

The Lancaster County Democrat

The logo for the Lancaster County Democrats, featuring the text "LANCASTER COUNTY DEMOCRATS" in a bold, blue, sans-serif font. The word "DEMOCRATS" is larger and more prominent, with a small graphic of a person's head and shoulders integrated into the letter "O".

November 2025

Integrity – Say What You Mean and Mean What You Say. 11/4/2025

**By Kristi Egger,
Lancaster County Public Defender**

I believe in speaking plainly and clearly. After serving as a criminal defense attorney in the Public Defender's Office, I have found that is the best way to talk to people to make sure that I am understood. I do not obscure the facts or hide meanings. If I say I've been a public defender 36 years, that's what I mean, and that is the literal truth. I do not say that "I've got a career in legal defense spanning five decades" because that would be misleading and misunderstood as representing myself to have been an attorney for more than 50 years, and I'm not THAT old.

So, when a 45 year-old candidate says in their campaign material that their "legal career spans over 3 decades," you do the math. They have made a deliberately misleading statement. These verbal gymnastics obfuscate the truth in an attempt to trump up their actual years of experience. If they graduated from law school in 2005, that means that they've have been an attorney for 20 years. What's wrong with saying so?

I intentionally do not want to give the wrong impression. So, I say it the way it is. And that's why I do not see myself as a politician. I do not like double speak, "alternative facts," or "spin".

Recently, at the Central Committee Meeting of the Lancaster County Democratic Party, this same candidate asserted that, since she was hired (end of July 2024), "five people have left the Office." That may be technically correct, though again, this is deliberately misleading. Two of the five people who left were law clerks. We hire law clerks as second and third year law students, with the understanding that they will work there for 1 or 2 years while they are in law school. After they pass the Bar Exam, if there is a job opening, sometimes we hire them to work as deputy public defenders. However, most clerks are here for two years at the most. We do not count them in our

attrition rates, and to include them distorts the truth. Check out my article concerning attrition, and you will see that in Lancaster County, our office attrition rate is far lower than the national average.

All the talk about attrition or "burnout", is part of a narrative designed to sully the reputation of the Public Defender's Office, and by implication, the elected Public Defender. This sort of strategy is no different than shouting "there's a crisis at the border, and only I can fix it." Frankly, this attack on denigrates the hard-working, dedicated attorneys and support staff that serve our county. Everyone, attorneys and support staff in the Public Defender's Office, work very hard to represent our clients. To imply otherwise is disingenuous and insulting.

People who are employed here *want* to work here and have a desire to defend those who are most vulnerable. Most are not in it for the glory, esteem or money. Most do it to seek justice and fairness. The truth is that many attorneys seek jobs in our Office, and over the last year, we had many more qualified applicants than open positions. Our newest hire is a seasoned attorney with 25 years experience, who is enthusiastic about joining our Office and had been waiting for an opening for several months.

When I sought election in 2022, I ran against my former boss because I thought it was important that the elected Public Defender be present in the Office, in Court, and to take cases. I resigned from the Public Defender's Office after 32 years, because I felt it was the *ethical* thing to do. I did not want to cause discord and discomfort in the workplace. To have two candidates for Public Defender working in the Office can have the effect of making people feel like they should "pick a team." My hope in resigning before I ran for Office was that I would avoid creating stress and drama for the people still working there at the time.

My job as the elected Public Defender is to help ensure that our Office is zealously and effectively representing our clients. I manage the office to make sure the people that work there have what they need to fulfil our mission. I also take seriously my obligation to be

accountable to taxpayers. I do not see my job as “political” but rather as service to our community.

Because I don’t see myself as a politician, I have never sought the endorsement of political office holders. Nor have I sought money from politicians or deep-pocketed donors to whom I would then be beholden. Instead, I have received endorsements from my peers, mentors, and attorneys with whom I have worked and taught. My campaign has always been a grassroots one, talking directly to voters and *showing* them what I’m about. To do otherwise feels dishonest and antithetical to who I am...a plainspoken, hard-working, lifelong Public Defender.

The Republican Record on Health Care Is Atrocious

By Dennis Crawford



Conservatives have opposed every expansion of health care.

The current Republican government shutdown is about an age-old debate between the two parties about the proper role of government. The Democrats believe that government should help working families, the elderly, the sick, the poor and the disabled to gain access to decent and affordable health care. That’s why the Democrats are holding out for the extension of the ACA tax credits that would make health insurance much more affordable.

In contrast, the Republicans oppose the extension of these credits on various spurious grounds. They are saying we can’t afford them and that the benefits would largely benefit undocumented immigrants. The Republicans’ fiscal responsibility arguments are

laughable in light of their awful record on the deficit. The talking point about undocumented immigrants simply isn’t true.

The reality is that conservative and MAGA Republicans have long believed that it’s not a proper function of government to fund health care for working families and the under privileged. Instead, they believe government exists to comfort the already comfortable in the hopes that it all trickles down someday. That’s what the GOP government shutdown is all about.

