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Economists rip Romney's latest address

By John Wojcik

In advance of a June 14 speech on the economy by the President, lawmakers and leading economists called a press conference here at which they rebutted GOP presidential nominee Mitt Romney's economic address to a group of businessmen earlier in the day.

In his speech Romney essentially called upon workers, already reeling from high unemployment and losses of net worth approaching 40 percent, to make more sacrifices by accepting cuts in Medicare benefits, and Pell Grants and by accepting fewer firefighters, cops and teachers in their communities. In the same speech he advocated more tax breaks for millionaires like himself and for corporations already hated for shipping U.S. jobs overseas.

"It is clear that Mitt Romney has entered and remains in a fact free zone and has put forward a package based on lies, distortion and deception," declared Rep. Chris Van Hollen, D-Md., Ranking Member of the House Budget Committee.

"How can he ask Americans who have lost so much of their wealth to sacrifice more while in the same breath call for more tax breaks for the few who are doing fine already in this economy?," Van Hollen demanded to know. "For him to say President Obama doesn't have a clue when it is the President, over Republican opposition, who put through a \$700 billion stimulus program and rescued the auto industry, creating or saving millions of jobs, is beyond me. In addition, although it's far from enough, we've had 27 months of private sector job growth."

Van Hollen, a Democrat, said his Republican



colleagues knew well that the only problem with the stimulus program was that, because of GOP resistance, it wasn't actually big enough.

"The Republican colleagues of mine on the House Budget Committee have heard, upfront, the reports from the non-partisan Congressional Budget Office," Van Hollen declared, "and in each of those reports they had laid out for them, in black and white, the details of how the stimulus created millions of jobs.

"In addition, the President has laid out a jobs program to create millions of new jobs. It has been sitting, stalled in the Republican-controlled House, since September, by Republicans who

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would rather see the American people suffer than see the president succeed."

Bivens also blasted Romney for his repeated claim that businesses don't create jobs now because they fear regulations that might come down the pipe if the president is re-elected.

Noted economist Dean Baler, co-director of the Center for Economic Policy Research, accused Romney of lying and distortion when the Republican candidate claims Obama had promised the American people that his stimulus bill would keep unemployment from going above 8 percent. "No one knew at first that the jobless rate would soar into the double digits," Baker declared. "The only claim made for the stimulus was that it would save or create three million jobs and it did that. Without it things would be far worse.

"Romney is also practicing deception when he talks over and over again about how the National Health Care Act is killing jobs and how regulations kill jobs," said Baker. "First off, most of the health care bill is not in effect yet and second, regulations have benefits. New environmental regulations in 1990, EPA studies show, yielded 2.3 trillion in benefits to the economy, not just through job creation but by allowing millions of people to remain healthy and productive. "Doesn't Romney realize that when regulations protect people's health effectively we save billions in the costs entailed with people dying, children getting sick or having to be

treated in hospitals.

Josh Bevens of the Economic Policy Institute's Policy Center took on Romney.

"If you look at corporate profits," Bivens said, they are doing fine, their rate of profit is higher than it has ever been since the 1960's and they are sitting on trillions of dollars of cash profits - more than they have ever had. They are not using it to create enough jobs."

Bivens also blasted Romney for his repeated claim that businesses don't create jobs now because they fear regulations that might come down the pipe if the president is re-elected.

"That is one of his most absurd claims," Bivens said. "If there really was this fear about future regulations than it would make sense to ramp up production now and do a lot of business and profit making quickly before those regulations kick in. But they aren't doing that because the problem is not regulation, the problem is that the demand isn't there because the American people can't afford to buy what they would produce.



John Wojcik is People's World labor editor.

Obamacare: good Rx for young adults

By PW Editorial Board

Nearly 14 million young people either remained on or signed on to health care coverage through the health insurance of their parents. This is an early benefit coming from President Barack Obama's signature law, the Affordable Care Act (ACA). Many benefits from the full ACA doesn't go into effect until 2014.

Some 6.6 million of these 19 to 25 year olds would likely not have been able to get coverage without the passage of the ACA.

But the news is not all rosy. Almost 39% of young adults in the age group did not qualify for coverage and 36% had serious problems with medical bills causing them to lose their savings, default on tuition and student loans, change their career and educational plans, or run out of money for rent, heat or food.

