

Ethan Allen Institute

Newsletter – January 2021 (Printer Edition)

Happy New Year!

Top Story: We Won the TCI Battle, the War Goes On

It was good news when Governor Phil Scott announced Vermont would not be participating in the Transportation Climate Initiative (TCI), at least not in 2021. It was good news that of the twelve states considering joining the agreement to increase regional costs of gasoline and diesel through a carbon credit selling scheme, only three signed on, along with Washington, DC. So, if you have any champagne left over from December 31, raise a glass to these happy developments!

The other good news is that, with New Hampshire (Portsmouth), New York (Albany), and Quebec not participating in TCI, the jurisdictions from which Vermont fuel dealers purchase most of their inventory will not be forcing their own local, large scale fuel distributors to purchase TCI carbon credits. The worry was that if these states (excepting Quebec, which cannot participate in TCI as it is part of a foreign country and would likely require an international treaty to do so) participated in TCI and Vermont did not, Vermonters could end up paying higher fuel costs imposed by other states while not receiving any redistributed TCI revenue. Always a debatable point, we now know that this rather cynical form of blackmail isn't going to be an issue, at least in the short term, despite VPIRG and others continuing sound this false alarm.

That's the good news. Here's the not as good news....

First, Vermont, along with eight other non-participating states, agreed to "stay at the table" and continue discussing the possibility of some future TCI deal. Only New Hampshire, under the leadership of Governor Chris Sununu, has pulled out of the program completely, saying the Granite State will have nothing to do with the TCI "boondoggle." This, of course, leaves the door open for future participation by Vermont or the states from which Vermont buys its gasoline and diesel. It would be much better if this door were permanently locked.

More immediately, Senator Chris Bray (D-Addison), who chairs the Energy and Natural Resources Committee and is as radical a climate warrior as there is, hinted that he may pursue legislation in the upcoming session mandating that Vermont participate in TCI despite the governor's refusal.

And, in the most recent meeting of the newly formed Climate Counsel, which took place before Scott's TCI no-go announcement, the group briefly touched the anticipated revenue from TCI and the expectation that it fund initiatives under the Global Warming Solutions Act. So, look for hard pressure from this quarter and from the usual activist group suspects to get Scott to either voluntarily or involuntarily change course. The Ethan Allen Institute is proud of the role we played over the past year educating Vermonters about the true workings and potential impact of TCI. John McClaughry and

Rob Roper wrote several op-eds on the subject, Common Sense Radio ran dozens of segments raising awareness of TCI and the many facets of the proposal, we commissioned a scientific poll of 600 Vermonters determining that strong majorities did not favor participation in TCI given its costs and minimal environmental impact, and we ran a paid social media campaign that reached thousands of citizens with critical information about TCI, and played a leadership role in a multi-state coalition of organizations opposed to TCI.

Unfortunately, TCI appears to be developing as kind virus that goes dormant, like chickenpox, but will live perpetually in the body politic, flaring up any time a weak immune system allows it to, like shingles. So, EAI will continue to work on a vaccine for permanent immunity!

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Commentary: Meet Your New Climate Government

By John McClaughry

Now, with the legislature overriding Gov. Phil Scott's veto of the Global Warming Solutions Act, the new Vermont Climate Council is in business. It has eight ex officio members from the current administration, plus fifteen citizens chosen by the legislative leadership that engineered the veto override.

Interestingly, three of the four legislative leaders who made those appointments are no longer with us: Lt. Gov. David Zuckerman, defeated 2-1 by Gov. Scott, Sen. Tim Ashe, defeated in the Democratic primary for Lt. Gov., and Speaker Mitzi Johnson. Johnson was defeated in her own legislative district by two Republicans who hammered her for peddling GWSA.

From their published biographies, the fifteen legislative appointees are an impressive bunch. Notable among them is Jared Duval, the executive director of the Energy Action Network (EAN), the climate activist umbrella group of businesses, nonprofits, utilities and colleges. He is one of at least eight EAN members appointed. Another is Vermont Natural Resources Council lobbyist (the most prominent of their fourteen) Johanna Miller, coordinator of the Vermont Environment and Climate Action Network. Liz Miller, a lawyer at Green Mountain Power, was Commissioner of Public Service and point person for Gov. Peter Shumlin when he launched his climate change crusade in 2011. She later served for three years as his Chief of Staff.

Richard Cowart is an internationally known expert on "greenhouse gas program design". He chaired the Public Service Board (now PUC) for 13 years under Govs. Kunin and Dean. He also chairs the Vermont Energy Investment Corporation that manages

\$47 million a year from a PUC tax on electric bills to promote home weatherization. At the same time he is a Principal in the innocuously named Regulatory Assistance Project, which works in Montpelier (and other states and countries) to push “decarbonization” legislation.