The history of the debates over the expansion of health care lays bare the GOP belief that the federal government should not be involved in providing health care. Back in 1960, a washed up actor named Ronald Reagan, in a letter to Richard Nixon, compared John F. Kennedy’s Medicare plan to that of Karl Marx, stating, “Under the tousled boyish haircut it is still old Karl Marx.”

Subsequently, Reagan was the spokesman for the conservative opponents of the Medicare program. Reagan predicted an apocalyptic future for the country if Medicare were to pass: “We are going to spend our sunset years telling our children and our children’s children, what it once was like in America when men were free.”

Republican made similar predictions of doom during the debate over the ACA in 2009–10. Then House minority leader John Boehner predicted that if the ACA passed, it would be “Armageddon” and would “ruin our country.”

Not to be outdone, former Alaska governor Sarah Palin falsely claimed that the ACA would set up death panels to ration care. She predicted that she would have to appear in front of a death panel to beg for medical care for her special needs son.

Then Nebraska U.S. Senate hopeful Ben Sasse predicted in 2013 that if the ACA was implemented that the U.S. would “cease to exist.” Sasse never proposed a replacement plan, and the U.S. is still here.

The Republicans began to promise a replacement plan for the ACA as early as 2009. However, they never came up with one during the Obama Administration. The Republicans voted over 60 times during the Obama Administration to repeal the ACA without a replacement plan.

As we have grown to expect, all of the Republican predictions of disaster were proven wrong. By the time Barack Obama left office in 2017, 20 million formerly uninsured Americans had obtained insurance. The uninsured rate was reduced from 18% to a record low of 8.6%. Lifetime limits in policies were abolished, and insurance companies could no longer discriminate against the sick and the injured.

During his first presidential run in 2016, Donald Trump promised to replace Obama with

something “terrific.” He promised “great health care at a tiny fraction of the cost” and said it would be “so easy.” Trump and the Republicans soon found out that governing is a lot harder than campaigning.

The Republicans finally unveiled their replacement plan in 2017 with a bill that was commonly labeled as Trump Care. This legislation would have taken away insurance from 24 million people per the CBO. In addition, pre-existing condition protections were gutted. The bill was so bad that the House Republicans voted to exempt themselves from it. Fortunately, this disastrous bill was killed in the Senate by one vote.

The next Republican stab at health care was in this year’s big ugly bill. According to the CBO, approximately 15 million people will lose health coverage and become uninsured by 2034 because of the Medicaid and ACA marketplace cuts in the Republican ugly bill, the law’s failure to extend enhanced premium tax credits for ACA marketplace coverage, and other harmful ACA marketplace rule changes.

The Republicans’ partisan CR aimed at re-opening the government would maintain those devastating health care cuts and increase premiums by 114% in the ACA marketplaces. The Republicans would like the Democrats to vote for these premium hikes so they can deflect blame during the 2026 elections.

The Democrats should make an offer to the Republicans that they only will support a government funding deal that restores all of the health care cuts in the Big Ugly Bill. In addition, they should also demand a nationally televised budget meeting at the White House where Trump and all of the GOP party leaders get in front of the cameras and promise to honor that deal. They should settle for nothing less.

The reality is that the Senate Republicans could pass their CR at any time with 51 votes. The Senate GOP has already waived the 60 vote requirement three times this year.

Representative Marjorie Taylor Greene posted: “I’m going to go against everyone on this issue because when the tax credits expire this year my own adult children’s insurance premiums for 2026 are going to DOUBLE, along with all the wonderful families and hard-working people in my district...If Republican Senators wanted to pass the CR and reopen the government they could, by using the nuclear option to override the 60 vote rule and pass the CR with a simple majority vote.”

The Senate GOP needs to put on their big boy pants and pass their 114% premium increase on a party line vote. They can then try to explain it to the voters in 2026. Governing is hard.

People are about to be hit with one of the biggest premium hikes in over a decade and Trump and the Republicans would rather keep the federal government closed than do anything about it. MAGA Means Morons Are Governing America. Throw the rascals out! Blue wave 2026!

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Bryan again (and again) runs for president

By Jim Schaffer

In the closing years of the nineteenth century, William Jennings Bryan had become the best-known critic of American imperialism and used his popularity to run for president two more times, in 1900 and again in 1908. He became the dominant—and most controversial—figure in his party. Bryan himself was in constant demand as a speaker and writer, which earned him a tidy income and enabled him to give up his legal practice.

Another presidential campaign

As he began to plan for a second presidential campaign, Bryan enlisted the help of his brother Charlie. Together they sifted through the mountains of letters Bryan had received to create a huge card file of admirers. Charlie jotted down everything about each correspondent: party affiliation, job, religion, even income. He updated the file for the next thirty years and used it to send out regular mailings to the Bryan network. By 1912 the index had grown to half a million. and represented, in effect, the type of database that would become a familiar part of politics.

