000	\$97,555,084	\$47,747,616	\$24,617,640	\$25,189,828	\$38,238,153	\$58,652,588	39%	60%
1998	\$59,002,984	\$27,114,703	\$20,465,124	\$11,423,157	\$23,816,977	\$34,890,376	40%	59%
1996	\$68,973,350	\$35,161,961	\$19,636,163	\$14,175,226	\$27,057,043	\$41,690,751	39%	60%
1994	\$49,819,100	\$25,502,108	\$19,074,243	\$5,242,749	\$24,272,333	\$25,458,604	49%	51%
1992	\$43,908,467	\$23,713,560	\$15,980,406	\$4,214,501	\$22,642,723	\$21,060,096	52%	48%
1990	\$21,909,142	\$9,716,010	\$12,193,132	N/A	\$11,274,890	\$10,623,564	51%	48%
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$823,948,241</b>	<b>\$459,821,432</b>	<b>\$274,253,269</b>	<b>\$89,873,540</b>	<b>\$353,537,944</b>	<b>\$466,781,486</b>	<b>43%</b>	<b>57%</b>

# Insurance Industry Contributions

## Insurance: Long-Term Contribution Trends



**Industries in this Sector:**

**Pick another Sector:**

**Search for an industry:**

**Save/Share:**

Election Cycle	Rank†	Total Contributions	Contributions from Individuals	Contributions from PACs	Soft Money Contributions	Donations to Democrats	Donations to Republicans	% to Dems	% to Repubs
2008*	11	\$46,376,919	\$25,143,678	\$21,233,241	N/A	\$20,846,186	\$25,451,316	45%	55%
2006*	8	\$31,376,093	\$12,910,339	\$18,465,754	N/A	\$10,777,465	\$20,120,227	34%	64%
2004*	9	\$36,529,999	\$20,134,280	\$16,395,719	N/A	\$11,784,031	\$24,648,925	32%	67%
2002	8	\$37,516,297	\$9,117,176	\$12,334,265	\$16,064,856	\$11,595,527	\$25,880,353	31%	69%
2000	7	\$41,504,766	\$13,214,140	\$12,413,562	\$15,877,064	\$13,983,340	\$27,372,688	34%	66%
1998	6	\$30,079,715	\$7,898,184	\$11,268,084	\$10,913,447	\$9,086,092	\$20,956,801	30%	70%
1996	6	\$33,146,712	\$10,705,920	\$11,737,683	\$10,703,109	\$10,628,692	\$22,475,570	32%	68%
1994	5	\$21,919,304	\$6,809,601	\$10,727,340	\$4,382,363	\$9,788,828	\$12,107,028	45%	55%
1992	6	\$21,130,750	\$7,451,137	\$10,042,961	\$3,636,652	\$9,688,756	\$11,423,428	46%	54%
1990	4	\$13,077,095	\$3,437,633	\$9,639,462	N/A	\$6,679,316	\$6,397,569	51%	49%
Total	7	\$312,657,650	\$116,822,088	\$134,258,071	\$61,577,491	\$114,858,233	\$196,833,905	37%	63%

# Health and Human Services

The Hill | 03/1/09



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Buzz this article up.



## *The Hill:*

Kansas Gov. Kathleen Sebelius (D), President Obama's choice to head the Department of Health and Human Services, has touched off criticism over her association with a Kansas abortion provider.

Sebelius vetoed a late-term abortion law in 2008, and in 2007 she held a reception at the Kansas governor's mansion that included Dr. George Tiller, a Wichita doctor whose clinic provided late-term abortions. Tiller was under investigation for violating that state's restrictions on some forms of abortion.

[Read the whole story: \*The Hill\*](#)

# New Words

**e·con·o·clast** n. 1. One who attacks and seeks to overthrow economies. 2. One who destroys faith and trust in sacred economic principles.

**e·con·o·path** n. One who is affected with a personality disorder marked by aggressive stupidity and greed and disregard of fiduciary responsibilities. --**e·con·o·path·ic** adj.

(With apologies to the American Heritage Dictionary)

# Past Performance is no Guarantee

We can only hope

**Treasury Secretary Timothy Geithner will unveil a long-awaited package of measures to help the financial sector at 11 am New York time. (10 Feb 09)**

**But Rogers said Geithner, who was president of the New York Federal Reserve Bank, "has been dead wrong about everything for 15 years in a row," and so was President Barack Obama's economic advisor Lawrence Summers, who acted as Treasury Secretary at the turn of the century.**

<http://finance.yahoo.com/news/Banks-Rescue-Will-Make-Things-cnbc-14311295.html>



**"Every government interference in the economy consists of giving an unearned benefit, extorted by force, to some men at the expense of others." --  
-Ayn Rand**

# Who knew what, when?

## Who's to blame for loophole?

Treasury secretary and senator try to explain who was responsible for letting AIG bonuses go forward under Obama-backed stimulus bill

COMBINED NEWS SERVICES

*March 20, 2009*

WASHINGTON - Treasury Secretary [Timothy Geithner](#) confirmed yesterday that his department urged Sen. Chris Dodd to water down the executive-bonus limits included in last month's stimulus bill, a move that allowed the payment of \$165 million in bonuses to [American International Group](#) employees.

As the House readied legislation to crack down on the outrage-inspiring bonuses, Dodd, a [Connecticut](#) Democrat who chairs the Banking Committee, and Geithner appeared at odds over who was really responsible for Congress' failure to prevent them in the first place.

Dodd, on the defensive over a loophole that enabled the bonuses to go forward, claimed the [Obama](#) administration insisted he modify his proposal to rein in bonuses at companies getting billions of dollars in financial bailouts so that it would only apply to payments agreed to in the future - thus clearing the way for the AIG payouts.

Dodd told reporters he agreed to the changes "in order to preserve the amendment."

<http://www.newsday.com/business/ny-bzbonu206076078mar20,0,5660097.story>

# Surprise!

## White House Calls Bonuses a Late Surprise

Congress Moves to Impose Hefty Tax on Executives Who Don't Return Money

By [Shailagh Murray](#), [Paul Kane](#) and [Michael D. Shear](#)

Washington Post Staff Writers

Wednesday, March 18, 2009; Page A01

Senior White House officials said last night that President Obama did not learn that bonuses worth \$165 million were to be paid to executives of American International Group until Thursday, one day before they were issued and two days after his Treasury secretary was informed that the payments were going forward.



President Obama, through a spokesman, defended Treasury Secretary Timothy F. Geithner amid questions about his handling of the AIG situation. (By Bill O'leary -- The Washington Post)

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<http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/content/article/2009/03/17/AR2009031703780.html>

The Washington Post

Although the bonuses were permitted under the terms of the 2008 bailout bill, the payments have triggered alarm, particularly among Republicans, about oversight of the way the money is spent. With the prominent exception of Grassley, GOP leaders were noncommittal yesterday about embracing the tax approach and declined to offer their own proposals for recouping the \$165 million. But they rebuked Geithner for not stopping the bonuses, and they made it clear that further requests for aid would be rejected out of hand.



## Before the Fall, AIG Payouts Went to Washington

Published by Massie Ritsch on March 16, 2009 11:16 AM | [Permalink](#) | [Comments \(5\)](#)

As long as everyone's talking today about AIG's payouts to its executives and foreign banks, let's remember the payouts AIG has made over the years to politicians. In the last 20 years [American International Group](#) (AIG) has contributed more than \$9 million to federal candidates and parties through PAC and individual contributions. That's enough to rank AIG on OpenSecrets.org's [Heavy Hitters](#) list, which profiles the top 100 contributors of all time.

Over time, AIG hasn't shown an especially partisan streak, splitting evenly the \$9.3 million it has contributed since 1989. In the last election cycle, though, 68 percent of contributions associated with the company went to Democrats. Two senators who chair committees charged with overseeing AIG and the insurance industry, Sen. [Chris Dodd](#) (D-Conn.) and Sen. [Max Baucus](#) (D-Mont.), are among the [top recipients of AIG contributions](#). Baucus chairs the Senate Finance Committee and has [collected more money from AIG](#) in his congressional career than from any other company--\$91,000. And with more than \$280,000, AIG has been the [fourth largest contributor to Dodd](#), who chairs the Senate's banking committee. President Obama and his rival in last year's election, Sen. John McCain (R-Ariz.), are also high on the list of top recipients.

