



WEEKLY UPDATE

BROUGHT TO YOU BY THE DNC COMMUNICATIONS DEPARTMENT

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The Unfinished Work of Selma MIC // REP. JOHN LEWIS

This past weekend as I introduced President Barack Obama on the steps of the Edmund Pettus Bridge in Selma, Alabama, I was overcome with powerful emotions. Of course, I reflected on how far we have come over the past 50 years. But one thought could not escape my mind: Those who fight to make it harder to vote don't know what it's like to be kicked, clubbed, and beaten for the simple right to cast a ballot. But I do.

Fifty years ago, I, with 600 nonviolent protesters, marched on Selma to protest voting discrimination, and the death of Jimmie Lee Jackson, a civil rights activist who had been beaten and shot by Alabama state troopers a month earlier. We were met with heavily armed police, tear gas, bullwhips and billy clubs. But we fought on, we made our voices heard and we forced our nation to stare its soul in the mirror.

One week later, President Lyndon Johnson stood before a joint session of Congress to declare that if our nation were to truly live up to its promise as a land of equal opportunity, we must overcome the crippling legacy of bigotry and injustice.

Five months later, we passed the Voting Rights Act, which stated that the practices aimed deliberately at keeping blacks from voting would not stand.

On the day it passed, I would have been in utter disbelief to know that in 2015, the VRA would still be a point of debate. But in 2013, the Supreme Court gutted key aspects of the law. In the weeks that followed, Republicans in statehouses across the country quickly passed laws making it harder to vote.

Read the full op-ed [here](#).

President Obama Honors 50th Anniversary of Selma

This past Saturday, President Barack Obama traveled to Selma, Alabama to stand alongside Congressman John Lewis and others in commemoration of the 50th anniversary of the historic march for fair and equal voting rights.

In President Obama's remarks, he honored the historic significance of the Selma march, noting the lasting impacts that the event has continued to make across generations. The President urged the public to view Selma as not just a singular moment in history, but as a lasting standard for others to follow in the ongoing fight for fairness and equality in America.

"WHAT THEY DID HERE WILL REVERBERATE THROUGH THE AGES...BECAUSE THEY PROVED THAT NONVIOLENT CHANGE IS POSSIBLE; THAT LOVE AND HOPE CAN CONQUER HATE."

-President Obama in Selma

Read the President's full remarks [here](#).

"What could be more American than what happened in this place?" the President asked. "What could more profoundly vindicate the idea of America than plain and humble people — unsung, the downtrodden, the dreamers not of high station, not born to wealth or privilege, not of one religious tradition but many, coming together to shape their country's course? What greater expression of faith in the American experiment than this, what greater form of patriotism is there than the belief that America is not yet finished, that we are strong enough to be self-critical, that each successive generation can look upon our imperfections and decide that it is in our power to remake this nation to more closely align with our highest ideals?"

President Obama emphasized the importance of "those who walked so we could run," and called for all Americans to learn from and continue the mission of those who risked everything to march 50 years ago.

[GOP's Reckless Iran Letter Doesn't Go Unnoticed](#)

[This week](#), Republican senators have set out to cripple the President's international negotiating ability with their reckless letter to Iran. Take a look at a few more editorials on the letter and we can't say we disagree with them:

"...the letter comes across as a thoughtless and destructive stunt. At a minimum, the senators have given Iran a way to reject the deal and escape blame. This is neither a small nor improbable thing." – [USA Today Editorial Board, 03/10/15](#)

"The letter not only undercuts the president's traditional authority to oversee the shaping of foreign policy but badly undermines America's credibility in the international community." – [Boston Globe Editorial Board, 03/10/15](#)

"The latest message stands as another example of GOP obstructionism that stalls immigration reform and climate-change policy, brings government to the brink of closing down, and repeatedly goes after Obama's health care law." – [San Francisco Chronicle Editorial Board, 03/10/15](#)

"Whatever the outcome of negotiations with Iran, the 47 senators have done immeasurable harm to their image and U.S. credibility in world affairs. It is regrettable that Kentucky's two senators were among them." – [Courier-Journal Editorial Board, 03/10/15](#)

"The senators who signed the letter should be ashamed." – [Pittsburgh Post-Gazette Editorial Board, 03/11/15](#)

"Apparently, the senators and their consultants could use some lessons in politics as well." – [Sacramento Bee Editorial Board, 03/10/15](#)

"Senate Republicans were so eager to give the president a black eye they didn't even bother to wait and find out what was in the proposed framework agreement before denouncing it. That's a heck of a way to conduct the nation's foreign policy." – [Baltimore Sun Editorial Board, 03/10/15](#)

View the full Factivists post [here](#).