Bryan's enlistment

But international events threw a wrench in Bryan's plans. On April 11, 1898, Pres. McKinley asked Congress to intervene in Cuba; two weeks later, the U.S. declared war on Spain. Bryan sympathized with the cause but wondered whether as a 38-year-old with no military experience, he should join the armed forces.

Nevertheless, he decided to enlist and was appointed colonel of the 3rd Nebraska Volunteer Infantry. His brief five-month stint in the military, however, proved to be a mostly frustrating experience. He and his troops were sent to Florida for training where several died from typhoid and malaria. The healthier men kept busy drilling, reading, and trying to keep an army of tropical insects and snakes out of their tents. Two weeks after Bryan and his men arrived in camp, Spain sued for peace.

"I had five months of peace in the army," Bryan quipped, "and resigned to take part in a fight." The "fight" was the annexation of the Philippines, which the Spanish had surrendered for \$20 million. McKinley and most Republicans argued that the United States had an obligation to "Christianize" and "civilize" the seven million inhabitants of the vast archipelago. Bryan, along with most Democrats, argued that colonization would rob Americans of their claim to moral high

ground, as well as saddle the nation with a new "race problem."

A new campaign begins

During the late winter and spring of 1899, Bryan resumed his presidential campaign. He filled auditoriums and crowded out every other story in the local press. But reflecting on the 1900 campaign, journalist Henry Pringle wrote, "For all his magnetism, Bryan always spoke for disorganized minorities. They disagreed violently among themselves." Only an eternal optimist would have bet on Bryan's chances.

To have any hope of winning, the Democrats had to stage a spirited and unified convention. They gathered in Kansas City—a location farther west than any major party had chosen before. That summer editor William White tried to explain why Bryan, despite holding no office, had become "the most prominent man in the United States." For White, Bryan's personality had made him a popular hero, but it didn't necessarily make him the best person to govern. "There is really no more reason for electing an orator to office," he wrote, "than for electing a fiddler. Both talents rouse the emotions."

For a decade, Bryan's renown had depended on his ability to deliver a memorable speech. Now on his second presidential campaign, would it be enough? After repeating his claim that the election was "a contest between democracy and plutocracy," Bryan focused most of his arguments on the war in the Philippines.

Meanwhile, Bryan had a new opponent to consider. In 1898, Teddy Roosevelt had narrowly won election as governor of New York. His speaking style quickly became as famous as Bryan's. A year later, when the Republican Vice President died, delegates at the GOP convention chose Teddy to replace him on the ticket, hoping for a candidate able to match Bryan's popular appeal, especially since the incumbent president, McKinley, would do most of his campaigning from his front porch in Ohio.

Natural born rivals

Roosevelt and Bryan were destined to be rivals. Born just two years apart, they disagreed about almost everything. During the campaign Roosevelt decided to beat the Democratic nominee at his own game—making it a point to travel more miles and give more speeches than Bryan. He devoted most of his energy to the western and midwestern states that his party had either lost in 1896 or won by only a few thousand votes.

The result of the 1900 presidential race didn't surprise anyone. Compared to the Democrats, the GOP had ten times the money and a much more efficient

party structure. The Republican message was essentially “let well enough alone,” and it proved successful. McKinley defeated Bryan by more than 6 percent of the popular vote. The morning after the election, Bryan even had to face the loss of his own state, city, and precinct.

Not done yet

Despite this second loss, Bryan never considered retiring from the national scene. He knew he could make a substantial income on the lecture circuit and that no other Democrat could match his following or his ability to make news. So, he became a freelance political celebrity—from his base in the Lincoln suburbs, Bryan spent the next four years maintaining his image as the independent conscience of his party.

But defeat in the “second battle” cost Bryan the leadership of his party. Men who had been grumbling for eight long years about him now exulted that Bryan had become “a dwindling figure and a weakening force” whose statements could be dismissed. Still, the conservatives were worried, as they should have been, about Bryan’s future.

Life in Lincoln

Many of us have driven past Bryan Hospital, at 48th and Sumner, without noticing an older building right next to the hospital, yet that building, with a few more votes could have become the Western White House.

In 1902, Bryan, his wife Mary and their three children moved into a newly built mansion four miles east of downtown Lincoln. Will called the house “Fairview,” because it overlooked thirty-five acres of “beautiful farmland.” He referred to the estate as “the Monticello of the West” and invited politicians and diplomats from all over the world to come for a stay.

Bryan paid \$17,000 for the construction, using the proceeds of a book he wrote, “*The First Battle*,” describing his run for the presidency. Now on the National Historic Register, Fairview was actually “a working farm,” Kathi Vontz, a volunteer there, said. “He wanted to entertain politicians and dignitaries, which he did. In fact, the porch was open originally, but several years after the house was built, they enclosed it, to have more room. This is a beautiful home.”

