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What Does Barack Obama Mean for Public Financing?

Approaching the final days of the presidential election, Democratic candidate Barack Obama has raised unprecedented amounts of money. In September 2008 alone, Obama raised $150 million. At that point, the campaign had raised a total of at least $600 million. Early in his campaign, Obama said he would use public funding for the general election if his opponent did. In the end, however, he decided to pass on public funding in order to raise money without limits.

Many are asking if public financing is dead. It certainly is not. First, it is necessary to differentiate between the presidential public funding system and systems known as clean elections or fair elections that exist at the state and city level across the United States. Clean elections systems work in seven states and two cities in the U.S. These systems allow candidates who have proven community support to run their campaigns on public money. When a candidate accepts public funds, he or she may no longer use a penny of private money, including their own. They are freed from the burdens of fundraising. Fundraising takes time, drains energy, and can put the candidate in uncomfortable situations with donors. Big donors generally expect big favors. There is a limit to the amount of money that can be used, but the publicly funded candidate can apply for matching funds if they are outspent by a privately funded opponent. This is an important characteristic that is absent from the presidential system. Furthermore, several of the state systems are being altered so that candidates can apply for matching funds for efforts against them from 527s and other independent organizations.

There is not room for great detail on funding these systems here, but it is important to note that they do not have to be

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Response to "One-third of My Generation is Missing"

Response to the editorial "One-third of my generation is missing" by Nick Elledge, printed in the Daily Campus, 10/21/08 available for view online at www.smudailycampus.com.

Let me preface this piece by saying that this is not necessarily an endorsement of any ethical or political position, nor do I intend to propose an alternate theory. I merely find it necessary to point out a couple of flaws that I perceive in the author’s reasoning.

The author’s argument in support of anti-abortion legislation follows three basic premises:

1. The deliberate killing of an innocent human is always morally wrong.
2. Unborn babies are demonstrably human.
3. The law is obligated to protect the well-being of the weak.

From these three premises the author concludes that the law should be changed to protect the right to life of unborn babies – in other words, to outlaw abortion.

The first premise, in my opinion, is the strongest of the three, and I have little issue with it. Although there are situations which might throw it into question, for brevity’s sake I will admit its truth.

Even though the author calls the second premise (the biological premise) the "kicker for most people," I find it to be the weakest of the three. The author points out the biological fact that from the moment of conception a complete genetic code for a human being exists, and concludes that unborn babies are human from the moment of conception. The author also invokes the law of biogenesis to prove that unborn babies and adult humans are the same species. I have no dispute with the factual data provided by the author.

The problem that I have with the author’s second premise is that his argument assumes more than his factual data actually proves. The data and theory that he provides prove only that unborn babies belong to the human species; his argument, however, assumes that each unborn baby is a human being. Semantics may play a role here – being human is not the same thing as being a human, and one does not guarantee the other.

If I remember 12th grade Biology correctly (and I may not), every cell in my body except for my sex cells and blood cells contains my complete genetic code. I am certainly not three billion human beings. I could lop off my finger, stick it in a Petri dish and hand it to a biologist, and ask him, "Is this human?" His answer would be, "Yes, now stop bleeding on my lab equipment." The author could try to defend himself by saying that only fetal cells have the potential to become a human, but that would acknowledge that those fetal cells aren’t a human yet, which the author explicitly denies.

The same problem exists in the author’s use of the law of biogenesis, as revealed through his own words: "if you want to know what species something is, look at its parents" (emphasis added). The law of biogenesis is fulfilled as long as the fetus shares the same genetic characteristics as its parents – thus there is no contradiction in stating that an early fetus is a “ball of cells” as long as those cells are genetically human. In considering the philosophical question of what makes a human a human, I find it intriguing that the author would use a materialist argument to support a position traditionally associated with religious belief. It’s a novel approach, which may account for it being the “kicker” for so many unconvinced people, but I don’t think it logically helps his case.

The third premise the author cites is a legal premise: that the law should protect the rights of those who are too weak to defend themselves. His argument is framed as a response to critics who accuse pro-life supporters of forcing their ideas on others – there is a limit to how tolerant society can be when a behavior clearly violates basic human rights. The author is correct in saying that the law exists to
protect the members of its society. However, I have issue
with his attempt to apply legal standards to the act of abor-
tion, in particular when he states that “killing something you
are not sure is or is not human is manslaughter or criminal
negligence.” This statement is true if and only if it can be
demonstrated afterward that a human being has been killed.
Until that burden is met, no crime has occurred. As a matter
of common sense, there can be no such thing as attempt-
ed negligence. I can see what the author is trying to get
at through this legal argument, which is, to put it crudely,
better safe than sorry. I just think the argument would be
stronger if the author framed it as an appeal to common
sense rather than as a legal premise.