[Secretary Kerry Gives Marco Rubio a Lesson in Foreign Policy](#)

Self-proclaimed "foreign policy expert" Marco Rubio had a rough week. On Monday, Rubio cosigned Senate Republican efforts to undermine the President's international negotiating ability with what has been [widely described](#) as a reckless letter to Iran. On Thursday, Rubio doubled down on those irresponsible efforts at a hearing of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee.

Rubio tried to display his "savvy" opposite Secretary of State John Kerry. It wasn't pretty. In just five short minutes, Secretary Kerry gives Marco Rubio a lesson in foreign policy.

Watch the exchange below:



When it comes to foreign policy, Marco Rubio has a lot to learn.

View the full Factivists post [here](#).

'Welcome' GOPers: Top Dems blast POTUS field as 'too extreme' for NH
NEW HAMPSHIRE JOURNAL // JOHN DISTASO

Two leaders of the Democratic National Committee "welcomed" four likely Republican contenders to New Hampshire today by saying that there is little difference among them when it comes to favoring the rich at the expense of the middle class.

DNC Chairman Rep. Debbie Wasserman Schultz and New Hampshire Democratic Party Chairman Raymond Buckley, who is also a DNC vice chair, held a conference call with reporters as former Texas Gov. Rick Perry was in the state, followed tomorrow, Saturday and Sunday by former Florida Gov. Jeb Bush, Wisconsin Gov. Scott Walker and Texas Sen. Ted Cruz.

Wasserman Schultz asked Granite Staters to use their "unique" opportunity to ask the prospective candidates direct, tough questions.

She said Walker and Cruz "are relatively new to this game, and have records of dividing Americans." Bush and Perry, she said, "are just trying to distance themselves from a previous failed campaign or a failed record."

She accused Perry of wanting to "privatize the student loan industry and give control back to the banks. That will increase interest rates and shows he is more focused on helping big banks rather than students."

Buckley said all of the prospective GOP candidates have records that are "completely at odds with New Hampshire values" and the interests of middle class families.

Bush, he said, "has always been and will be what's best for him and those at the top," while Walker "has pitted the people of Wisconsin against each other, has launched attacks on workers and working families. He actually compared the hard-working people of his home state – teachers, firefighters, to ISIS. Pathetic."

Perry's policies, said Buckley, "has led to one of the highest wage gaps in the entire country." Noting Perry's short-lived candidacy of 2011, Buckley said "no amount of rebranding, new glasses or new promises can change" his primary concern, Buckley said, for his "Texas allies" and the wealthy.

Cruz, he said, "is just too extreme for New Hampshire."

Wasserman Schultz defended President Obama's negotiations with Iran over nuclear weapons, a matter about which Perry said earlier today there can be no compromise.

"We can definitely all be in agreement, from President Obama to Rick Perry, that we have to do what we can to ensure that Iran never achieves its goal of having a nuclear weapon and that is what these negotiations are designed to prevent," she said.

She said that while no one can predict if the negotiations will be successful, "given the alternatives available, including war, I believe strongly, as a pro-Israel member of Congress and a Jew, that it is essential that we do everything we can to prevent Iran from achieving its goal of having nuclear weapons."

Wasserman Schultz said no GOP prospective candidate is more vulnerable than another. "One important thing they have in common is that they all embrace the same old 'take care of the wealthy and special interests,'" and she said, "trickle-down economics," which "has repeatedly failed."

She also said Sen. Marco Rubio, of her home state of Florida, fits the same profile.

"He does not have a record of leadership. He's a follower. He ran as fast as he could from his own immigration plan as soon as there was a whiff of dissent from his own Tea Party base."

