

POLICY WATCH – September 2014

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The wonders of fall are upon us! This is also the season of crazy politics and democracy in action. In this issue we look at new studies that reveal that voters are more than unhappy, they are mad! They are tired of both political parties and even more tired of hearing and seeing what can't be done.

We also look at what is happening post-recession. When do we stop seeing this time as part of the long, slow recovery and start seeing it as the way things are from now on? Read on to find out more about why so many people are pessimistic about the future.

At the same time people are lamenting the lack of leadership, we at NBLC are celebrating the leaders in our midst! We are delighted that we are almost sold out of tickets for our Leaders of the North Bay Awards Luncheon and urge you to purchase your ticket today if you don't want to miss it.

Best,

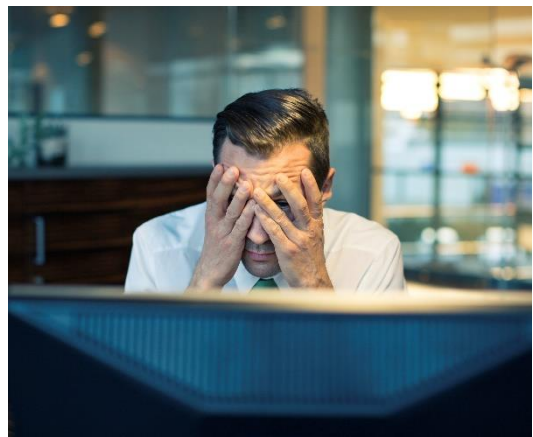
A handwritten signature in purple ink that reads "Cynthia Murray".

Cynthia

The Current American Psyche and this November's Elections

The America of the 21st Century is a country in transition. It is apparent that the changes seen in the Great Recession were not transitory but lasting, creating a new American psyche and a country that is trying to find its footing in these changed circumstances. Study after study is showing that Americans feel a void in leadership and have lost their optimism about the future.

In "Lost in America," by Frank Bruni (New York Times, August 25, 2014), Bruni says, "More and more I'm convinced that America right now isn't a country dealing with a mere dip in its mood and might. It's a country surrendering to a new identity and era, in which optimism is quaint and the frontier anything but endless. There's a feeling of helplessness that makes the political horizon, including the coming midterm elections,



especially unpredictable. Conventional wisdom has seldom been so useless, because pessimism in this country isn't usually this durable or profound."

While the North Bay has fared better than much of the country, there is a growing malaise. Income inequality, shrinking wages, the housing crisis, increasing costs of living, and continuing unemployment or underemployment of less educated workers are leading many to believe that the world has changed and that the future will not be as bright for their children.

As Bruni says, "Americans are apprehensive about where they are and even more so about where they're going. But they don't see anything or anyone to lead them into the light. They're sour on the president, on the Democratic Party and on Republicans most of all. They're hungry for hope but don't spot it on the menu. Where that tension leaves us is anybody's guess."

Citing results from a Wall Street Journal/NBC News poll, Bruni says, the poll found that "76 percent of Americans ages 18 and older weren't confident that their children's generation would fare better than their own. That's a blunt repudiation of the very idea of America, of what the "land of opportunity" is supposed to be about. The poll also showed that 71 percent thought that the country was on the wrong track. While that represents a spike, it also affirms a negative mind-set that's been fixed for a scarily long time. As the Democratic strategist Doug Sosnik has repeatedly noted, more Americans have been saying "wrong track" than "right track" for at least a decade now, and something's got to give."

