



WEEKLY UPDATE

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DNC Chair Debbie Wasserman Schultz's Statement on the 50th Anniversary of the Civil Rights Act

"Freedom from discrimination on the basis of race, color, religion, sex, or national origin – it is a concept that seems inherent to a nation founded by declaring that "We hold these truths to be self-evident, that all men are created equal..."

"But it wasn't until fifty years ago, with President Lyndon Johnson's signing of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, that this thoroughly American ideal came closer to reality when it was codified into law.

"Today's anniversary of the Civil Rights Act is a reminder that equal protection under the law has not been self-evident, but instead a struggle for which each generation has had to fight. The civil rights leaders of the 1950s and 60s, including those who participated in Freedom Summer fifty years ago, endured unthinkable adversity for having the courage to seek the rights with which each of us is endowed. Each subsequent victory over the last five decades is a byproduct of their hardships, and for that we are eternally grateful.

"It is because of their success that today's anniversary is less a celebration than a call to action. The Democratic Party is committed to ensuring the creation of a more perfect union by extending rights to those who are still excluded.

"The Voting Rights Act of 1965 followed in the spirit of the Civil Rights Act, but Congressional action is required to restore the protections negated by last year's Supreme Court decision in *Shelby County v. Holder*. And despite President Obama's recent executive action announcement, many American workers still lack protection from discrimination based on sexual orientation or identity.

"President Johnson made the case for passage of the Civil Rights Act by invoking his predecessor, "No memorial oration or eulogy could more eloquently honor President Kennedy's memory than the earliest possible passage of the civil rights bill for which he fought so long." Today, the Democratic Party believes there is no more fitting way to honor those who helped pass the Civil Rights Act than by extending its promise to all Americans."

Nice try, Rand....

Wednesday marked the 50th anniversary of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, the sweeping law that outlawed racial discrimination in public places and businesses in the United States, and a critical step on the journey toward equality for all Americans. Over the last 50 years, it has protected citizens from unfair treatment, and been celebrated for its significance.

But Tuesday, Rand Paul who has criticized the landmark legislation arguing that businesses should be allowed to discriminate, is now trying [to have it both ways](#) as he puts out a statement in celebration of its anniversary. [No rhetoric can erase](#) the number of instances where Paul has turned his back on the Civil Rights Act that's created a more fair and just America.

[When asked by his hometown newspaper](#) if he would have voted for the Civil Rights Act, [Paul dodged the question](#).



When they asked him to clarify his position, [he laughed](#).



The facts are clear: Rand Paul believes that businesses should have the right to discriminate against certain people and deny service to others. This is wrong, and no laughing matter.

That same Kentucky newspaper agrees, [calling his position "repugnant"](#):

"The ultimate result of such thinking would be the acceptability of a situation where the current President of the United States could be legally denied service at a lunch counter or a department store. This is not mainstream American thinking. This is, in a word, extremism."

Nice try, Rand, but we aren't fooled.

[DNC Chair Wasserman Schultz on this Week's Supreme Court Rulings](#)

On Monday, the Supreme Court announced two detrimental rulings, *Burwell v. Hobby Lobby* and *Harris v. Quinn*. In the first case, the Court made a ruling that allows for-profit employers to deny access to certain health care benefits based on their personal beliefs. In the second case, the Supreme Court took away some of the strength from unions that work to protect the rights of workers across the country.

In response to the Court's decision in *Burwell v. Hobby Lobby*, DNC Chair Debbie Wasserman Schultz said:

"I am disappointed and deeply concerned by the Supreme Court's decision today in the case of *Burwell v. Hobby Lobby*. Thanks to the Affordable Care Act, millions of Americans have gained access to preventive services without out-of-pocket costs, including birth control. However, this decision takes money out of the pockets of women and their families and allows for-profit employers to deny access to certain health care benefits based on their personal beliefs. Nearly sixty percent of women who use birth control do so for more than just family planning.

"It is no surprise that Republicans have sided against women on this issue as they have consistently opposed a woman's right to make her own health care decisions. Republicans have also blocked the Paycheck Fairness Act, which would bring us closer to the promise of equal pay for women. In the wake of this dangerous precedent set by the Supreme Court, Democrats in Congress will continue to fight on the issues of importance to women and their families."

In response to the Court's decision in *Harris v. Quinn*, DNC Chair Debbie Wasserman Schultz said:

"I disagree with the Supreme Court's decision in the case of *Harris v. Quinn*. Many of the basic workplace standards and protections that we take for granted as Americans are thanks to the efforts of organized labor. These benefits have been sought and achieved on behalf of all workers, regardless of whether or not they've paid union dues. I fear that this decision will seriously diminish the capacity of labor unions to represent the best interests of American workers who have fought for and won significant progress on wages, benefits and working conditions, and jeopardize the progress that has been made over the last century."

[Christie's Hypocrisy on Full Display in CNBC Bluster](#)

As he travels across the country, Chris Christie likes to tout his tough, no-nonsense leadership style, and Tuesday morning on CNBC was no different. Christie boldly told the hosts that Republicans should speak their minds on the issues, saying, *"If you get asked a question, answer it."*

But his bluster should've come with an asterisk: ***if you like the question.**

Immediately after his pronouncement, [Christie refused to answer a question](#) about whether the Supreme Court made the right decision Monday in the Hobby Lobby case, saying, "Who knows?" Earlier in the segment, he had also refused to say whether credit agencies "got it right" by downgrading New Jersey's credit rating a record-matching six time during his governorship. On that one too his answer was, "Who knows?"

Christie's dodges underscore his troubling record of blowing off questions he doesn't like. The bottom line is that Chris Christie isn't a straight-talking truth-teller. He's a craven politician who brazenly says one thing and does another.