Stepping aside, slightly

Four years later, the 1904 Democratic nominating convention took place in St. Louis where Bryan gave his party yet another rousing speech. One of the reporters covering that convention was H.L. Mencken, who, at age 24, was already a star reporter for the *Baltimore Herald*. Though Mencken would roast

Bryan in the 1920s “as a quack pure and unadulterated,” he remembered Bryan’s talk at the St. Louis convention as perhaps the best political speech he had ever heard.

Democrats that year chose Alton Parker as their nominee, an unfortunate choice that led to a landslide Roosevelt victory. The results did, however, vindicate Bryan. As Teddy Roosevelt took the oath of office in the late winter of 1905, every American who cared about politics knew that Bryan was once again the leader of the opposition. It was a good time for him to share his singular mission with the world.

Globetrotting

On September 27, 1905, Will, Mary and two of their children left San Francisco for a trip around the world, planning to arrive back in New York the following August after visiting Asia, the Middle East, and Europe. Bryan paid for the tour by giving speeches and writing a weekly letter—part travelogue, part commentary—that was published each week in the Hearst press and several other papers. Unconventional as ever, Bryan managed to become the favorite for the 1908 presidential nomination while sailing through the Philippines, strolling around the Holy Land, and conversing with the King of England and the emperor of Japan.

Chautauqua

Once back home from his global adventure, Bryan found a new way to make himself heard. Beginning in 1904, he spent the better part of twenty summers as the star attraction on the Chautauqua programs that entertained millions of Americans across rural areas of the country. One observer noted that Bryan was good for “forty acres of parked Fords, anywhere, at any time of the day or night.”

Year after year, Bryan was Chautauqua’s greatest name and biggest draw. Brother Charlie handled the speaking arrangements from the *Commoner* office in Lincoln, routinely scheduling two talks per day. During the summer, Will earned at least \$2,000 a week—as much as a national headliner on the vaudeville circuit. But the Chautauquas never played well in metropolitan centers, and Bryan’s image as a virtuous celebrity appealed mainly to rural audiences.

The Chautauqua tours helped Bryan refresh his fame. They kept him in the news, extended his popularity beyond Democratic ranks, and made him a good deal of money. Once he learned he could stay in the limelight by preaching how to cure the ills of the world, he turned that task into a career. “Both writing and speaking furnish such agreeable occupations,” he scribbled in *The Commoner*, “that one does not notice the loss of a little thing like the presidency.”

Bryan returns

At the end of August 1906, Bryan returned from his trip around the world to a monumental welcome home party. Among Democrats, Bryan alone had emerged from the debacle of the 1904 election with a national following. So, when a group offered to give Bryan “a big reception” upon his return, party officials from every region agreed to take part. New York City took on the trappings of a national political festival.

At the age of 46, Bryan no longer looked like the “boy orator” who had once amazed a nation but now he seemed more like an amiable businessman with a product to sell. With the help of the size and efficiency of the machine his brother Charlie had assembled, could Bryan revive his political fortunes?

To do so, he had to reconsider some of his positions. Should he to promote a plan to nationalize the railroads is would divide nation the railroads no choice but to he reconsider some of his concede his positions. Should he continue to promote a plan to nationalize the railroads? This would divide the Democrats, who had been out of power for a decade, and perhaps defeat his chances for a third nomination. SHe had no choice but to concede the issue. By retreating, Bryan preserved his status as the man to beat for the 1908 nomination.

Election strategy

As the election year of 1908 began, Bryan looked for a strategy he hoped would appeal to the voting public. He decided to support a bundle of reform proposals that Roosevelt had begun. Bryan also built an alliance with organized labor that later would do much to keep TR’s cousin Franklin Delano Roosevelt in the White House.

The decision to hold the nominating convention in Denver, a city Bryan had twice carried by wide margins, was evidence that Democrats were on Bryan’s side. “To be suspected of disloyalty to Bryan in those days,” a journalist recalled, “was almost like buying a ticket to private life.”

Early on the morning of July 11, Bryan was nominated on the first ballot with nearly 90 percent of the votes. A day later, delegates named Senator John Kern from Indiana to join him on the ticket. Unfortunately, neither he nor his allies had more than the vaguest idea of how to win the election. On the plus side, however, Bryan had the support of the two-million-member American Federation of Labor. In the

past, AFL leaders had been wary of endorsing a candidate, a step sure to cause internal strife, but now the nation’s largest interest group was immersed in partisan politics to stay.

Early recordings

Bryan did discover a new and inexpensive way to reach the public. In July he recorded ten brief speeches while at home in Lincoln. The technology, invented by Thomas Edison two decades before, was still quite primitive. Sitting in his library at Fairview, Bryan had to speak loudly and slowly into a phonograph, which transferred the sounds onto a wax cylinder. Recordings could last no more than four minutes, and extraneous noises marred the results. Broadcasting was still more than a decade in the future, but Bryan’s innovation was a step in that direction.