Onetime Shumlin Secretary of Transportation Sue Minter, now CEO of Capstone Community Action, was named to represent low income organizations that have lobbied strongly for a carbon tax like the ESSEX Plan. They want the low-skill jobs promised by home weatherization, and of course want to make sure that any carbon tax revenues are used to compensate low income families to offset the burden of higher fuel costs. In her campaign for governor in 2016 Minter advocated a regional motor fuel tax program, later to emerge as the Transportation and Climate Initiative (TCI) that will be before the 2021 legislature.

Both Minter and Liz Miller are consultants to the Conservation Law Foundation, which sued the State of Massachusetts in 2016 to force its Department of Environmental Protection to move faster to curb greenhouse gas emissions under that state’s GWSA. The Vermont GWSA authorizes “any person” to sue the State for the same purpose, and CLF will most likely be the plaintiff. If it “substantially prevails” its legal costs will be reimbursed by the taxpayers.

Four appointees were named to represent business. Chad Farrell is a solar farm developer, and Adam Knudsen manufactures solar plus storage installations. Michael Schmell represents the fuel sector. The fourth is Kelly Klein, a mead brewer in St. Albans.

The roster includes a student from Hyde Park, representing “Youth”, who says she is “passionate about environmental, racial, ethnic, social, educational, mental health and human and Earth rights.”

Rounding out the team are an organic farmer from Wilmington, the State Climatologist from the Sustainability Graduate Institute at Goddard College, a Nature Conservancy microbiologist, and two regional planning commission executive directors.

What 14 of these 15 appointees have in common - or they wouldn’t have been appointed – is an unquestioning belief in the legislatively declared climate emergency, and the determination to make little Vermont a pioneer in appearing to do something about it.

You might wonder, who didn’t get represented? Fuel oil dealers have their lone voice to keep in business the companies that deliver gasoline, diesel fuel, home heating oil and propane to Vermont customers. Aside from the mead brewer, the remaining two business representatives are dependent on solar subsidies for the success of their enterprises.

Where is the voice of the people who consume and rely upon energy? Mack Molding? Keurig Dr.Pepper? Killington Mountain Resort? General Dynamics? Global Foundries? OMYA? Agrimark? Automaster?

Where is the voice of truckers, loggers, and motorists? Of schools, colleges, hospitals, and stores? Of the usual involuntary financiers of grand liberal schemes, taxpayers?

None of these are represented. From the viewpoint of the GWSA boosters, all of those interests are, by relying on fossil fuels, helping to send planet Earth hurtling toward Al Gore’s Heat Death. Why should they have a voice?

The eight members from the Scott Administration will try to represent those forgotten interests, but by legislative design, they will be outnumbered 14-9.

PS: Since this column first appeared Michael Schmall, appointed to represent the Fuel Sector, resigned. On December 21 outgoing Speaker Mitzi Johnson appointed Brian Gray, General Manager of the Vermont Energy Co-op, to represent the Fuel Sector, although Gray's co-op does not sell gasoline, diesel fuel, off-road fuel, biodiesel, BioHeat, or propane. Gray is also on the Board of the Energy Action Network, making him at least the ninth EAN member among the 15 legislative appointees to the Council. Also, Vermonters for a Clean Environment reported "we were offended when the 'Statewide Environmental Group' appointee of Speaker Mitzi Johnson, Johanna Miller of VNRC, introduced herself at the first meeting... disclosing that her husband works for [solar developer] SunCommon." (VCE End of 2020 Report).

- John McClaughry is vice president of the Ethan Allen Institute

Commentary: Candid Comments Reveal Illogic Behind Vermont's Climate Policy

By Rob Roper

Responding to an email inquiry from a concerned citizen about the real impact – and cost -- of the Global Warming Solutions Act, passed last spring over the veto of Governor Phil Scott (R), Representative Scott Campbell (D-St. Johnsbury) admitted, "Let me start by repeating that no one, least of all me, believes Vermont can stop climate change — or even affect climate change. It's tempting to focus on that narrow issue because of the specific metrics in the law, namely the required greenhouse gas reduction thresholds (leaving aside the unfortunate name of the Act)," and, "GWSA will not 'mitigate' climate change..." Thanks for the honesty!

But, Rep. Campbell goes on to defend the GWSA, despite its ineffectiveness at mitigating climate change, because, he says, the real purpose of the law is not to, "mitigate" climate change, but it sets in motion preparing for it, building resilience, and *mitigating the effects* [emphasis original] of climate change on Vermont's economy and communities."