AIG has been a personal investment for lawmakers, too. Twenty-eight current members of Congress reported [owning stock in AIG](#) in 2007, worth between \$2.5 million and \$3.3 million. Sen. [John Kerry](#) (D-Mass.), one of the richest members of Congress, was by far the biggest investor in AIG, with stock valued around \$2 million.

Last year AIG and its subsidiaries spent about [\\$9.7 million on federal lobbying](#), or about \$53,000 for every day Congress was in session in 2008. The company's spending on advocacy last year was down from an all-time high of \$11.4 million spent on [lobbying in 2007](#).

# **Politicians should give back contributions from bailed out companies!**

**While our congressmen are so righteously venting their "moral outrage" and demanding return of the bonus payments that they previously approved, they must also add a provision that companies receiving bailout money must not make political contributions until all the bailout money and extraordinary payments from the Treasury and Federal Reserve Bank have been paid back. Further, that all politicians or their campaigns that have received such contributions within the last twenty-four months must return them, or recuse themselves from all deliberations or debate on financial matters.**

Curt Gibby  
2543 Deasa Dr.  
Spring, Tx 77373

March 21, 2009

TSS 08-09 #7 -- Healthcare and You

37

# No surprise after all

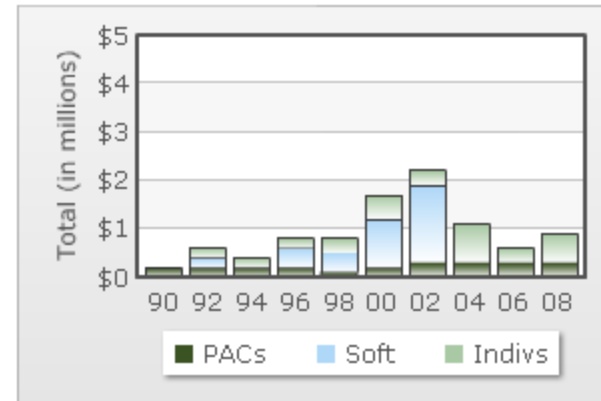
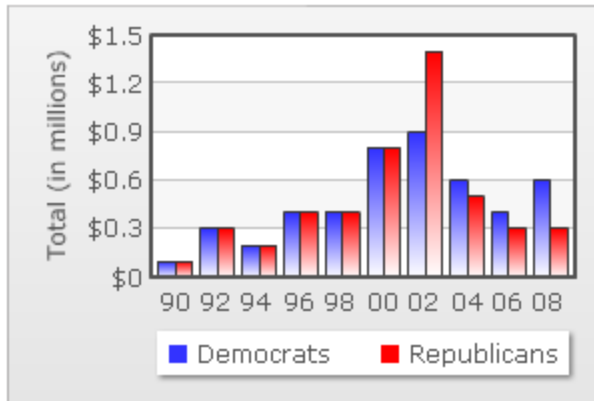
## American International Group

American International Group (AIG) is a leading provider of property and casualty insurance in America. It was one of the financial companies to receive billions of dollars in taxpayer money to help it stay afloat in 2008 and 2009, but was criticized heavily for using some of that money to pay out bonuses to employees. AIG has also lobbied Congress on extending free trade agreements with numerous countries, including China, India and Chile. After the terrorism attacks of September 11, AIG asked Congress to pass legislation that would help pay for any insurance claims resulting from future terrorist attacks.

Search for a Heavy Hitter:

Enter at least 3 characters

Save/Share: [BOOKMARK](#)



Cycle	Total	Democrats	Republicans	% to Dems	% to Repubs	Individuals	PACs	Soft (Indivs)	Soft (Orgs)
2008	\$854,905	\$586,426	\$267,579	69%	31%	\$567,562	\$287,343	\$0	\$0
2006	\$650,375	\$361,081	\$274,294	56%	42%	\$344,535	\$305,840	\$0	\$0
2004	\$1,076,948	\$593,612	\$482,336	55%	45%	\$788,788	\$288,160	\$0	\$0
2002	\$2,266,357	\$894,517	\$1,371,840	40%	61%	\$342,157	\$284,982	\$112,518	\$1,526,700
2000	\$1,642,861	\$806,572	\$835,289	49%	51%	\$470,551	\$155,550	\$2,000	\$1,014,760
1998	\$833,095	\$392,125	\$440,970	47%	53%	\$254,355	\$134,740	\$70,000	\$374,000
1996	\$818,088	\$389,640	\$429,448	48%	53%	\$218,858	\$170,730	\$80,000	\$348,500
1994	\$384,311	\$198,977	\$184,834	52%	48%	\$153,909	\$183,402	\$500	\$46,500
1992	\$589,765	\$327,991	\$258,774	56%	44%	\$180,575	\$208,190	\$105,000	\$96,000
1990	\$226,134	\$134,659	\$91,475	60%	41%	\$39,009	\$187,125	N/A	N/A

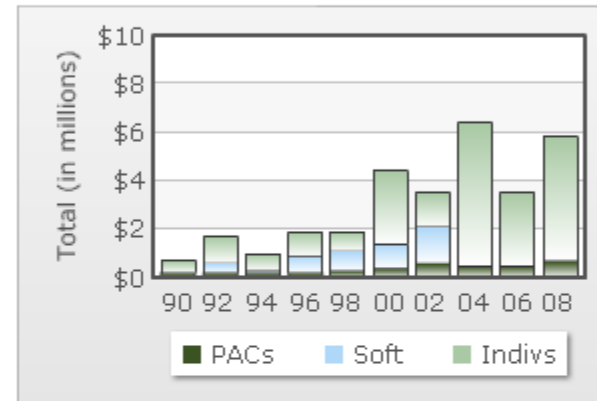
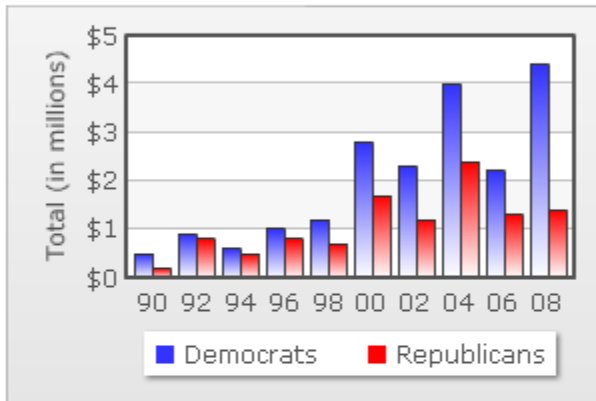
# And. this ...

## Goldman Sachs

Goldman Sachs, one of Wall Street's most prestigious investment banks, was also among the many banks in 2008 and 2009 to receive billions of dollars in taxpayer money to help it stay afloat. Like others in the securities industry, Goldman Sachs advises and invests in nearly every industry affected by federal legislation. The firm closely monitors issues including economic policy, trade and nearly all legislation that governs the financial sector. It has been a major proponent of privatizing Social Security as well as legislation that would essentially deregulate the investment banking/securities industry. The firm tends to give most of its money to Democrats. A number of high-ranking government officials in recent years have spent part of their careers at Goldman Sachs.