Whether Bryan would seek the support of Black voters was another matter. In 1896, he had welcomed the endorsement of Cyrus Bell, an Omaha Republican who edited the only black newspaper in the state. But eight years later, when his opponent Taft tried to make inroads into the white South, Bryan was unwilling to challenge Jim Crow laws. He denied the rumor, for example, that he had served lunch at Fairview to “colored men,” though he admitted Blacks would “call” at his home from time to time.

Despite everything, Bryan thought he could win. Not since Grover Cleveland’s last campaign had Democrats been so united, and they were running on a tough, anti-corporate platform that seemed in sync with the reformist mood of the nation. Bryan spent most of his time stumping in New York and the industrial Midwest, and the size and passion of the crowds always buoyed his confidence.

But on November 3 the Republican William Howard Taft won a victory by over 1.2 million votes, much closer than the 1904 election. Once again, the Republicans swept every state in the Northeast and along the Great Lakes. Outside the Old South, Bryan managed to capture only Kentucky, Nevada, Colorado, Oklahoma, and his own Nebraska. “We have beaten them to a frazzle,” gloated Roosevelt. A Democratic daily paper put it like this: “Mr. Bryan, though a great campaigner, is a weak candidate.”

A kingmaker

Bryan would not run for office again, but he would help Woodrow Wilson win the Democratic nomination and then the presidency. Bryan served as his secretary of state. And near the end of his life Bryan finally got the chance to defend the Bible in the Scopes Trial. [second of a three-part series]

Outraged Farmers Blame Ag Monopolies as Catastrophic Collapse Looms

By Chris Bennet

The inescapable crop math of sustained crippling commodity prices and high input costs has many growers screaming for immediate relief.

However, bailouts are Band-Aids over bullet holes, contend farmers desperate for fundamental change.

“This is what farmers know and experience,” says producer Adam Chappell. “You can bet your ass, the monopolies will get their money. If you think otherwise, you’ve got blinders on.”

Farmers are not crying wolf. The wolf is real and right outside the door in the form of generational collapse.

The inescapable crop math of sustained crippling commodity prices and high input costs has many growers screaming for immediate relief, potentially via aid payments in late 2025 or early 2026. However, bailouts are Band-Aids over bullet holes.

Alarm has turned to extreme despair on many operations. On Sept. 2, 2025, a telltale farm meeting went nuclear. Field representatives from the offices of Sen. Tom Cotton, Sen. John Boozman and Rep. Rick Crawford, along with a rep sent by Gov. Sarah Sanders, initially intended to speak with a handful of growers in Brookland, Ark.

Instead, 400-plus farmers packed the house to overflow on a Tuesday — despite the pressing demands of rice and corn harvest and a mere three days’ notice — and unleashed a chain of grievances.

Where does blame lie? Where to begin digging for a long-term solution?

Amid the fallout of the Sept. 2 meeting, three farmers sound off on markets, monopolies, moratoriums and mismanagement in U.S. agriculture. They spare no sacred cows.

Adam Chappell: “This is the Worst Economy of My Lifetime ...”

Denial ain’t just a river in Egypt, says Adam Chappell. “Year after year of sweeping all this under the rug and pretending it’s not happening has got us to this point. Years of barely squeaking by, surviving with a bailout and then doing it all again. That is the definition of insanity.”

Growing 2,400 acres of soybeans, rice, and corn in east Arkansas’ Woodruff County, [Chappell](#), 46, accuses USDA of head-in-the-sand policy: “I’m sick of USDA graphs saying agriculture income is set to rise. They’re baking cattle and coming payments into their recipe and pretending things are good.

“This is the worst agriculture economy of my lifetime over at least the past three years, and right this minute, guys are going under — as in [bankruptcy](#) or leaving the farm,” he exclaims. “The solution is supposedly another bailout or a gap payment the following year? Wake the hell up: Where do you think that money is gonna go? It won’t go to farmers. It’ll go into supplier’s pockets.”

The entire agriculture industry — a bedrock of U.S. security — rests squarely on the shoulders of the American farmer. Ironically, that same farmer is the only player in the ag chain who cannot pass costs down the ladder.

Blame partially belongs on “Big Ag,” Chappell contends.

“Seed, chemicals or fertilizer, it’s all in the hands of a few companies that are the only game in town. You want to fix farming? Start a federal investigation on those big companies. Booming quarterly earnings and big stock dividends make no sense when farmers can’t pinch a penny.”

“If corn prices were to suddenly jump this month, nitrogen prices will magically rise the following year,” he continues. “If soybean prices explode to \$15 tomorrow, a bag of beans will climb to \$90. Guaranteed. Potash will hit \$1,000. The monopoly problem is real.”

Behind closed doors, away from microphones and cameras, Chappell says federal politicians acknowledge “monopoly influence.”