Republicans, who derisively refer to the ACA as "Obamacare" and promise to junk it if they capture the White House and Congress in the fall, may not be concerned with the problems of these young people, especially since most of them come from low-income families and whose problems are not high on the list of Republican concerns.

But the vast majority of the American people who are workers in the low and middle income ranges have everything to gain and nothing to

lose by seeing the provisions of the ACA go into effect.

However, the Supreme Court may fulfill the Republicans' promise with its anticipated decision on the health care law.

Although the fight to add a public option to the ACA must continue, the plan as it stands today is the best and most comprehensive option the American people have at hand to alleviate the suffering and even premature deaths of thousands of people the Republicans would leave out in the streets for lack of ability to pay for costly overpriced private insurance.

This is literally a life- and-death issue for thousands of people and the ACA must be preserved at all costs.

As Commonwealth Fund President Karen Davis remarked, "The Affordable Care Act will provide all Americans with affordable coverage, and help young adults achieve healthy, productive, and financially secure futures."

That the Republicans, in their rush to serve the selfish interests of the corporate elite, the 1%, and are willing to sacrifice the health and well being of the American people in the process, should be a sufficient guarantee to ensure their defeat in November.

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Michigan Republicans muzzle women

By John Rummel

Kee them barefoot, pregnant and silent. Judging by legislation the Republican- and male-dominated Michigan House of Representatives has passed, that's their attitude toward women.

After state Reps Lisa Brown and Barb Byrum, both Democrats, courageously spoke out against anti-choice legislation passed Wednesday, Republican Speaker of the House Jase Bolger informed House Democrats that the two lawmakers would be prohibited from speaking during Thursday's legislative session on any and all issues.

What did Bolger use as a pretense to silence debate? On Wednesday Rep. Brown told anti-choice legislation's backers, "I'm flattered you're all so interested in my vagina." And Rep. Byrum was gaveled out of order when she protested Republicans' refusal to allow her to speak on her amendment to require proof that a man's life was in danger before he could have a vasectomy.

What has been ignored in Rep. Brown's testimony was her eloquent statement that, to ensure religious freedom, separation of church and state is necessary to keep one faith from infringing on the rights of another. In her Jewish faith, "abortions performed in order to preserve the life of the mother, are mandatory."

Michigan Senate Democratic leader Gretchen Whitmer wrote that the Republican bills are designed specifically to shut down women's health clinics that provide critical and life-saving services for thousands of women across Michigan.

Whitmer called the Republican actions offensive. She said, "Their actions yesterday took away our right to choose what's best for our own bodies. Now today, they've even taken away our right to voice our opposition to their actions."

Among other things, the bills would saddle health centers with unnecessary and burdensome licensing requirements if they perform abortions; ban abortion after 20 weeks with no exemptions for rape, incest, or fetal defects; and punish doctors who violate the vague and limited exemptions



with at least 15 years in jail.

Planned Parenthood says its health centers are vital to the health care needs of women throughout the state, pointing out that 1 in 5 women will visit a Planned Parenthood health center in her lifetime. Only 10 percent of Planned Parenthood patients have private health insurance.

For 75 percent of Planned Parenthood patients in Michigan, an appointment at Planned Parenthood is the only health care they will receive in a given year.

If ever there was a body that needed silencing, it's the Republicans in Lansing. Here's a checklist of what the Michigan legislature and its Republican leadership has accomplished in the last two years:

- * attack collective bargaining, check;
- * make workers compensation laws ineffective, check;
- * raise taxes on poor and seniors, check;
- * allow emergency dictators to replace elected officials, check;
- * use voter suppression to limit those who vote, check;
- * end cash assistance for 40,000 women and children, check.

These bills, and many others, are why Whitmer writes, "Women are paying attention, and come November, we will be voting."

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Youth march for jobs and to end violence

By Joelle Fishman

Aspirited march of 150 youth and adult supporters stopped downtown New Haven, Conn., traffic as they made their way from the closed Dixwell Q House youth center to New Haven City Hall. They called for jobs and an end to violence.