Buckley noted that in New Hampshire, about 40 percent of registered voters are undeclared – or independent – swing voters, and he said believes the Republicans are too extreme to win widespread support in that group in a primary or a general election.

In the States

- On Monday, Florida Governor Rick Scott once again not only ducked questions about whether he believes climate change is real, but completely denied his administration's ban on terms such as "climate change" and "sustainability." As the Florida Democratic Party pointed out, this is strike three for Rick Scott when it comes to climate change. Even beyond lying about his ridiculous word-ban and avoiding an answer on whether global warming is a problem, Scott would not even say whether the Department of Environmental Protection is planning to combat sea level rise as caused by climate change. Rather, he continued to avoid answers that Floridians have a right and a reason to hear. Read the full press release [here](#).
- On Tuesday, the Arkansas Democratic Party criticized Senator Tom Cotton for his "overreach of power" in sending a letter to Iran, an action that threatens to danger diplomacy and undermine the President of the United States. The Arkansas Democratic Party Chair Vince Insalaco issued the following statement: "Senator Cotton's actions are disrespectful to both our Commander in Chief and an embarrassment to the people he represents. Cotton served one two-year term in the House and spent most of that time running for the Senate. Yet, Cotton's blind ambition has him acting as if he is running for president. He is willing to endanger our country's international negotiations in the process." Read the full press release [here](#).
- On Wednesday, in response to a Texas Republican celebration of the state's ban on same-sex marriage, members of the Texas Democratic Party dropped off cakes to show how misguided the Republicans' celebration was. Texas Democrats delivered rainbow colored cakes in the shape of Texas and cards that stated, "Love is Love" to Lieutenant Governor Dan Patrick and other Texas Republicans that participated in a 10th anniversary celebration of Texas' same-sex marriage ban. The Texas Democratic Party said that the cakes were meant to serve as a reminder that "the majority of Texans support the freedom to marry." Read the full press release [here](#).
- Over the weekend, while Governor Scott Walker pandered to early voters in Iowa on topics of wind energy and ethanol subsidies, the Democratic Party of Wisconsin set out to remind Walker of the major cuts to agriculture and environment funding he implemented back in Wisconsin. On Wednesday, the Democratic Party of Wisconsin pointed out that Walker's Iowa Caucus Budget proposes a one-third cut to state funding for farm research. These type of cuts would hurt the UW-Extension program Discovery Farms, which focuses on engaging with farmers throughout Wisconsin on innovative conservation strategies. The Wisconsin Farm Bureau said they were "puzzled by the proposed cuts to agricultural research," and Democratic Party of Wisconsin Chair Mike Tate released the following statement: "Over the weekend Scott Walker was saying and doing whatever it takes to get agricultural leaders in Iowa to support his campaign for president, but back in Wisconsin he's cutting funding for programs that actually benefit farmers and our \$88 billion agricultural economy. Scott Walker is already underwater with Wisconsin voters – he's only going to lose more support around the state as he puts his personal political gains before our farm families." Read the full press release [here](#).
- Over the weekend, Senator Rob Portman joined in commemorating the 50th anniversary of Bloody Sunday in Selma, Alabama, but, as the Ohio Democratic Party noted, Senator Portman's continued failure to fight for equal voting rights outshined his calculated political appearance. When asked about supporting the proposed fix to the Voting Rights Act so that the historic legislation may be restored, Senator Portman said, "I haven't looked at it. Is there a Senate version?" As the Ohio Democratic Party pointed out, a Senate version does exist, has no Republican support, and Senator Portman has a history of not supporting legislation aimed at expanding voter participation, such as the Voter Registration Act of 1993. Ohio Democratic Party Director of Party Engagement Nina Turner released the following statement: "Actions speak louder than political rhetoric. If Sen. Portman truly believes in equal access to the ballot box, he can take immediate action by pledging to support the VRA Amendment that has been introduced by his Democratic colleagues in both chambers of the U.S. Congress...We have learned many important lessons from the past; the question is, does Sen. Portman have the courage to stand up and protect our right to vote in the present." Read the full press release [here](#).