Search for a Heavy Hitter:

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[Print](#) [E-mail](#)



Cycle	Total	Democrats	Republicans	% to Dems	% to Repubs	Individuals	PACs	Soft (Indivs)	Soft (Orgs)
2008	\$5,842,471	\$4,392,720	\$1,439,411	75%	25%	\$5,095,971	\$746,500	\$0	\$0
2006	\$3,502,866	\$2,170,911	\$1,294,005	62%	37%	\$2,979,616	\$523,250	\$0	\$0
2004	\$6,428,438	\$3,963,753	\$2,446,185	62%	38%	\$5,907,727	\$520,711	\$0	\$0
2002	\$3,513,035	\$2,292,040	\$1,219,995	65%	35%	\$1,383,500	\$581,000	\$1,548,535	\$0
2000	\$4,432,977	\$2,764,185	\$1,662,292	62%	38%	\$2,986,054	\$433,573	\$953,350	\$60,000
1998	\$1,938,166	\$1,225,252	\$683,914	63%	35%	\$823,478	\$299,483	\$756,955	\$58,250
1996	\$1,816,563	\$997,747	\$816,316	55%	45%	\$973,238	\$187,250	\$624,435	\$31,640
1994	\$1,026,235	\$562,760	\$462,675	55%	45%	\$714,905	\$190,500	\$80,830	\$40,000
1992	\$1,660,310	\$908,295	\$751,515	55%	45%	\$1,074,432	\$235,558	\$261,600	\$88,720
1990	\$717,621	\$473,716	\$243,905	66%	34%	\$508,321	\$209,300	N/A	N/A

# Now here's a surprise (not)

## American International Group: Recipients

Select Cycle:

### Money to Congress: 2008 Cycle

Dems:		\$452,526
Repubs:		\$144,792
Others:		\$0
Incumbents:		\$563,914
Non-Incumbents:		\$33,404

House	# of Members	Average Contribution	Total Contributions
<a href="#">Democrats</a>	36	\$2,940	\$105,850
<a href="#">Republicans</a>	21	\$1,223	\$25,693
Independents	0	\$0	\$0
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>57</b>	<b>\$2,307</b>	<b>\$131,543</b>

The US House of Representatives has 435 members.

Senate	# of Members	Average Contribution	Total Contributions
<a href="#">Democrats</a>	18	\$18,229	\$328,122
<a href="#">Republicans</a>	17	\$6,132	\$104,249
Independents	0	\$0	\$0
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>35</b>	<b>\$12,353</b>	<b>\$432,371</b>

The US Senate has 100 members.

### Top Recipients

Senate	<a href="#">Obama, Barack</a>	\$104,332
Senate	<a href="#">Dodd, Chris</a>	\$103,900
Senate	<a href="#">McCain, John</a>	\$59,499
Senate	<a href="#">Clinton, Hillary</a>	\$37,965
Senate	<a href="#">Baucus, Max</a>	\$24,750
Presidential	<a href="#">Romney, Mitt</a>	\$20,850
Senate	<a href="#">Biden, Joseph R Jr</a>	\$19,975
House	<a href="#">Larson, John B</a>	\$19,750
Senate	<a href="#">Sununu, John E</a>	\$18,500
Presidential	<a href="#">Giuliani, Rudolph W</a>	\$13,200
House	<a href="#">Kaniorski, Paul E</a>	\$12,000
Senate	<a href="#">Durbin, Dick</a>	\$11,000
House	<a href="#">Perlmutter, Edwin G</a>	\$10,500
House	<a href="#">Rangel, Charles B</a>	\$9,000
Presidential	<a href="#">Edwards, John</a>	\$7,850
Senate	<a href="#">Corker, Bob</a>	\$7,400
House	<a href="#">Smith, Chris</a>	\$6,900
House	<a href="#">Neal, Richard E</a>	\$6,500
Senate	<a href="#">Rockefeller, Jay</a>	\$6,500
Senate	<a href="#">Reed, Jack</a>	\$6,000
<a href="#">See all recipients</a>		



# TOP Contributors

## Top Contributors

Senator Barack Obama 2003 - 2008

Election Cycle: 2008

Total of itemized contribution records of \$200 or  
[671269 contributions for this member, click here](#)

Contributor	Total
University of California	\$1,392,675
<a href="#">Goldman Sachs</a>	\$1,035,095
Harvard University	\$831,110
<a href="#">Microsoft Corp</a>	\$809,799
Google Inc	\$796,564
<a href="#">JPMorgan Chase &amp; Co</a>	\$700,808
<a href="#">Citigroup Inc</a>	\$681,318
Sidley Austin LLP	\$604,938
University of Chicago	\$599,089
Stanford University	\$584,904
Skadden, Arps et al	\$564,345
<a href="#">Time Warner</a>	\$540,051
UBS AG	\$529,869
IBM Corp	\$525,857
WilmerHale	\$525,792
<a href="#">Morgan Stanley</a>	\$513,623
Columbia University	\$507,316
National Amusements Inc	\$506,751
Kirkland & Ellis	\$501,335
US Government	\$482,956

# How do you say “Sold” in Chinese

## Chinese house hunters tour U.S. in search of sweet deal

By Calum MacLeod, USA TODAY

BEIJING — A special Chinese tour group is heading to the United States later this month to go bargain hunting for houses at foreclosure prices.

More than 40 affluent house hunters from across China will begin a trip to Boston, New York, San Francisco and Los Angeles on Feb. 24 in search of cheap homes to buy. Their goal: to find investment property and housing their children could use when they go to the USA to study or work. Their budget: \$300,000 to \$800,000 apiece.

### **CHART:** [Price declines in four major cities](#)

"U.S. house prices are lower now, and we'll also be looking at low-price houses auctioned off by the courts," says Zhao Xinyu, a manager at Soufun.com, China's leading real estate website and the trip's organizer.

This is the first overseas buying trip for the real estate firm, whose name in Chinese means "search house" and which has organized house-hunting trips inside China. It may not be the last.

"We won't force our clients to buy," Zhao says of this first group of bargain hunters, who are paying \$3,600 each for the trip. "But if it's successful, we'll organize several more trips this year."

### **Hunting for businesses, employees, too**

Cash-rich China, whose purchases of U.S. Treasury notes help prop up the federal government, is looking to recession-stricken America for more than just houses at the right price.

Chinese companies are on the ground looking for U.S. firms on the skids, says David Putnam, head of Asia for Houlihan Lokey, a Los Angeles-based investment bank that specializes in financial restructuring. They're looking for people, too.

# China concerned?

## China concerned about security of US investments

Funds placed with Treasury and in bonds

By [Don Lee](#) and [Barbara Demick](#)

Los Angeles Times / March 14, 2009

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SHANGHAI - Chinese Premier Wen Jiabao voiced concerns yesterday about the security of China's massive investments in US government debt, even as he expressed confidence in the economic leadership of President Obama.



**Discuss**  
COMMENTS (3)

"To be honest, we are a little bit worried," Wen said, speaking at the closing news conference of China's annual legislative session.

"We have loaned huge amounts of money to the United States, so of course, we have to be concerned. . . . We hope the United States honors its word and ensures the safety of Chinese assets."

China is America's biggest foreign creditor. About one-half of China's estimated \$2 trillion of foreign exchange reserves, the largest in the world, are invested in US Treasury and other government-backed bonds. China's continued holdings and future purchases of American debt are seen as an important part of financing Obama's \$787-billion economic stimulus plan.

Wen's comments, coming after a string of otherwise upbeat pronouncements about China's economic prospects, were unusual in that he has rarely spoken up on the issue, nor in such frank terms.

# NIC pick backs out

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## Ex-Intel Pick Lashes Out At "Israel Lobby"

Washington Post: Charles Freeman Stepped Down From Selection To Chair National Intelligence Council

WASHINGTON, March 12, 2009

Comments  59

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Director of National Intelligence Dennis C. Blair, above, chose Charles W. Freeman Jr. to chair the National Intelligence Council. Freeman stepped away on Tuesday, blaming "the Israel Lobby" for the controversy that surrounded him. (AP PHOTO)

### RELATED



PHOTO ESSAY

#### Pursuing Peace

In Israel, secretary of state Hillary Clinton vows U.S. will "vigorously" promote peace efforts.

AnswerTips™ enabled ([What's this?](#))

(Washingtonpost.com) This story was written by Washington Post Staff Writer **Walter Pincus**.

The withdrawal of a senior intelligence adviser after an online campaign to prevent him from taking office has ignited a debate over whether powerful pro-Israel lobbying interests are exercising outsize influence over who serves in the Obama administration.

When Charles W. Freeman Jr. stepped away Tuesday from an appointment to chair the National Intelligence Council -- which oversees the production of reports that represent the view of the nation's 16 intelligence agencies -- he decried in an e-mail "the barrage of libelous distortions of my record [that] would not cease upon my entry into office," and he was blunt about whom he considers responsible.