I applaud the author’s dedication to his cause and his will-
ingness to open himself to criticism by sharing his beliefs.
Nonetheless, because of the logical disconnect between the
first two premises and the conclusion he draws from them, I
don’t believe that the pro-life argument as he explains it is
compelling enough to justify changing the law.

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funded by additional taxes. In Arizona, John McCain’s home
state, the fund for campaigns comes from a 10% portion of
all traffic and civil fines, and they have more than enough
money to make the system work.

Despite the bright future for public financing in general, af-
fter this election, the presidential system may very well be
a goner. This election exposes some serious flaws in the
system. Obama has set a new standard for presidential cam-
paign fundraising, and he has instilled a new fear of accept-
ing public funds. Why would you accept $84 million (and
only $84 million) for your campaign when your opponent can
raise $150 million in one month? Obama has spoken about
fixing the system, but thus far we are still lacking a solu-
tion. Recent Congressional efforts to reform the system have
failed.

Nonetheless, during this election hundreds of candidates ran
campaigns using public funds. These candidates in Arizona,
Maine, Connecticut, North Carolina, New Mexico, and other
states prove that public financing does work. The argument
still holds that public financing allows ordinary people to
run for office, frees them to talk to constituents (rather than
spend time raising money), ensures that, if elected, they are
accountable to voters rather than donors, and offers voters
more choice. In light of the huge amount of money being
raised and spent by Congressional candidates (with finan-
cial institutions among the highest contributors) the need for
Congressional Fair Elections is greater than ever. We do have
a solution to this problem, the Fair Elections Now Act. This
legislation has been introduced in the U.S. House and Senate
and would provide for optional public funding of campaigns
for Congressional candidates. Barack Obama is a cosponsor
of this bill. Obama has changed a lot of things about presi-
dential politics. He has altered the fundraising landscape and
possibly killed public funding at the presidential level, but
he also presents huge opportunities for more effective and
widespread public funding of Congressional campaigns.

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Do you have an opinion about... politics, music, class, television, football, shopping, intramurals, fraternities,
movies, tests, the Mavs, sex, restaurants, religion, sororities, driving, study abroad, Umphrey Lee, fashion, news,
the war, parking, technology, magazines, bars, baseball, the weather, professors, the Mustang Band, dating, books,
nightclubs, Texas, the Daily Campus, pets, club sports, or anything else?

we’re listening at hilltopics@gmail.com
Anyone who has ever been to the gym knows that next day feeling – sore! It happens to everyone, and it is both a natural physical response to exercise and a sign of growth and healing. Sometimes though, this ‘soreness’ is something more, and potentially indicative of an injury.

First off, it is important to mention the common symptoms associated with soreness. General soreness feels like your muscles are tight, or you just feel sluggish. If you are really sore, your muscles might even be a little sore upon massage or have a little ‘burn’ during physical activity. When there are real or sharp pains, though, it could mean something else.

Common work-out injuries can include muscle strains, tears, or pulls, and pinched nerves. Some of the general signs of these more serious injuries can include sharp shooting pains, a loss of range of motion, or muscle weakness. Numbness may also be a symptom, especially if the injury is a pinched nerve. The big difference between a serious injury and general soreness is the intensity and duration of the pain. If the pain can be described as dull, and lasts all day long, then it is most likely just general soreness. If the pain is sharp and extreme, and comes in short bursts or doing certain movements, these are some of the signs a medical professional may be needed.

Many such injuries occur for a number of reasons. If you are lifting weights, you may become hurt if you try to increase the weight you are lifting too fast. Also, if you are not doing exercises properly, it is easy to get hurt. Stretching is the true key to not getting injured. Before a workout of any kind, it is crucial to stretch properly. A stretching routine before and after can help reduce your odds of injury. Stretching should take at least 15 minutes, and each stretch should be held for around 15 seconds. After stretching, a light jog, before any workout, can also help. The light jog warms your muscles up, gets blood flowing, and reduces the chance of injury. If you are going running, the stretching is definitely important. For your light jog, just take the first five minutes of your run to ease into your pace. Go easy, and gradually build to the speed you desire.

There are some general recommendations for taking care of any of these problems. The best thing you can choose to do is to apply ice. Putting ice on an injury (serious or just sore) can help reduce the pain. The ice reduces inflammation and swelling, and promotes healing in the injured muscle. The reason sore or hurt muscles often feel ‘hot’ is due to the inflammation and the body’s natural reaction to an injury. There are muscle relaxants and creams that can greatly reduce general soreness, although a doctor should be consulted before starting any such therapy. If the pain continues to persist over several days, gets worse, or affects your everyday life, it is important to go see a medical professional. The sooner these injuries are diagnosed, the sooner you can be on the road to recovery. Exercising smart, and recovering smart, can greatly improve your health and prevent injury.