In Massachusetts, Bush and Baker Ignore Threat of Climate Change

On Wednesday, DNC Chair Debbie Wasserman Schultz wrote the following op-ed for Huffington Post ahead of Jeb Bush's trip to Massachusetts to campaign with gubernatorial candidate Charlie Baker. Read the article below, or on Huffingtonpost.com [here](#).

Today, Republican Massachusetts gubernatorial candidate Charlie Baker will be joined on the campaign trail by former Florida governor Jeb Bush. Although they will be together for a fundraiser in Cape Cod, it is unlikely that the two will discuss one of the most critical issues facing the area: the looming threat of climate change.

As a Congresswoman from South Florida, I'm deeply familiar with the risks that rising sea levels and warming ocean temperatures pose to Cape Cod's local industries like tourism and fishing. And as a mother, I'm concerned that carbon pollution has contributed to increased asthma attacks among children.

Of course, the state of Massachusetts and many of its neighbors have been leaders in addressing the problem of climate change. The Regional Greenhouse Gas Initiative among Northeast and Mid-Atlantic states is a model for reducing carbon dioxide emissions while helping the economy. In fact, a report earlier this year found that the program is projected to return more than \$2 billion in energy bill savings for households and businesses.

We know that inaction has serious potential costs to public health and safety. Meanwhile, efforts like the RGGI show that improved energy efficiency and investments in renewable energy can produce cost savings in the long run.

So why won't Bush and Baker be talking about win-win solutions on climate change?

It is because Bush like most prominent members of the Republican Party won't accept the science of climate change. When asked if he believed that global warming was primarily man-made, Bush claimed, "I'm a skeptic. I'm not a scientist." This sentiment has been echoed by other leading Republicans from my home state. Florida Governor Rick Scott has gone from saying he has "not been convinced that there's any man-made climate change" to responding "I'm not a scientist." Tea Party favorite Senator Marco Rubio dismissed the conclusion of climate scientists as the scientists' "opinion."

Until recently, even Charlie Baker shared that view. During his last campaign for governor in 2010, Baker refused to answer whether he believed in the reality of climate change, saying "You're asking me to take a position on something I don't know enough about. I absolutely am not smart enough to believe that I know the answer to that question."

This mentality is a fundamental misunderstanding of how a representative democracy works. As elected officials, we aren't expected to be experts on every issue. However, we are responsible for making decisions based on the best available information.

It's not even how a functioning adult acts. When I was told by my doctor that I had breast cancer, I didn't reject their diagnosis because I wasn't an oncologist myself. I listened to the advice of people who knew more than I did and started immediately on a course of action that would solve the problem.

Republicans like Jeb Bush and Charlie Baker may not be scientists. But do you know who are? The more than 300 experts who compiled the third U.S. National Climate Assessment, which found that man-made climate change is detrimental to our environment.

As President Obama recently observed, when President Kennedy challenged the American people to go to the moon, he wasn't met by opposition who denied the moon's existence. Instead, the American people responded by rising to the challenge.

I hope that Jeb Bush and Charlie Baker enjoy their event on Cape Cod. But moreover, I hope they come to an appreciation that communities like this which are among the most vulnerable to climate change - like so many in my district in South Florida - are worth saving. I also hope they realize that taking swift, decisive action now will prove to be more financially prudent in the long run.

We have a moral responsibility to pass along to our children a clean and healthy planet, which will require acting soon if we are to correct our current trajectory. We can't afford to be wasting time arguing the validity of facts about which 97 percent of scientists agree.

In the States

- On Tuesday, the Chair of the Wisconsin Democratic Party, Mike Tate, released a statement on the consequences of Governor Scott Walker's disastrous fiscal policies. Chairman Tate condemns Governor Walker for "choosing his own political ambitions over fiscal responsibility," and the way in which his "reckless decisions motivated by election-year politicking" have been made at the expense of Wisconsin's citizens. In fact, the Party's Communications Director Melissa Baldauff cites a dramatic "shortfall of \$93 million in state tax dollars for the state's Medicaid fund" as just one of the many testaments to another failed conservative economic agenda. Read the full statement [here](#) and find out how average citizens are suffering due to Governor Walker's fiscal carelessness.
- On Tuesday, the Iowa Democratic Party released [a new video](#) demonstrating just how much of a threat two of the state's leading Republicans, Joni Ernst and David Young, pose to Social Security benefits. The two Republicans have issued a plan, known as the "Ernst and Young Accountability Firm," which Iowa Democratic Party Communications Director, Christina Freundlich, describes as "reducing benefits, increasing the retirement age, raising taxes on the middle class, and risking retirement savings," of average Iowan seniors. To see for yourself how Ernst and Young's plan would undermine the guaranteed benefits of Iowans and "put Iowans' retirement in the hands of Wall Street," watch the video [here](#).
- On Tuesday, the Florida Democratic Party issued a new ad titled "Why," which holds Governor Rick Scott accountable for his failed economic policies. The ad reveals just how detrimental Scott's agenda of "misguided cuts to schools and tuition hikes to colleges," has been to the average Florida student's education. Party spokesman Joshua Karp attests to this fact as he recalls how Governor Scott "cut public schools by \$1.3 billion and hiked tuition at 11 public colleges in order to pay for even more tax breaks for wealthy special interests." Watch the full ad [here](#).
- On Monday, DJ Quinlan, Executive Director of the Arizona Democratic Party, released a statement in support of President Obama's decision to take executive actions on immigration reform. As the crisis continues to heighten throughout the country, and particularly in border states such as Arizona, Mr. Quinlan cites the fact that "the majority of Arizonans and Americans support comprehensive immigration reform," when emphasizing how "the time for action on immigration is now." Read the full press release [here](#).