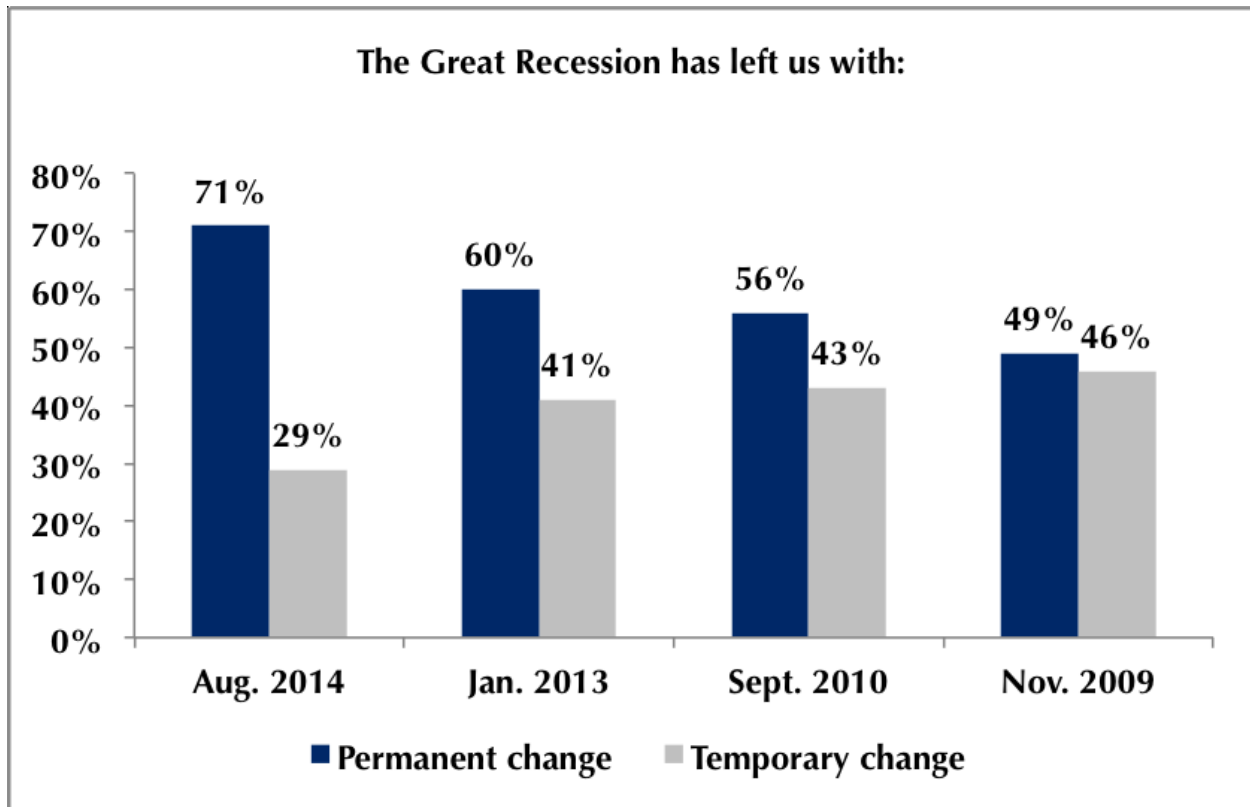
Where are the leaders? How does America get back on track?

Poll after poll has found that Americans no longer trust the federal government to solve national problems. Bruni says, "The intensity of Americans' disgust with Congress came through in another recent poll, by ABC News and The Washington Post. Typically, Americans lambaste the institution as a whole but make an exception for the politician representing their district. But in this poll, for the first time in the 25 years that ABC and The Post had been asking the question, a majority of respondents — 51 percent — said that they disapproved even of the job that their own House member was doing."

Remarkably, given that disgust, experience has shown it doesn't translate into the voters showing their Congressional representatives the door in elections. Says Bruni, "Congress wasn't in any great favor in 2012, and 90 percent of the House members and 91 percent of the senators who sought re-election won it. The tyranny of money, patronage, name recognition and gerrymandering in American politics guaranteed as much. Small wonder that 79 percent of Americans indicated dissatisfaction with the system in the Journal/NBC poll."

This midterm election will be determined by voters who have lost faith in both parties, voters who see no hope of breaking the gridlock in Washington and voters who see their futures being eroded as they earn less, work harder and go deeper in debt paying for housing and college educations. Bruni observes, "The new jobs don't feel as sturdy as the old ones. It takes more hours to make the same money or support the same lifestyle. Students amass debt. Upward mobility increasingly seems a mirage, a myth."

Widespread Perceptions of Permanent Economic Change



Source: Mark Szeltner, Carl Van Horn, and Cliff Zukin, *Diminished Lives and Futures: A Portrait of America in the Great-Recession Era*, January 2013. Jessica Godofsky, Carl Van Horn, and Cliff Zukin, *American Workers Assess an Economic Disaster*, September 2010. Carl Van Horn and Cliff Zukin, *The No Confidence Economy*, November 2009 (New Brunswick, NJ: Heldrich Center for Workforce Development, Rutgers University).

But here's the rub. "People are mad at Democrats," John Hickenlooper, the Democratic governor of Colorado, told Bruni. "But they're certainly not happy with Republicans. They're mad at everything." Colorado, like the North Bay, has low unemployment. With that state's unemployment rate at 5.3 percent, Bruni says, "it suggests that this isn't just about the economy. It's about fear. It's about impotence. We can't calm the world in the way we'd like to, can't find common ground and peace at home, can't pass needed laws, can't build necessary infrastructure, can't, can't, can't."

In our hyperconnected world, we can find anything out through Google and know in the blink of an eye what is happening worldwide through the 24/7 news coverage. But this knowledge isn't translating to power. Americans are holding their noses and voting with no hope of seeing an end to the infighting and posturing. No wonder that Journal/NBC poll found that "60 percent of Americans said that we were a nation in decline. How sad. Sadder still was this: Nowhere in the survey was there any indication that they saw a method or a messenger poised to arrest it."

There is one last "can't." We can't surrender to pessimism, to giving up on the American dream and all that is right about our country. We must foster leadership and vote for the best candidate and keep hope alive that leaders will emerge that are right for this time. Our nation has passed through hard times before

and grown stronger from the struggle. The messy democratic process may periodically let us down but it will not fail us.

NBLC Endorses Candidates and Ballot Measures – Remember to vote – the midterm elections matter!