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Kill Your Idols Misses the Mark

by Thomas Dunlap

One of the best things about being a college student who lives near campus again is that (a) companies think/hope that you have access to money you don’t deserve and (b) don’t mind wasting it and they (c) know exactly where to find you in order to lure you into spending all of your magic plastic card/discretionary money. The most recent company trying to woo me right now is Netflix who was kind enough to send me free trial promotion code. This isn’t that remarkable (I found out anyone can try the service free just by visiting their site) but it is a revolutionary idea to me. For this month I can not only watch hard to find movies that ultra foxy film student girls tell me to check out but I also have access to a ton of music documentaries that I would have never found in a rental store and some I didn’t even know existed. The past week or so has also taught me that the U.S. Postal Service can haul ass when it wants to. Netflix has one built in caveat though, the service can only be as good as the movies you choose to watch. I have come to call this the Kill Your Idols Fallacy.

When Kill Your Idols popped up on my recommendations list I for some reason (perhaps it was the damn title) thought that this must have been the Sonic Youth affiliated documentary project that I’d heard about a while back. I wasn’t wrong but I actually wasn’t all that DNA and Foetus and tried to fix this hole in my library. The documentary should also give you a sense of the time or community and make you feel like you understand where its coming from and who’s involved at their very best the audience feels like they’re vicariously involved in something special but at the very least we should feel that we are witnessing something or someone important. All the old guard agreed that they were involved in something important but I never really got a sense of why. The movie skipped across the surface of most interviews without delving in. There were some anecdotes here and there that tried to make the players relatable but mostly I just ended up being happy that I didn’t lose my virginity to Lydia Lunch.

Fast forward to current day bands like The Yeah Yeah Yeah’s, Liars, Black Dice, Gogol Bordello, and one of the dudes from A.R.E Weapons and you get a picture painted for you of fashion oriented, safe, derivative music by both no-wave pioneers and current bands alike. There’s a part where everyone is bashing all the other bands, some of whom are in the film that’s pretty funny but also very discouraging. Lydia Lunch has a gem where she says that the most boring thing a band can do is use guitar, bass and drums and she says that they should pick up anything, a saxophone, whatever, instead of the classic rock band set up. I’d say that there is some truth in that but I really don’t think conventional instruments are completely tapped of their potential and picking up extra instruments certainly won’t save every band out there. Even semi descent ones sound kind of like novelty acts and most can’t evolve their sound and stay relevant past the first album than any other band. There is a problem with safe music and an musical environment where commercial success is so close at hand for most bands that they don’t have the freedom that comes with outside disinterest but having unbearable douches like the guy from A.R.E Weapons (I don’t even want to re-watch his segments to learn his name) complain about everything that’s wrong with the scene that he seems to be embodying even as the words come out of his mouth is not the answer.

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Dear and the Headlights

*Drunk Like Bible Times*

Dear and the Headlights are sounding like a band on a mission with the release of their newest disc *Drunk Like Bible Times*, the follow-up to *Small Steps, Heavy Hooves*. The album title alone demands attention, and each track warrants just as much. Sounding much more urgent than their previous album, Dear and the Headlights pick up the pace of this album, while still maintaining the effortless beauty of the debut. There seems to be a heavy Modest Mouse influence on this record; several songs sound like they would fit in perfectly with *Good News For People Who Love Bad News*. In the first part of the disc, we hear the heavier influence. They start off with “I’m Not Crying. You’re Not Crying, Are You,” beginning slow, and rocketing off into a swirl of guitar and drums. Vocalist Ian Metzger sings with such passion that you are immediately hanging on every lyric pouring from his emotional voice. Ironically enough, we hear the biggest Modest Mouse influence on “Bad News.” They seem to paint a picture with this song, displaying whirling acoustic guitar, gentle drums and precise vocals, only to splash into chaos, settling on the canvas only at the very end. We witness Dear and the Headlights at their heaviest with “Carl Solomon Blues,” and keeping pace with the cascading “Wiletta.” The single “Talk About” is a standout, bouncy and light, zigzagging up and down. The contrast between the layers of noise and abundant cutouts make the track very intriguing. The piano-based “Saintly Rows” paces up and down, before going into a full sprint, and “Now It’s Over” features an interesting, rolling beat, and we find Dear and the Headlights trying a new song format that suits them well. With *Drunk Like Bible Times*, Dear and the Headlights seem to be moving in a new direction, more upbeat and fun than its predecessor, every track is a joy, but there is just never a moment of complete amazement. Good record? Yes. Great? Not quite, but Dear and the Headlights are a young band, and I have a feeling they will be stealing the spotlight in the near future.