"The libels on me and their easily traceable email trails show conclusively that there is a powerful lobby determined to prevent any view other than its own from being aired, still less to factor in American understanding of trends and events in the Middle East," Freeman wrote.

# 5<sup>th</sup> District Democratic Special Primary

"This is really the first chance the voters have had to say, 'Enough is enough,' Quigley said in his victory address. "'We're voting for change and reform.'"

**With 93% of precincts reporting, the [AP](#) has called the race for Quigley:**

Quigley, Mike	11,415	22%
Fritchey, John	9,209	18%
Feigenholtz, Sara	8,730	17%
O'Connor, Patrick	6,013	12%
Forys, Victor	5,752	11%
Wheelan, Charles	3,517	7%
Geoghegan, Tom	3,135	6%
Bryar, Paul	1,032	2%
Donatelli, Jan	829	2%
Annunzio, Frank	699	1%
Capparelli, Cary	669	1%
Monteagudo, Carlos	485	1%

# Employee free choice ?

## Was worker fired for endorsing Forys?

[Comments](#)

[Recommend \(33\)](#)

March 1, 2009

BY **ABDON M. PALLASCH** Political Reporter / [apallasch@suntimes.com](mailto:apallasch@suntimes.com)

Did a union that supports a candidate for U.S. Rep. Rahm Emanuel's seat fire a worker for endorsing a different candidate?

The campaign of Dr. Victor Forys, a Polish-born physician seeking Emanuel's seat, will host a news conference today allowing Agnes Sobczyk to tell her story.

» [Click to enlarge image](#)



**Agnes Sobczyk holds up the letter she passed to a co-worker detailing her concerns about State Rep. John Fritchey. Sobczyk believes her endorsement of Forys caused her to be fired.**

*(Chris Sweda/Sun-Times)*

Sobczyk said she had been working as a receptionist for the Rosemont-based United Food and Commercial Workers Union for nearly a year when she was abruptly fired Thursday.

Her crime?

She said she passed a letter to a co-worker detailing her concerns about State Rep. John Fritchey, the candidate the union has endorsed to replace Emanuel.

She passed the letter to her co-worker on Wednesday night and on Thursday morning, she said Union President Ron Powell called her into his office.

"He shoved this in my face and said, 'Explain this!' she said. Sobczyk said she told Powell she was concerned about some stories she read about Fritchey and that she thought Forys was a better candidate.

CHICAGO **SUN-TIMES**

# Burris – the story ...?

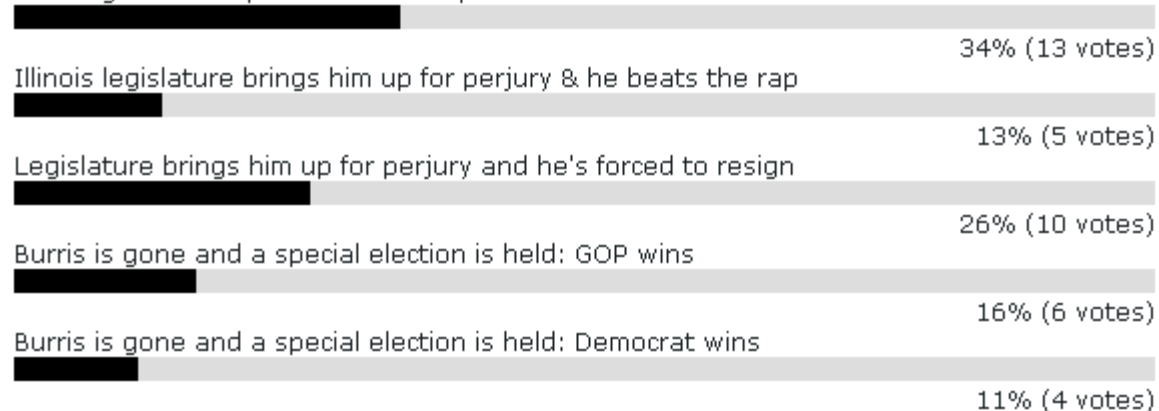
## Your guess is as good as ....

### What will happen with the Roland Burris Senate seat?

Your vote was recorded.

Posted by : **Drew McKissick** February 23, 2009 - 4:40pm

Burris ignores the problem and keeps his seat



Total votes: 38

[Login](#) or [register](#) to post comments

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# Burriss was on the Blago's list

## Burriss turns up on Blago list of potential fund-raisers

SENATE SEAT | Entry calls for \$5K-\$10K 3 weeks before he got appointment

 Comments

CHICAGO **SUN-TIMES**

March 14, 2009

BY NATASHA KORECKI AND DAVE MCKINNEY Staff Reporters

Sen. Roland Burriss appeared to have a possible unmet fund-raising commitment with then-Gov. Rod Blagojevich's campaign three weeks before landing a controversial appointment to the U.S. Senate, an internal Blagojevich fund-raising document obtained by the Chicago Sun-Times shows.

The list of potential donors, dated Dec. 3, contains an entry targeting Burriss for up to \$10,000 and indicates Burriss intended to "call back with a date," presumably concerning fund-raising.

The Burriss entry, which itself is not dated, raises new questions about the former attorney general's claim in a sworn affidavit last month that he shut down any discussion of raising money for or contributing to the scandal-tainted governor in a November discussion with Blagojevich's brother Robert. Robert Blagojevich chaired Rod Blagojevich's campaign fund.

The entry was on a spreadsheet that included a "low goal" of \$5,000 from Burriss and a high fund-raising goal of \$10,000. Entries of other potential donors reflected updates in November or early December.



# Will the icecap melt before ...

Los Angeles Times | Blogs

You are here: [LAT Home](#) > [Blogs](#) > [Top of the Ticket](#)

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## TOP OF THE TICKET

POLITICS, COAST TO COAST, WITH THE L.A. TIMES

« [Joe Biden, Obama's Mr. Fix-It, tells NATO time to talk to 'moderate' Taliban -- read full text here](#) | [Main](#) | [Here comes card-check/EFCA: Another bipartisan bridge to nowhere](#) »

### Coleman vs. Franken continues. Will Arctic ice cap melt before Minnesota gets new senator?



They are calling it the longest Senate election in U.S. history. So far, it's been 126 days since voters in Minnesota went to the polls to cast their ballots between incumbent **Norm Coleman** and Democratic challenger (and comedian) **Al Franken**. Actually, as you'll see from this clip, the election aftermath seems to have taken the funny out of Franken, who now looks and talks just like a politician.

# Justice

## Madoff sent to jail as furious victims applaud

AP Associated Press

By LARRY NEUMEISTER and TOM HAYS, Associated Press Writers –  
Thu Mar 12, 7:05 pm ET

 Buzz Up

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AP – Little sympathy among Madoff investors



 Slideshow: **Bernard Madoff Scandal**



 Wall Street Video: **Obama: Investors should have confidence in US** AP

NEW YORK – Careful to blame only himself, a "deeply sorry and ashamed" Bernard Madoff pleaded guilty Thursday to pulling off what could be the biggest, most spectacular swindle Wall Street has even seen, and was sent off to jail in handcuffs to the applause of his furious victims.

"I realized that my arrest and this day would inevitably come," Madoff said in a courtroom crammed with many of the investors he cheated out of billions of dollars.

The 70-year-old financier could get up to 150 years in prison at sentencing June 16 on 11 counts, including securities fraud and perjury. He could also be fined and ordered to pay restitution to his victims and forfeit any ill-gotten gains.

In a long, detailed statement delivered in a soft but steady voice, Madoff implicated no one but himself in the vast Ponzi scheme. He said he started it as a short-term way to weather the early-1990s recession and was unable to extricate himself as the years went by.

"I am actually grateful for this opportunity to publicly comment about my crimes, for which I am deeply sorry and ashamed," Madoff said in his first public comments about his crimes since the \$65 billion scandal broke in early December.

