



# Brown Political Review

VOLUME 1 ISSUE 1

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INAUGURAL ISSUE

## *the choice 2012*

### ★ **GLOBAL** ★

*SEARCHING FOR  
WHY LEBANON MAY  
BE SYRIA'S NEXT  
BATTLEGROUND.*

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### ★ **INTERVIEW** ★

*EZRA KLEIN  
GROVER NORQUIST  
HOWARD DEAN  
PAUL BEGALA  
DAVID FRUM*

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### ★ **NATIONAL** ★

*WHO FILLS THE  
EMERGING RIFT IN  
THE NEW  
REPUBLICAN PARTY?*

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Last semester, a few students had the idea for a nonpartisan political review at Brown. We thought there was room for a political magazine to complement other political outlets on campus. 2012 has been a special year to start off, and we are excited to present our inaugural issue to coincide with the November election that in recent weeks has become increasingly captivating.

But BPR is also more than a written magazine. Our website [BrownPoliticalReview.org](http://BrownPoliticalReview.org) hosts four great columns covering the election, public policy, the Supreme Court and international affairs, as well as the constant insights of our editorial board. It also features radio podcasts, exclusive audio interviews and our WebTV project BPRoundtable. The mission throughout is to contribute to a thoughtful and nonpartisan political culture at Brown.

There are so many people without whose incredible help this would not be possible. First, many thanks to Professor John Tomasi, Dina Egge, and everyone at the Political Theory Project, whose generous funding and unending support turned this idea into reality. Special appreciation to the two co-founders not at Brown this semester, Alexandros Diplas and Todd Harris, who invested significant time and effort into launching this publication. Of course, this would not be a magazine without our thoughtful and articulate writers, who were committed from first pitch to final edit. And most importantly, endless credit to our 40-odd staff who have worked incredibly hard and devoted themselves to creating something new throughout the summer and the hectic weeks of this semester.

Finally, thank you in advance for picking up BPR. We hope you enjoy reading it as much we enjoyed creating it.

Best Regards,  
Haakim Nainar & Ben Wofford  
Editors-in-Chief

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KATRINA MACHADO

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Increase from 2008 in Latino voters registered in Arizona. Can Obama put the state in play? **pg 7**

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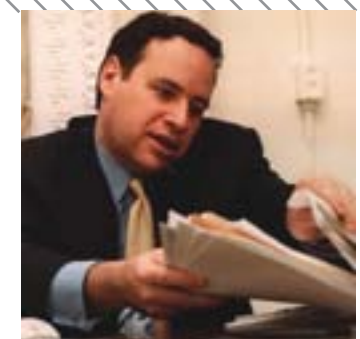
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# 21%

The new portion of GDP that federal taxation would account for under Simpson-Bowles, according to Grover Norquist. **pg 30**



GROVER

NORQUIST

When his No Tax Pledge ended a Grand Bargain, Harry Reid called him the “most powerful man in Washington.” Norquist discusses the future and fiscal politics with BPR’s Henry Knight and Matt Ricci.

**Simpson-Bowles Commission may be the framework for dealing with the Fiscal Cliff. What’s wrong with Simpson-Bowles?**

Simpson Bowles is a commitment to take federal taxation from 18.5% of GDP to 21%. Over the next decade, that’s a five trillion dollar tax increase. So it’s a non-starter; it’s a unicorn, it’s not there. Remember that Obama said, “Yeah, I like Simpson-Bowles,” and a few weeks later his budget included nothing from Simpson Bowles. Nothing! Which spending savings from S-B is the President for? None of them. The six Republicans and Democrats in favor of Simpson-Bowles never put it in legislative form, where it would be clear how little the spending reduction is and how big the tax increases are. If they thought it was a good idea, it would have been put in writing. They didn’t, and it hasn’t been scored by the CBO.

**70% favor a “balanced” deficit reduction approach, and many say your No-Tax Pledge partly created the Debt Ceiling fiasco. Don’t you bear some responsibility for Congress’s inability to compromise?**

No. Lets go back to the 70% assertion. Scott Rasmussen in *The Peoples Money* goes through all the polls. The American people quite explicitly want spending cuts and not tax increases. You look at polling data, and if you say “Would you like a balanced approach?” then of course people say yes. But, if you ask them “Do you want your taxes raised?” No! “Do you want anyone’s taxes raised?” No. Because when we raised taxes in 1982, as the Democrats talked Reagan into doing, they spent every penny of it. They didn’t use it to bring down the debt.

**As a board member of the NRA, what’s your response to the increased support for gun control in the wake of many recent and tragic shootings?**

Look at the expansion of concealed carry permits in each state that allowed people to have them. Violent crimes, murder, rape, assault, all declined dramati-

cally, more rapidly in states without. The number one city for gun control is Chicago. It is also murder central. The more honest citizens with concealed carry permits, the more violence, murder, assault, and rape go down. The data is irrefutable and puts the Democrats in a terrible position, which is why you don’t see them talking publicly about gun control.