“They all tell me they’re aware of a monopoly problem, and they don’t deny it exists. But they do nothing. Instead, we get bailouts and the money slips right out of our hands and into the big corporations we owe the money to — the monopolies. Meanwhile, those same corporations lobby for us to get the bailouts. Get it?”

“This is real talk,” Chappell describes. “This is what farmers know and experience. You can bet your ass, the monopolies will get their money. If you think otherwise, you’ve got blinders on.”

Kenneth Graves: “At Every Level of Agriculture, There Must Be a Reckoning.”

The Sept. 2 farm meeting, held a stone’s throw outside Jonesboro at Woods Chapel Baptist, was monumental, says retired Dewitt grower Kenneth Graves, 71. “I’d say 400 people or so showed up, maybe more. We’re talking about people standing outside the building in the middle of harvest. That tells you all you need to know.”

Dwarfing expectations, the line of overflow attendees wrapped around the building on Sept. 2.

Graves, chairman of the [Arkansas Rice Growers Association](#), understands severe hardship. He farmed

through the anemic ag crisis of the 1980s. However, the current unrest is a “coming disaster” unlike anything he’s witnessed across a 50-year career: “I’ve never seen this kinda look in farmers’ eyes. It’s fear. And it’s based in undeniable facts.”

In August 2025, Graves sent an open letter to media and politicians, pleading for attention to eye-popping numbers. “My letter told what things are like right now. In our geography, it looks like you need to yield 100-300-300 to stay ahead,” Graves describes. “That’s 100-bushel beans, 300-bushel rice and 300-bushel corn. Basic Arkansas averages are 56-bushel beans, 166-bushel rice and 175-bushel corn. In a nutshell, we are going over a cliff. Banks are forecasting farm bankruptcies at 25% to 40%, and the dirty secret is out. Everyone knows it; everyone feels it.”

How does the industry even begin to crawl out of the hole? Start with markets, Graves urges. “Our international competitors play under the table and get hidden subsidies. The whole dynamic is off. At every level of agriculture, there must be a reckoning. That certainly includes seed, chemical and machinery companies. Back off.”

Death of a thousand cuts, according to Graves: “It’s been building over time and now it’s on the doorstep. You can argue that guys will be able to get back in their fields next spring, but that’s just denying the inevitable. Whether this year or next year or the next, there’s a crash coming.”

“In a nutshell, we are going over a cliff,” says Kenneth Graves. “Banks are forecasting farm bankruptcies at 25% to 40%, and the dirty secret is out. Everyone knows it; everyone feels it.”

Graves advocates for immediate political intervention. “I’m urging legislators at all levels to act now,” he says. “We’re talking about our food and agriculture security, and when that tanks, the economic effect will spill over every rural region in the country.

“Remember when that Chinese spy balloon flew over the U.S. in 2023, and our politicians did nothing? They made a lot of noise and acted too late, shooting it down after it collected data across the country,” Graves adds. “It’s past time to act. Our politicians either recognize this now or let us be some other country’s economic hostage later.”

Bailey Buffalo: “Farmers, Not the Giant Agriculture Manufacturers, Are the Ones Hurting.”

Adios to fifth- and sixth-generation farmers?

Yes, says Bailey Buffalo, 40, owner of [Buffalo Grain Systems](#) in Jonesboro, and president of [Farm Protection Alliance](#).

“Horror stories. The pain is unreal. Worst farming situation I’ve seen in my life,” Buffalo says. “Look at Extension [University of Arkansas] numbers — corn growers losing \$240 per acre; soybeans losing \$144 per acre; and rice losing \$380 per acre. The cotton growers may be worst of all.”

Agriculture’s handbrake must be pulled, says Bailey Buffalo, with an economic reversal contingent on a deep look at consolidation, moratoriums, and diversification.

Storms can be weathered during agricultural tumult, Buffalo maintains — except when a thumb rests on the scale. Consolidation, he says, has turned a market rut into a debacle.

“Basic macroeconomics (CR4) tells us that if the top four competitors in any sector control more than 40% of the market, abuses become likely and that sector is approaching a monopolistic risk. That’s where I believe we’re at in farming,” he explains. “We can’t climb out of this mess partly because we’re at the mercy of agriculture monopolies.

“Take corn, cotton, rice and soybean seed. They’re at 70% to 90% control by corporate cartels, in my opinion. Take fertilizer where the top four players control about 82% of the market,” he adds. “If 40% of any sector is a monopoly risk, then what the hell do our agriculture percentages tell us?”

Despite Buffalo’s alarm, the input market contains exceptions, he notes: “I can name small seed suppliers and fertilizer suppliers who are providing very high-quality products at fractions of what those much larger corporations are charging. The farmers just have to put the extra work into finding them and into getting their orders in early as possible. They are proving that it’s possible for small operations to sneak into corners of the market.”

Yet, exceptions do not move the overall dial. “Farmers are literally losing money per acre while Big Agriculture is making hundreds of millions of dollars and more,” Buffalo says. “How can that be sustainable? You can make all the excuses or justifications you like, but any fair-minded person knows the situation is way out of balance.”