### RELATED QUOTES

<b>^DJI</b>	7,223.98	<b>+53.92</b>
<b>^GSPC</b>	756.55	<b>+5.81</b>
<b>^IXIC</b>	1,431.50	<b>+5.40</b>

## THE FINANCIAL CRISIS

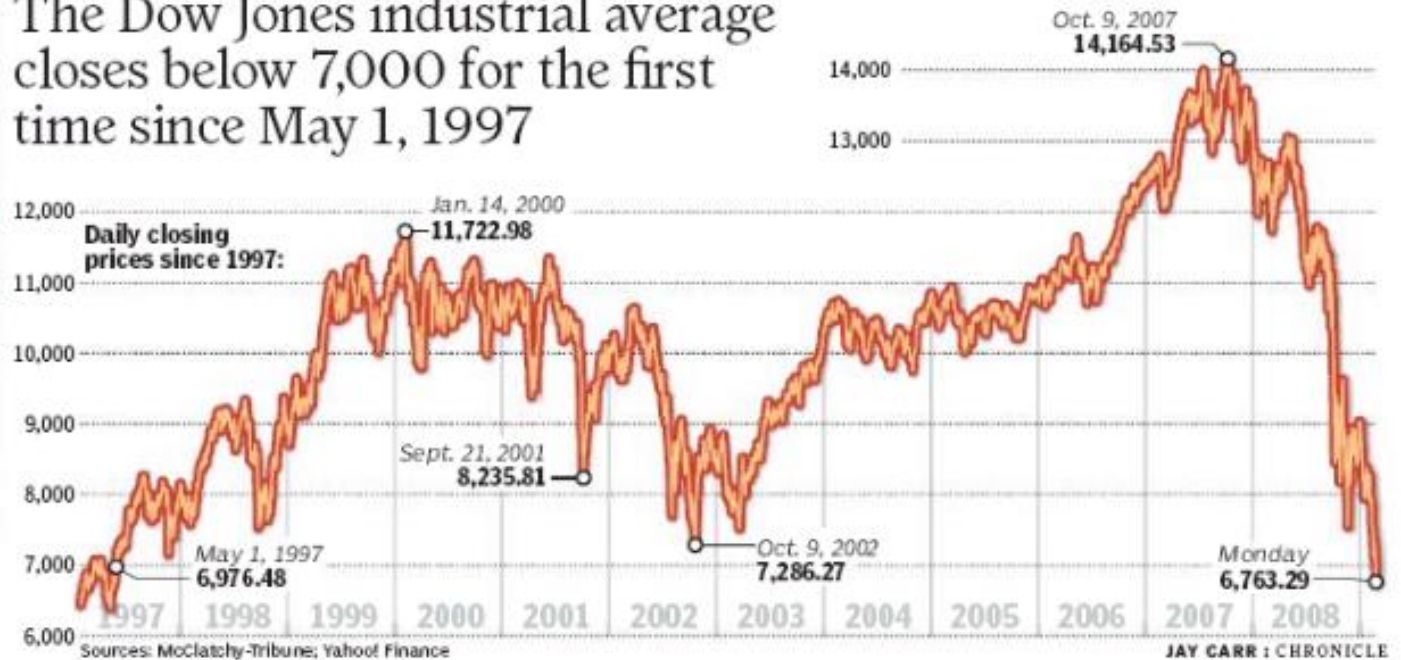
# MARCH COMES IN LIKE A BEAR



RICHARD DREW: AP

**HURTING:** Specialist Peter Mazza works on the floor of the New York Stock Exchange Monday, a day of another unwanted milestone.

The Dow Jones industrial average closes below 7,000 for the first time since May 1, 1997



■ Fear, losses felt across the globe and in U.S., where stocks drop on declines in construction, industry

# Crude Oil Price

March, Friday 20 2009 - 22:32:44

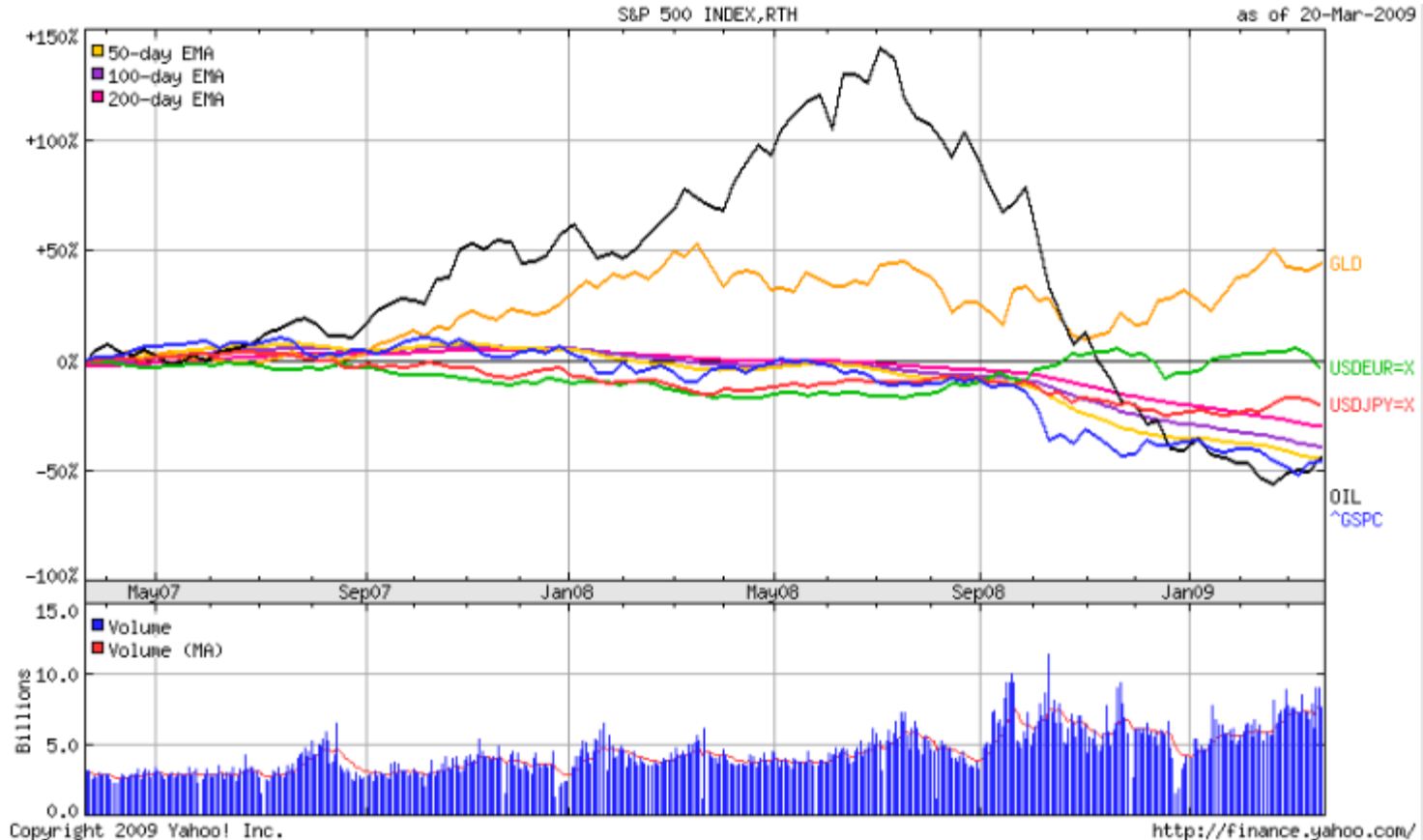


Crude Oil Price by OIL-PRICE.NET ©

Price		Change	Trades	Volume
22:32 - \$ 51.06		0.00	NA	20,427
Range	Open	52 Wk Range	1 Year Forecast	
0.00 - 52.13	0.00	32.41 - 147.27	\$ 59 / Barrel	