8.4/10

Key Tracks: “Talk About” “I’m Not Crying. You’re Not Crying, Are You?” “Bad News”

Murs

*Murs For President*

Murs has been coasting under the radar for several years now. An underground hero, Murs is honest, relatable, and confident without being cocky, refreshing in a world full of overly confident rappers. Murs is rapping about what he knows. The world he grew up in, one that needs to change. He narrates the life he is living in a new, fresh way, a way you can’t help but want to hear. Murs picks eccentric beats that suit his off-beat demeanor, and we see him at his weakest when trying to make that commercial hit, like in “Lookin’ Fly” with will.i.am. When he is feeling natural with effortless flow and his unique beats, we hear Murs at his strongest. Obviously, from the title, we can tell that this is a very political record. He begins with “I’m Innocent,” a call for attention to the injustices in the world, feeling urgent and brash. “The Science” begins with jazz flute, thick drumming, and a scratchy, twisting chorus. “Everything –Murs” is the most beautiful track of the album. A beautiful piano and turntable infused song, with a truly magnificent chorus pairing Murs’ flow over emotional vocals, that will demand several listens.

by Joshua Boydston
“Road Is My Religion” starts hot and heavy with deep bass and a guitar riff, Murs rhyming in perfect sync with this rock beat. “So Comfortable” sounds bubbly and sexual, and “Time Is Now” is soulful and showcases verses from Snoop Dogg. “Think You Know Me” is slow and drowsy musically, but clear and deliberate vocally. A 70’s-esque sample kicks off “Me And This Jawn,” but then a dizzy, cavernous beat takes over, with Murs sounding strong and demanding over this shaky foundation. If you are looking for a fresh rapper, and an even more refreshing rap album in a world of copycat emcees, Murs For President is right up your alley. Every song is reaching out for greatness, not all grasp it, but some seem to have some sort of hold. Why not Murs for President? His campaign is the most intriguing of them all.

8.6/10

Key Tracks: “Everything –Murs” “Think You Know Me” “The Science”

The Broken West
Now Or Heaven

If you are looking for something light and fun, melodic and straightforward, the Broken West is the band for you. Their debut “I Can’t Go On, I’ll Go On” left many people excited about the potential of this band. They were something new, unashamed of pop aspirations while maintaining a low-key, natural feel to their music. Letting the Broken West do what feels natural is working out very well for the band. On Now Or Heaven, we see the Broken West maturing a little, but still staying breezy and warm. “Gwen, Now and Then” opens up the album. Unassuming and innocent, it can’t help but capture your attention and dance around in your head. The delicate “Auctioneer” picks up where “Gwen” left off. Vocalist Ross Flournoy’s delivery is leisurely and amiable, a delight to listen to. “Elm City” drags on a bit, but “Ambuscade” quickly picks it back up with a beautiful, iridescent guitar line. The Broken West let loose with “Perfect Games,” one of the most lively, entertaining songs of the album. The song won’t leave your mind; the paired vocals, lucid beat, and angled guitar match up to complete song writing perfection. “House of Lies” is vivacious, yet discreet, sinking its claws into you with little chance of escape. On “Terror for Two” we hear the band doing what it does best, writing pop songs for the intelligent. “Embassy Row” closes out the album, a wonderful, glistening song that is modest and alluring. The Broken West have crafted a gorgeous indie-pop album. It is far from perfect, and the album features a few lulls, but overall it’s a pleasurable experience. It’s not the type of record you completely focus upon, but it’s the perfect companion, and will leave you feeling warm and cozy inside.

8.3/10

Key Tracks: “Gwen, Now and Then” “Auctioneer” “Perfect Games”

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Thumbs up:
• No more election stress! Now we can get started thinking about '12.
• Bye week + Romo's Return = Time for the 'Boys to salvage their season!
• That we live in a country where power can shift from one party to another without people shooting each other in the streets. We just take this stuff for granted.

Thumbs down:
• Professors conspiring to have all of their tests take place the same week, if not the same day.
• Now that Halloween is over, what am I supposed to do with my costume?
• The media's obsession with Michelle Obama's wardrobe, or any politician's for that matter.

Upcoming Events:

November 11
Dr. Barbara Forrest lecture “Why Texans Shouldn't Let Creationists Mess With Science Education”
6:00 pm HT Ballroom

November 13
Human Rights Panel
7:00 pm HT Forum

November 15
Football at UTEP
8:05 pm

November 18–21
Shakespear’s “Twelfth Night”
8:00 pm Greer Carson Theatre, Owen Arts Center

SMU Totally Fictitious Fact:
If animals could run for office, Peruna would run for president. His VP choice of Twiggy, the water skiing squirrel, would be seen by many pundits as an overly bold maneuver, but that’s because Peruna is a maverick.