“At every level of agriculture, there must be a reckoning,” says Kenneth Graves. “That certainly includes seed, chemical, and machinery companies. Back off.”

Bailout cash is a “gross Band-Aid,” according to Buffalo. “The subsidies send farmers back to the pit, over and over. The money trickles to lenders, loans, suppliers, banks or somewhere else in chain. Bailouts are the same as kicking the can down the road,” he adds.

That “can” has grown exceedingly heavy and the end of the road is in sight, Buffalo says: “Some people

blame tariffs. Some blame the current president. Some blame the last president. Some blame other politicians. In the background of all this blame, nobody is looking at where farmers spend their money. Farmers pay monopolies and often feel they have no choice.”

Agriculture’s handbrake must be pulled, Buffalo says, with an economic reversal contingent on a deep look at consolidation, moratoriums and diversification — via both a federal and state lens. In his opinion, the following four changes are in order:

1. Start with monopolies. “State constitutions have anti-trust legislation. Create smoke at the state level and force USDA and the feds to follow.”

2. Put an indefinite moratorium on all mergers and acquisitions in the food and ag sectors. “End consolidation and demand long-lasting change.”

3. Get a handle on D.C. lobbyists. According to a 2024 report, [Cultivating Control](#): *Lobbying by the agribusiness sector has steadily increased: In just the last five years, the agribusiness sector’s annual lobbying expenditures have risen 22%, from \$145 million in 2019 to \$177 million in 2023. And each year, agribusiness spends more on federal lobbying than the oil and gas industry and the defense sector.*

A five-year “cooling off” lobbying period should be set in stone for any government official exiting office, Buffalo says: “Defense, SEC going to Wall Street, any of them, including agriculture. You should never, never be allowed to retire from an ag committee in Congress and then run over to a board at Tyson, Cargill, ADM, John Deere or any other company.”

4. The grain industry must diversify. “I think diversification must be part of any solution. I’m talking about an effort to grow all our food in this country. Our grain goes to feed and ethanol, but we need a structure to grow our own edible food as well, and protect our national security like never before.”

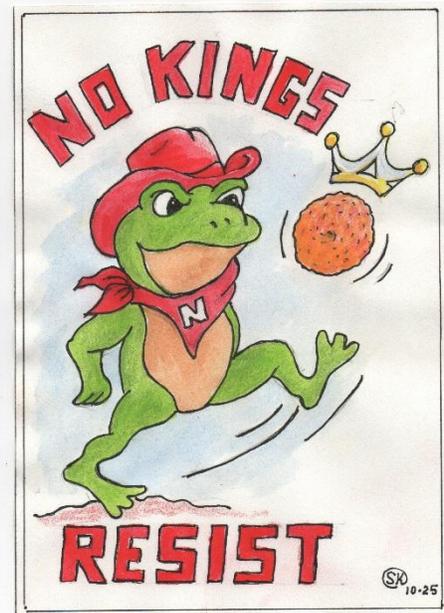
The entire agriculture industry—a bedrock of U.S. security—rests squarely on the shoulders of the American farmer. Ironically, that same farmer is the only player in the ag chain who cannot pass costs down the ladder.

At the Sept. 2 spillover meeting in northeast Arkansas, Buffalo was present, listening to the plight of the common grower. The meeting was noted by media and politicians as evidence of a dire “agriculture crisis.” Ironically, no such crisis exists, Buffalo asserts.

“They don’t get it and therefore they can’t properly find the solution,” he says. “Right now, if I was to walk into Congress and ask all the senators and reps, ‘Who thinks the *agriculture industry* is hurting to the point of collapse?’ all the hands would go up. Instead,

the question should be, ‘Who thinks *farmers* are hurting to the point of collapse?’”

“There’s a giant difference between the two questions, and that difference is indicative of the separation between local Ag and Big Ag,” Buffalo concludes. “Farmers, not the giant agriculture manufacturers, are the ones hurting to the point of going belly up. There’s no solving any of this until that difference is recognized.”



The Economy Does Better Under Democratic Presidents

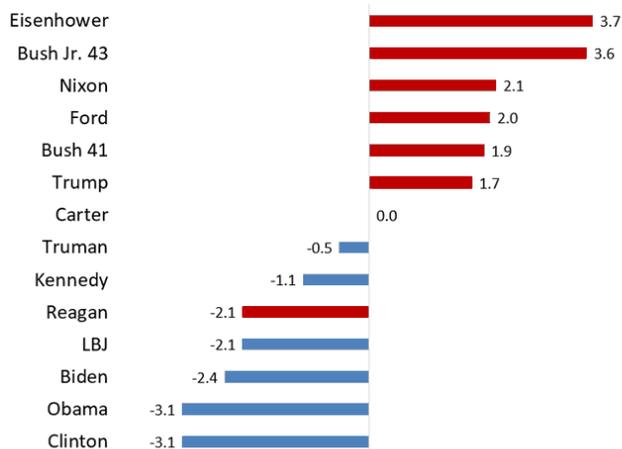
By Dennis Crawford

One of my objectives as a writer is to rebut the phony conventional wisdom that benefits the Republican Party. A majority of voters continue to believe that the Republicans are better for the economy. The reality is that the Republicans aren't better for the economy. The last three Republican presidents have presided over a recession and the last three Democratic presidents have presided over an economic boom. Trump is currently in the process of driving the once thriving U.S. economy into the ditch.