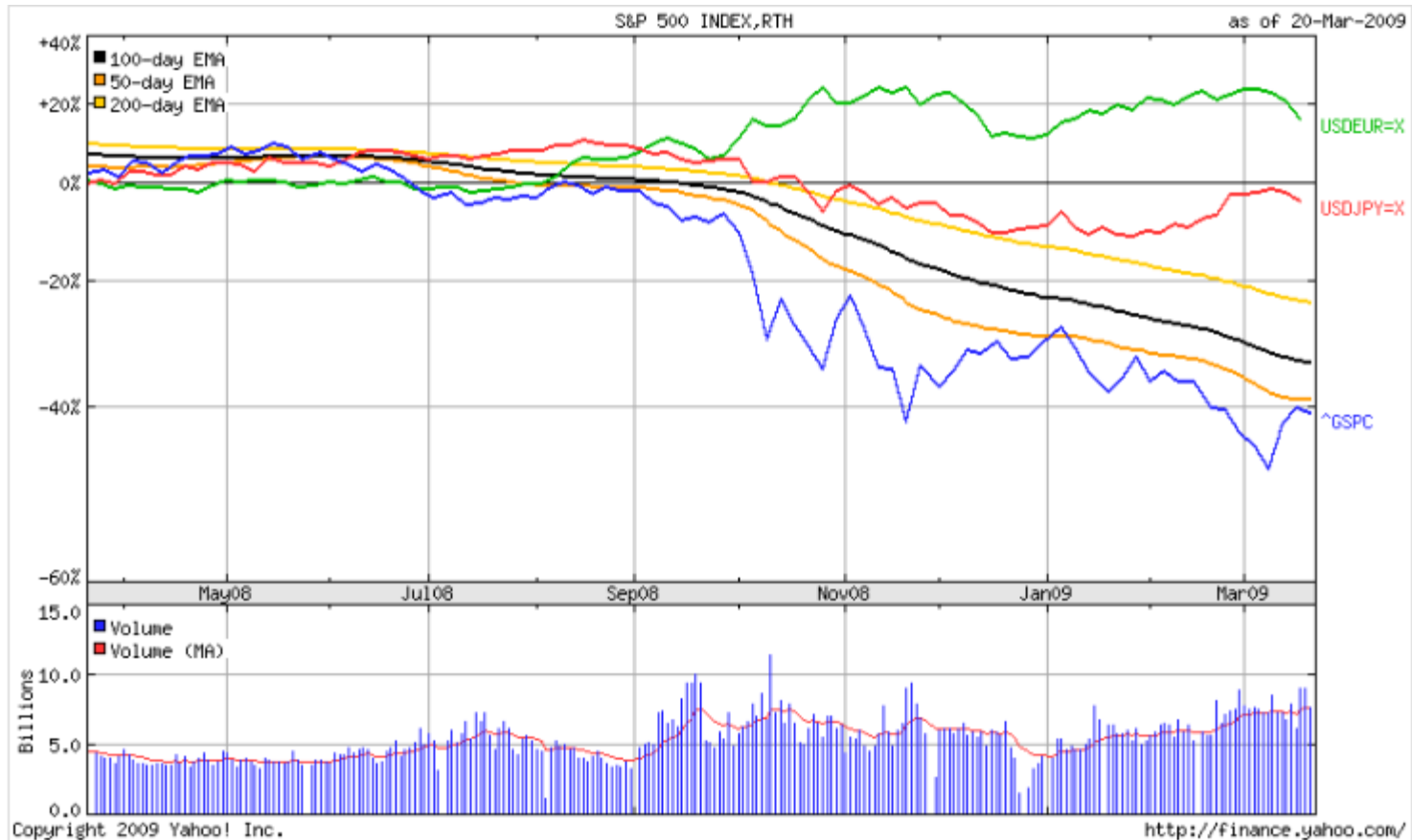
<http://oil-price.net/>

# S&P vs OIL (2 yr.)



Index Value:	<b>768.54</b>
Trade Time:	4:59PM ET
Change:	<b>↓ 15.50 (1.98%)</b>
Prev Close:	784.04
Open:	784.58
Day's Range:	766.20 - 788.91
52wk Range:	666.79 - 1,440.24

# S&P 500 – 1 Year

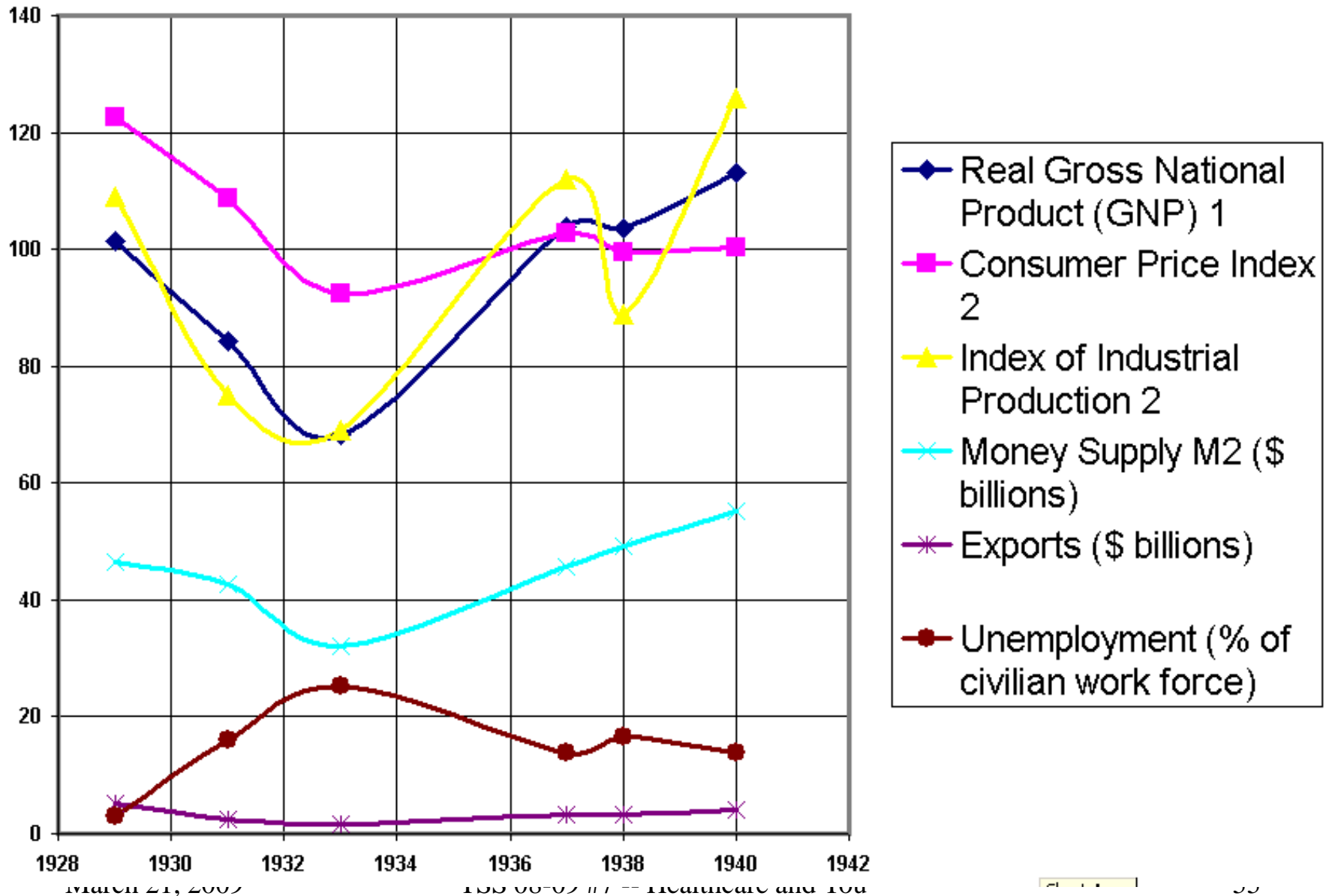


Index Value:	<b>768.54</b>
Trade Time:	4:59PM ET
Change:	<b>↓ 15.50 (1.98%)</b>
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Open:	784.58
Day's Range:	766.20 - 788.91
52wk Range:	666.79 - 1,440.24