Rallying in front of the Amistad statue, youth speakers, union leaders, and elected officials urged the Jobs Pipeline Committee formed by the Board of Aldermen to continue working until opportunities are provided to New Haven's youth.

"I'm fighting for these kids. I'm fighting for myself," exclaimed Nollysha Canteen, a high school senior and the youth representative on the Committee. "My sisters and brothers are scared to walk out the door because they're scared they'll be shot," she said.

"Would it be different if there were jobs?" asked Latoya Agnew, a youth leader from the Newhallville neighborhood. "Yes," answered the crowd. "Give us youth centers. Give us jobs. So this doesn't have to happen," she added.

"I may be only 11," said Jackie Marks, of New Elm City Dream, who chaired the rally, "but the youth here today are our future leaders."

Montell Wright, 16, led the crowd chanting, "United we stand, Divided we fall; Jobs for youth, Jobs for All!"

New Elm City Dream members have surveyed over 500 teens about jobs, violence, education, and neighborhood needs. It was announced at the rally that the youth who filled out surveys overwhelmingly state that having good jobs available for young people and adults will improve the quality of life in New Haven.

Nube de humo de incendio forestal cubre Denver

Por Dan Elliott

Muchos residentes del área montañosa del suroeste estado de Nuevo México fueron evacuados ante el peligro de un incendio de 145 kilómetros cuadrados (56 millas cuadradas) que amenaza el poblado de Ruidoso y ha causado daños o destruido al menos 224 viviendas y otras construcciones, confirmaron las autoridades el martes por la noche.

Cuadrillas de rescate sólo hallaron montones de metal retorcido y otros escombros en las zonas residenciales que fueron más afectadas por el incendio en Little Bear.

Jan Gueswel describe un angustiante escape de su casa en las montañas en Colorado: las llamas se extendían hasta 60 metros en el aire, sobre el único sendero de salida. Pero ella jura que nunca va a vivir en otra parte.

Con el incendio de 175 kilómetros cuadrados (68 millas cuadradas) contenido al 10%, Gueswel y centenares de otros residentes enfrentan un desplazamiento extendido e incertidumbre. Pero algunos dijeron el martes que habían aceptado desde hace tiempo el riesgo constante de incendios en un área montañosa.

"Resulta realmente desgarrador ver el daño causado a esta bella región del país", dijo la gobernadora de Nuevo México, Susana Martínez, después de realizar un recorrido por el área.

Con al menos 19 incendios de gran magnitud que se extienden en nueve estados, el presidente Barack Obama llamó por teléfono a John Hickenlooper, gobernador de Colorado, para asegurarle que el gobierno federal está listo para proporcionar personal, equipo y un subsidio de emergencia para Colorado y otros es-

tados que combaten el fuego. Obama también trató de establecer contacto con Martínez, pero la oficina de la gobernadora dijo que la mala recepción en la zona del incendio ha evitado la conexión.

El incendio de 176 kilómetros cuadrados (68 millas cuadradas) de Colorado arde a aproximadamente 96 kilómetros (60 millas) al sur de Denver. El humo detuvo el combate aéreo del fuego por la mañana, pero los helicópteros y aviones cisterna se elevaron al mediodía.

Las autoridades del condado de Larimer permitieron que algunos de los residentes regresaran a sus hogares, pero emitieron 25 avisos de evacuación más a los residentes en el flanco oeste del fuego.

Una mujer de 62 años pereció en su cabaña en el incendio en High Park, Colorado, que fue causado por relámpagos y ha destruido más de 100 edificaciones. Más de 600 bomberos trabajaban para levantar líneas de contención, al tiempo que aviones cisternas y helicópteros se centraban en proteger inmuebles.

"Si vas hacia el este, tienes los tornados. Si vives en las montañas, tienes los incendios", dijo Denise Haines, cuya familia cargó en camiones 142 alpacas y llamas de su granja y las llevó a los terrenos de la Feria del Condado Larimer.

En Wyoming, donde los equipos consiguieron progresos en dos incendios, el jefe del servicio forestal estatal Bill Crapser dijo que los bomberos en todo el Oeste estaban lidiando con sequía, montones de árboles muertos a causa de escarabajos, más residentes en áreas boscosas y una acumulación de decenas.