From a Tweet storm from David Doney on June 25, 2025: "Republican presidents are terrible for the economy and have been for decades. Let's run the numbers. First, the unemployment rate has gone up for every Republican president since WW2 except Reagan (and fell for every Democrat but Carter.

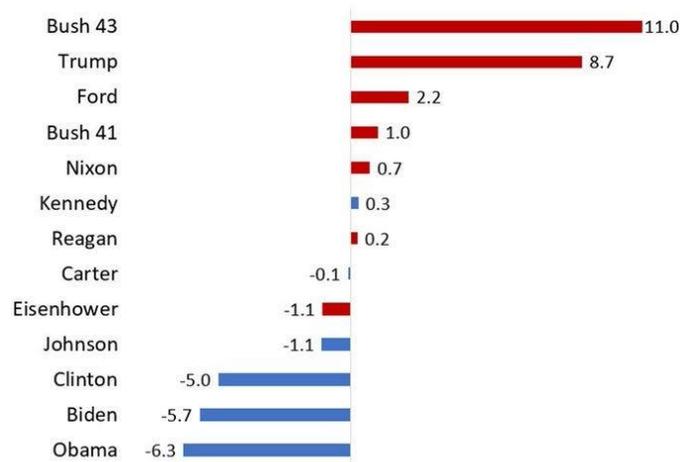
Budget deficits increased for every Republican but Eisenhower and fell under every Democrat but Kennedy. Who is the party of fiscal responsibility? Hint: Team Blue.

Change in Unemployment Rate %
Start to End of Presidency



Source Data: FRED, January 1948-January 2025

Change in Budget Deficit (% GDP)
Start to End of Presidency



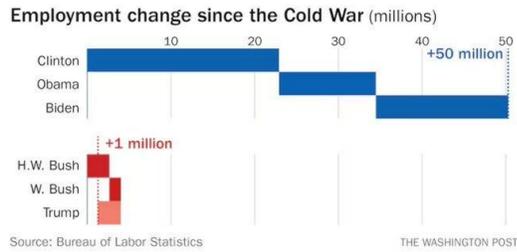
Source Data: CBO Historical Tables

10 of the last 11 recessions started under Republicans. Recessions cause unemployment and budget deficits to rise, as tax revenue falls and government spending increases automatically for UI and Medicaid even without stimulus.

Both Bushes had weak job creation, and Trump had negative job creation, so the jobs score since 1989 is about: Democrats: +50 million GOP: +1 million (not a typo!) It's about 51-1 now. If you pretend the pandemic didn't happen and give '09 to Bush 43, it's about 46-6.

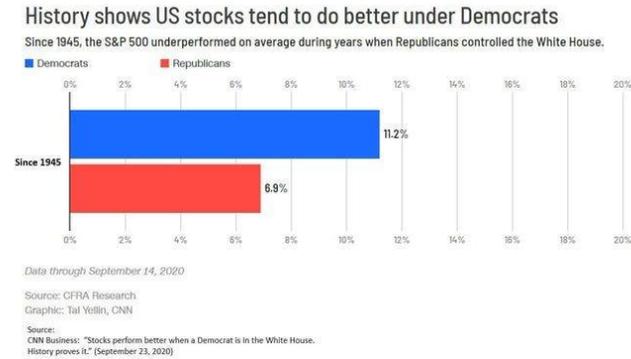
10 Of The Last 11 ECONOMIC RECESSIONS Began Under Republican Presidents

2020	Trump	2007	Bush II
2001	Bush II	1990	Bush I
1981	Reagan	1980	Carter
1973	Nixon	1969	Nixon
1960	Eisenhower	1957	Eisenhower
1953	Eisenhower		



**Stock market does worse under
Republicans. Annual rate of return since 1945:
Democrats: +11.2% GOP: +6.9%**

Democratic Presidents Have Higher Stock Market Returns (Truman to Trump)



It is truly inexplicable that a majority of voters believe the Republicans are better for the economy. It represents a real failure by Democrats and the corporate media. It's up to us Democrats to get the message out. Republican propaganda depends upon voter amnesia. It's our duty to refresh voter memories. Let's do it!

Sources:

David Doney on June 25, 2025:

https://x.com/David_Charts2/status/1938064928960602181

https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/U.S._economic_performance_by_presidential_party#



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