N/A

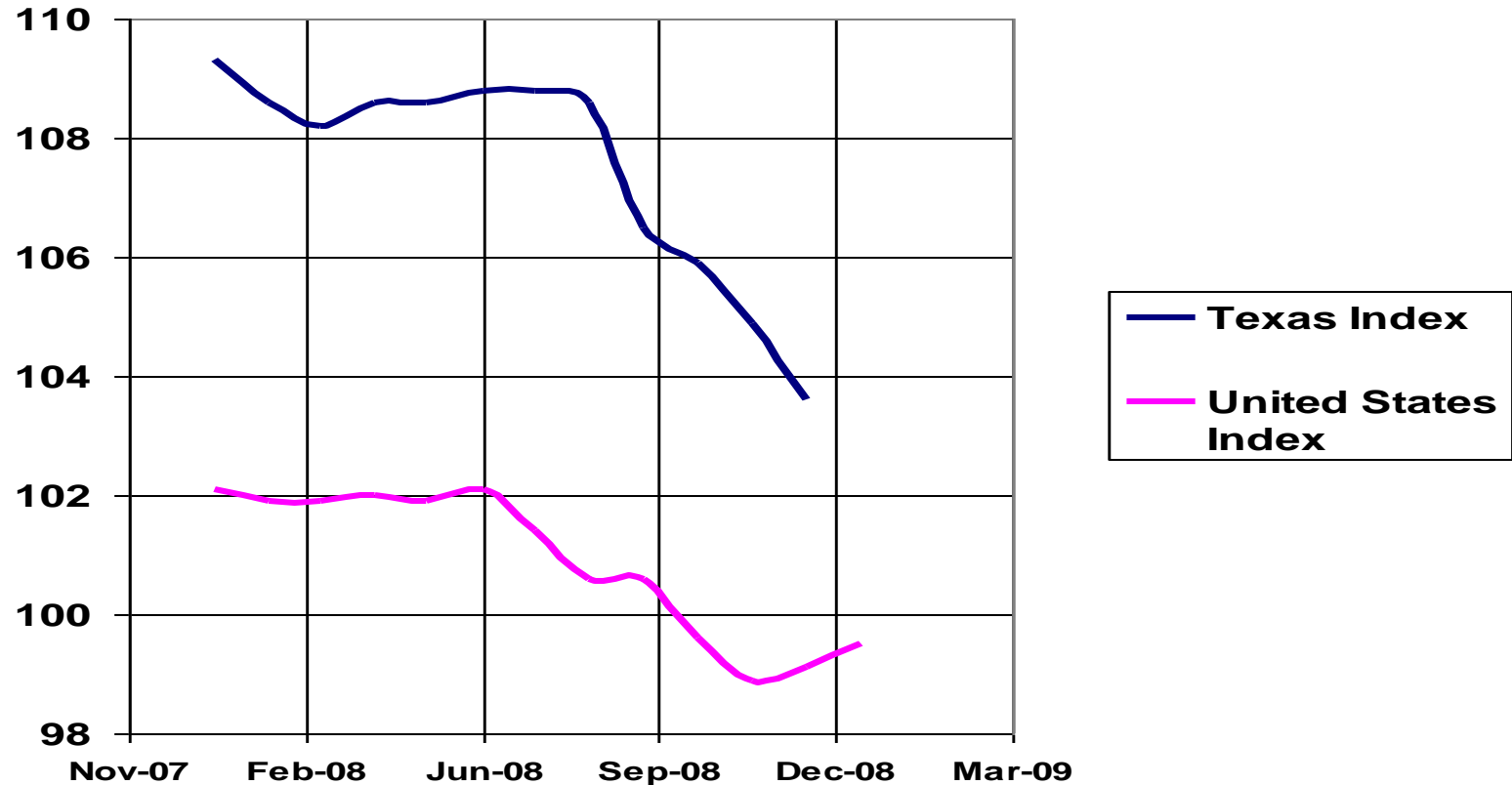


# The Years of the Great Depression



# Texas Leading Economic Indicators

## Leading Economic Indicators



<http://www.texasahead.org/economy/tracking/>

March 21, 2009

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## Fluke? Credit crisis was a heist, Jim Jubak, Jubak's Journal 3/20/09, MSN Money

Thanks to a complicit Congress, the reins were systematically loosened on the looters of the financial industry. And they're still at it, looking for new plunder. *By [Jim Jubak](#)*

It was no accident.

The folks in power in Washington and on Wall Street want to pretend that the current global financial crisis -- you know, the one that reduced household net worth in the United States by [\\$11.2 trillion in 2008](#), according to the Federal Reserve -- was an accident caused by some unfortunate confluence of greed and asleep-at-the-switch regulators.

What we're now living through, though, is the result of a conscious, planned looting of the world economy. Its roots stretch back decades. And it wouldn't have been possible without the contrivances of the bought-and-paid-for folks who sit in Congress.

Of course, just because the plan blew up on the looters, taking off a financial finger here and a portfolio hand there, you shouldn't have any illusion that they've retired. In fact, in the "solutions" now being proposed -- by Congress -- to fix the global and U.S. financial systems, you can see the looters at work as hard as ever.

### Blaming the regulators

The smoke screen -- the official explanation of the global crash -- was on full display at a March 5 hearing led by Sens. Chris Dodd, D-Conn., and Richard Shelby, R-Ala., respectively the chairman and ranking minority member of the Senate Banking Committee, into the \$170 billion morass that is **American International Group** ([AIG](#), [news](#), [msgs](#))

**Question:** How is it that the Office of Thrift Supervision, a unit of the Treasury Department that regulates the savings and loan industry, wound up as the primary federal regulator for insurance giant AIG?

**Answer:** The company was essentially able to shop for the regulator of its choice. AIG's acquisition of a small savings and loan in 1999 gave oversight responsibility to the Office of Thrift Supervision, a 1,000-employee agency with offices in Washington, Atlanta, Dallas, San Francisco and Jersey City, N.J.

# If you miss the Cold War

## Report: Cuba, Venezuela Could Host Russian Bombers

**Report: Russian bombers could be based in Cuba, Venezuela; Kremlin says it is hypothetical**

By **DAVID NOWAK** Associated Press Writer  
MOSCOW March 14, 2009 (AP)

The Associated Press  
[12 comments](#)



In this photo released by the U.S. Navy, one of two Russian Tupolev 95 Bear long rang bomber... ▼  
(U.S. NavyAP Photo )

A Russian air force chief said Saturday that the country could base some strategic bombers in Cuba or on an island offered by Venezuela, the Interfax news agency reported, but a Kremlin official quickly said the military had been speaking only hypothetically.

The U.S. and Russia have been trying to reset their relationship, severely strained over U.S. plans to position missile defense elements in Poland and the Czech Republic and by Russia's

invasion of U.S. ally Georgia last year.

Russia has nothing to gain strategically from basing long-range craft within relatively short range of U.S. shores, independent military analyst Alexander Golts said, calling the military statement a retaliatory gesture aimed at hitting back after U.S. ships patrolled Black Sea waters near Georgia.

# Yeah, but we didn't ship them...



- Home
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News » World ■ Troop deaths in Iraq

## Reports: Russia confirms Iran missile contract

Updated 1d 23h ago | Comments 337 | Recommend 34

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Enlarge

By Hasan Sarbakhshian, AP

Israel and the United States fear that if Iran possessed S-300 missiles, it would use them to protect its nuclear enrichment facility in Natanz, seen here, or its first atomic power plant, now being built by Russian contractors at Bushehr.

MOSCOW (AP) — Russian news agencies cited a top defense official Wednesday as confirming that a contract to sell powerful air-defense missiles to Iran was signed two years ago, but saying no such weapons have yet been delivered.

Russian officials have consistently denied claims the country already has provided some of the S-300 missiles to Iran. They have not said whether a contract existed.

The state-run ITAR-Tass and RIA-Novosti news agencies and the independent Interfax quoted an unnamed top official in the Federal Military-Technical Cooperation Service as saying the contract was signed two years ago. Service spokesman Andrei Tarabrin told The Associated Press he could not immediately comment.

Supplying S-300s to Iran would change the military balance in the Middle East and the issue has been the subject of intense speculation and diplomatic wrangling for months.



Other ways to share:



What's this?