North Bay Leadership Council supports candidates and ballot measures that will bring greater economic competitiveness, sound public policy and prosperity to the North Bay. We are proud to make the following endorsements for November 2014 election:

Santa Rosa City Council:
Tom Schwedhelm
John Sawyer
Ashle Crocker

Petaluma Mayor:
Mike Harris

Petaluma City Council:
Chris Albertson
Dave King

Rohnert Park:
Amy Ahanotu
Pam Stafford

Santa Rosa Junior College Board
Bob Burdo
Don Zumwalt
Kathleen Doyle
Napa City Council:
Juliana Inman
Peter Mott

Previously endorsed in the June Primary:
James Gore for Sonoma County Supervisor – District 4
Mike McGuire for State Senate – District 2
Mark Levine for Assembly – District 10
Bill Dodd for Assembly – District 4

Ballot Measures

Sonoma County Measure H (Santa Rosa Junior College Bond) – SUPPORT
County of Marin Measure A (MERA parcel tax measure) -- SUPPORT
Prop 1 (State Water Bond) -- SUPPORT

Leaders of the North Bay Awards Luncheon is Almost Sold Out – Get Your Ticket Today!

We are close to selling out the awards luncheon on October 31st, at the Embassy Suites, San Rafael. If you wish to attend the event, please contact info@northbayleadership.org or call (707) 283- 0028. Don't miss hearing about Born to be Good, from Keynote Speaker, Dacher Kelnter and meeting this year's Honorees:

- **Caught in the Act of Leadership**, Individual Excellence in Leadership:
James Farley, *County of Marin, Cultural Service*
- **We're All in this Together**, Community Building:
Willie Tamayo, *La Tortilla Factory*
- **Paint the Community Green**, Environmental Stewardship:
Marin Sanitary Service
- **The "Light Bulb" Went On**, Innovative/Entrepreneurial Spirit:
Buck Institute for Research on Aging
- **Empowering the Latino Community**, Leadership within the Latino Community:
La Luz Center

Business Edge Briefing Breakfast Series - Why Emotional Intelligence Rules In Business: Let a Top EQ Coach Show You How to Use It

Wednesday, October 8, 2014

Dominican University, Creekside Room – Caleruega Hall

7:00 a.m. - 9:00 a.m.

Business Edge Briefing Breakfast Series – Women's Entrepreneurship: Fastest Growing Small Businesses Are Latina Owned Firms

Thursday, October 23, 2014

Redwood Credit Union - Sonoma Room

3033 Cleveland Ave., Suite 100, Santa Rosa

7:00 a.m. - 9:00 a.m.

Members in the News

Kaiser Permanente First Health Care Provider and Health Plan Named to Billion Dollar Roundtable

Organization recognized for economically developing communities it serves and improving total health through \$1.4 billion in annual spend with minority- and women-owned businesses

Kaiser Permanente Awards Grants to Support 41 Sonoma and Marin County Nonprofit Organizations

Community Benefit grants address Sonoma and Marin counties health needs

Kaiser Permanente Honored as One of the Best Places to Work in North Bay

For the ninth consecutive year, Kaiser Permanente Marin/Sonoma, which includes the San Rafael and Santa Rosa Medical Centers, has been recognized as one of the "Best Places to Work" in the Bay Area by the North Bay Business Journal.

PG&E Named One of the Bay Area's Healthiest Companies by the San Francisco Business Times

The San Francisco Business Times and Silicon Valley Business Journal selected 82 finalists for this year's Healthiest Employers in the Greater Bay Area lists and associated event. Companies were categorized based on the size of their Bay Area workforce.

Canine Companions for Independence Training Center in Texas Built By Baylor Scott & White Health

Largest provider of highly trained assistance dogs expands to North Texas; First collaboration with a health care system

St. Joseph Health Launches CDC's Workplace Wellness Training in North Bay

St. Joseph Health has taken a leading role in the North Bay in training employers to promote health and wellness among members of their workforce by launching the Work@Health™ training program, developed by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC).

BioMarin Pharmaceutical Made Forbes List of Most Innovative Companies In the World

Congratulations to BioMarin Pharmaceutical for making the number 7 most innovative company in the world!

North Bay Business Journal Announces 2014 Best Places to Work

The North Bay Business Journal has selected a record 88 companies for its ninth-annual Best Places to Work.

AT&T Donates \$1 Million to Girls Who Code

Last week AT&T made a \$1 million donation to Girls Who Code, the organization committed to educating girls in STEM.

Redwood Credit Union Supports Earthquake Relief Efforts

RCU Branches Accepting Donations for American Red Cross Napa Area Earthquake Relief

Midstate Construction Completes College of The Redwoods Construction

Owner College of the Redwoods, construction manager Nadon Management, Inc. and general contractor Midstate Construction Corporation recently completed the new Science/Humanities Facility at the College of the Redwoods in Eureka, California.

Read more online at www.northbayleadership.org/news



Who We Are

Over twenty years ago, business leaders founded the North Bay Leadership Council on a simple premise: We can accomplish more by working together. Today, the Council includes 45 leading employers in the North Bay. Our members represent a wide variety of businesses, non-profits and educational institutions, with a workforce in excess of 25,000. As business and civic leaders, our goal is to promote sound public policy, innovation and sustainability to make our region a better place to live and work. For more information: Call

707.283.0028 / E-mail info@northbayleadership.org

www.northbayleadership.org