**Conservative intellectuals like David Frum, Norman Orstein at AEI and President H.W. Bush suggest the current direction of the GOP is unsustainable. If Romney loses, do you think the GOP needs to move away from the right or more to the right?**

The modern Republican Party is not just the presidential election; it includes the House and the Senate. Obviously Republicans have won the House, and for the next decade will hold the House, as the party who will not raise your taxes. So it certainly is sound politics and sound policy. Norm Ornstein and David Frum are neither intellectual nor Republicans. Orstein is a left wing Democrat and David Frum is a disgruntled former Republican who whines about raising taxes all the time. Neither of them is the model for the modern Republican Party.

**But who do you think is next in line to represent the modern GOP? You don’t think there’s any change needed if Romney loses this election?**

I think the Republican Party is in a significantly stronger position than the modern Democratic Party. Who then, if Romney isn’t the nominee in four years? Throw a dart at the map. Around the country there are a number of Republican governors who govern competently and well, unlike Democrats. Twenty-four states have Republican governors and legislatures. Eleven states have Democratic governors and legislatures. The twenty-four states are succeeding while those eleven states are failing. The Republican Party’s future is written in the success of governors.

FROM THE WEB

See all our featured columns at [BrownPoliticalReview.org](http://BrownPoliticalReview.org)

GAMBLING ON RHODE ISLAND’S FUTURE



MATTHEW MCCABE

The first noticeable thing is the smell. As one of the few places in Rhode Island that allow indoor smoking, Twin River Casino is infused with the odor of cigarettes. The casino, located in Lincoln, Rhode Island, was formerly a greyhound racetrack known as Lincoln Park. The name was changed to Twin River in 2007, and greyhound racing ended three years later as part of an agreement to help the casino emerge from bankruptcy. Twin River’s main attraction is now video lottery terminals.

This November, Rhode Island voters will decide on a ballot question whether to allow Twin River to add table games. According to the Providence Journal, Twin River has spent \$1,655,564 to advocate for passage of this proposal, most visibly in a series of television commercials. For many people the gambling question is a moral one. But from a public policy perspective, is increasing gambling in Rhode Island good policy?

A 2009 study published in the UNLV Gaming Research & Review Journal frames debates over casinos as an issue of “economic boosterism” versus “social disruption.” In other words, are the economic benefits of a casino greater than its social costs? This would seem to be a straightforward question best answered by cost-benefit analysis. Academics, however, do not agree on the answer. One article in the Journal of Contemporary Criminal Justice concludes that the introduction of casinos does not increase the volume of crime. A more recent paper from the Brookings Institution indicates that casinos do in fact impose negative social costs. This paper finds some economic ben-

efits from gambling, but also notes that casinos siphon off money that would be spent on other local businesses.

This last point is key: despite what casino advocates might argue, gambling revenue does not fall from the sky. Consumers who gamble are choosing not to spend that money on other things. For example, an increase in casino gambling might come at the expense of the Rhode Island Lottery, which contributes a higher percentage of its revenue to the state than does Twin River. Additionally, the social costs associated with gambling are often hard to quantify, and even harder to directly associate with casinos. For example, it is possible that banning gambling and driving it underground creates more social costs than legalized gambling.

According to a report from the University of Massachusetts Dartmouth, unlike most New England casinos, Twin River’s revenue has increased during the recession. In a recent survey, only 46% of Twin River patrons were from Rhode Island. Most of the remaining patrons were Massachusetts residents. The report speculates that the high cost of gas and the increasing prevalence of “staycations” have allowed Twin River to attract patrons who formerly went to more distant casinos, such as those in Connecticut. These trends, however, might soon work against Twin River, as Massachusetts legalized casino gambling last year and is developing plans for new casinos. A study commissioned by Governor Lincoln Chafee found that by 2017 Rhode Island would lose \$100 million of its yearly share of gambling revenue to casino gambling in Massachusetts.

According to Twin River, the casino’s contribution to Rhode Island was around \$290 million last year, which, according to local paper Warwick Beacon, makes it the “third largest source of state revenue behind income and sales tax.” The casino contributes about \$10 million to the town of Lincoln each year. This additional revenue is significant, given that Rhode Island has been especially hard hit by the recession: the state’s unemployment rate in July was 10.8%, while the nation’s unemployment rate was 8.1%.

Twin River is a dark and dreary place. Everyone would probably rather see signs of recovery in the construction of new high-rises rather than in smoky rooms filled with poker tables. But these feelings do not change the reality of the situation. Twin River is already an established and growing institution in Rhode Island, and an important source of revenue for the town of Lincoln and for the state. Also consider that in Nevada in 1998, only one-third of gambling revenue came from table games. While this is an imperfect comparison, it suggests that introducing table games at Twin River will not lead to an explosion of gambling in Rhode Island, but might allow Twin River to compete with the coming Massachusetts casinos. This reality, combined with the fact that evidence of social disruption caused by casinos is ambiguous at best, suggests that voters should approve the ballot question permitting table games at Twin River.

*Matthew McCabe is a featured columnist for “Facts and Factions,” one of four columns constantly keeping up with the latest in politics at [BrownPoliticalReview.org](http://BrownPoliticalReview.org).*