# What would Nostradamus Say ?

## Russian scholar says US will collapse — next year

AP Associated Press

By MIKE ECKEL, Associated Press Writer — Wed Mar 4, 4:39 am ET

 Buzz Up

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AP — Dean of the Russian Foreign Ministry diplomatic academy seen, during his lecture at the Russian Foreign ...

MOSCOW — If you're inclined to believe Igor Panarin, and the Kremlin wouldn't mind if you did, then [President Barack Obama](#) will order martial law this year, the U.S. will split into six rump-states before 2011, and Russia and China will become the backbones of a new world order.

Panarin might be easy to ignore but for the fact that he is a dean at the Foreign Ministry's school for future diplomats and a regular on Russia's state-guided TV channels. And his predictions fit into the anti-American story line of the Kremlin leadership.

"There is a high probability that the collapse of the United States will occur by 2010," Panarin told dozens of students, professors and diplomats Tuesday at the Diplomatic Academy — a lecture the ministry pointedly invited The Associated Press and other foreign media to attend.

The prediction from Panarin, a former spokesman for Russia's Federal Space Agency and reportedly an ex-KGB analyst, meshes with the negative view of the U.S. that has been flowing from the Kremlin in recent years, in particular from Vladimir Putin.

Putin, the former president who is now prime minister, has likened the United States to Nazi Germany's Third Reich and blames [Washington for the global financial crisis](#) that has pounded the Russian economy.

Panarin didn't give many specifics on what underlies his analysis, mostly citing newspapers, magazines and other open sources.

He also noted he had been predicting the demise of the world's [wealthiest country](#) for more than a decade now.

**Third Saturday Seminar 2008-2009**

**Humanity at a Crossroads**

**Session 07**

**21 March 2009**

**“Your Money or Your Life”**

*The Problems Associated with Healthcare in America*

**Peter McGehee, MS, MBA**

**ALL Program, Montgomery College, Conroe, Texas**

# Don't be Panicked

**Can you take responsibility for yourself and others close to you?**

**Can you stay calm and assess a changing or changed situation?**

**Can you tell the difference between fact and fabrication.**

**Can you delay panicking until the threat has passed?**

# **It all connects**

**Fear, War, Greed**

**To much capital in the hands of the few**

**Too little money in the hands of the consumers.**

**Credit is not a replacement for disposable income**

**Oil is a limited resource**

**Unable to anticipate what looks obvious in retrospect**

**Trusting of Authority**

**Lacking critical ability/Education**

**Etc.**

# **Don't just be a thermometer, Be a thermostat**

**Jill Carroll**



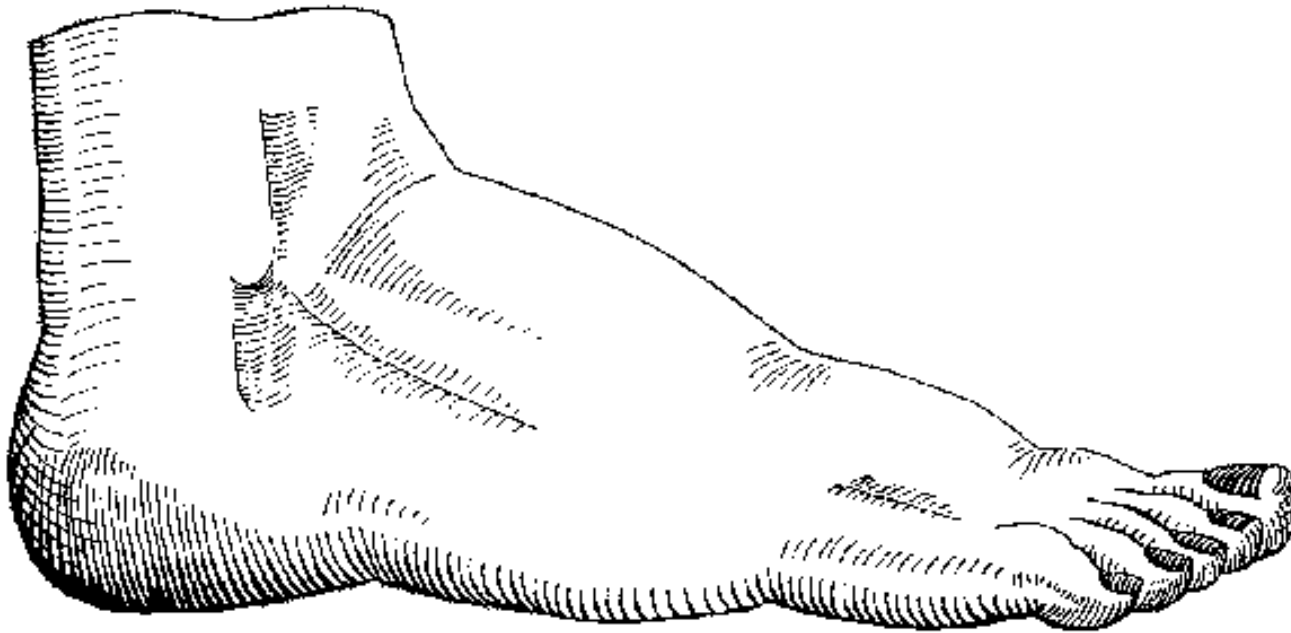
***Don't panic!***

***Don't be Panicked!***

*Seriously*

**See You 21 March 2009**

The Monty Python Foot, a convenient way to end something that would seem to go on for ever accomplishing nothing.... (*See deus ex machina*)



The famous Python Foot can here be seen in its original format in the bottom left corner of "An Allegory of Venus and Cupid" by [Bronzino](#) (~1545)

When Monty Python had no ending for a skit, this foot would appear out of the sky and squash whatever was on screen with a rude noise. Allowing the show to move on.

# Enrichment Material

# The greater fool theory

**The greater fool theory (sometimes the bigger fool theory, also called survivor investing) is the belief held by one who makes a questionable investment, with the assumption that they will be able to sell it later to "a bigger fool"; in other words, buying something not because you believe that it is worth the price, but rather because you believe that you will be able to sell it to someone else for an even better price.<sup>[1]</sup>**

**Wikipedia.org**

**One of life's persistent questions:**

**“Why do cockroaches roll over before the die?”**



# Getting Warmer?



March 21, 2009

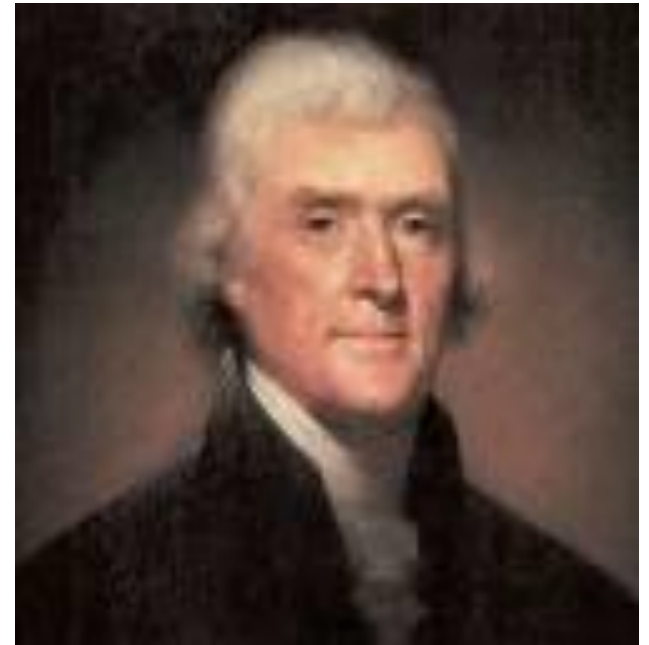
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# The Second Amendment

**The strongest reason for the people to retain the right to keep and bear arms is, as a last resort, to protect themselves against tyranny in Government."**

**~Thomas Jefferson~**



# Spurious History

**"This year will go down in history. For the first time, a civilized nation has full gun registration. Our streets will be safer, our police more efficient, and the world will follow our lead into the future!"**

***-- Adolph Hitler (Germany 1935)***