A couple of points here. First, of course, this is not how the GWSA was sold to the public, especially the youth who turned out in droves expecting this to be some sort of "bold" action to save the planet for their future. Is someone going to tell them that what they fought for is an empty – if very expensive – gesture?

Second, and perhaps more interestingly, is Rep. Campbell's contention that the real focus is adapting to an inevitably changing climate. Now, this is kind of funny because those of us who suggested in the past that we can't do much if anything to alter the changing climate but should rather focus on adapting to it have been lambasted as cynical "climate deniers." Glad to see we've been right all along, and this is indeed the real policy objective of our state government.

However, if this is the policy objective, Vermont doesn't seem to be going about it in a particularly sensible way. If we need to prepare for more extreme weather events, pouring money into things like electric vehicle subsidies, insulating homes, and renewable energy generation isn't helpful. Rep. Campbell's admission confirms this: "GWSA will not 'mitigate' climate change," therefore, it will not lessen the frequency or

impact of future weather events and, therefore, is worthless as a means of establishing any sought after resiliency.

Resiliency from an infrastructure perspective means we need to be investing in stronger bridges, culverts, sea-walls and bulkheads. It means upgrading our sewage treatment facilities, so they stop pouring untreated waste into our waterways when rain floods the system. It means protecting or moving our roads that follow the paths of rivers, so they are not in danger of being washed out, and the same goes for housing placed in similar situations. This requires steel, concrete, lumber and bulldozers, not EV charging stations.

Resiliency from an energy perspective means we need more reliable and more available (ie. less expensive) energy sources in order to deal with increasing climate-driven demand. Placing more reliance on weather based energy sources such as wind and solar, which are already unpredictable, while acknowledging that weather is likely to become more erratic in the future, is nonsensical. California, which experienced rolling blackouts during an extreme heatwave this past summer as a result of its own GWSA mandates, is a good example of how renewable energy makes us less resilient in the face of climate anomalies, not more so.

Resiliency from an economic perspective would require tax and regulatory policies that attract private capital investment and allow people to build wealth – something our recent legislatures have been rather hostile toward. Slapping Vermonters, especially rural Vermonters, with regressive taxes and mandates that make it more expensive to drive, work, find affordable housing and then to heat and power those homes is a recipe not for economic resiliency, but economic stagnation and insecurity.

If resiliency is really an objective of the GWSA, not climate change mitigation, Rep. Campbell and the others who voted for it need to tell that to the newly formed Climate Council. This body, charged with coming up with a plan to meet the goals of the GWSA, has met twice since its inception, and so far the conversation has only been about greenhouse gas emissions and the need to reduce them – the admittedly ineffectual part of the law – and not on building the stuff we’ll need to withstand the next Irene. Though that may change in the future, I for one am not getting a vibe that it will. What I suspect we’ll get is a hugely expensive program that does nothing to stop climate change, undermines our ability to adapt to it, and diverts resources away from real solutions.

- Rob Roper is president of the Ethan Allen Institute.

Events

Tuesday, January 5, supporters of the U.S. Constitution will gather at the Vermont State House lawn at noon for a “Fifth Amendment Fest”, the second in a series of rallies to celebrate our federal and state Constitutions, including the Bill of Rights. EAI’s Rob Roper will be one of the featured speakers.

News & Views

Misleading Employment Statistics. “[Vermont’s November] unemployment rate continues to not reflect the true state of the economy. At 3.1% Vermont is tied with Nebraska for the lowest rate in the nation and we are only slightly above the rates that prevailed throughout 2019. But that is only because of quirks in how the unemployment rate is measured. A more realistic and accurate reflection of the health of Vermont’s economy is that Vermont’s labor force is still far below what it was pre-pandemic. Indeed, Vermont currently is experiencing the second worst labor force decline in the nation over the past 12 months. Only Iowa has a larger percentage decline than Vermont. And not all states have experienced a labor force decline as a result of the pandemic. One-quarter of the states have a larger labor force than a year ago.” – Art Woolf (VTDigger 12/19/20)

Meanwhile, Across the Connecticut River... Gov. Sununu and the new Republican House and Senate majorities are discussing cuts to their rooms and meals and other business taxes to help Covid impacted businesses. “The New Hampshire meals and rooms tax is imposed on restaurants, hotels, and grocery stores that sell prepared food. Currently, the meals and rooms tax rate is 9% of the meal or room cost. Reducing this tax would be a huge win for New Hampshire’s tourism industry, which has been hit particularly hard by the forced shutdowns to slow the spread of the virus. ([Concord Monitor, 11/5/20](#))

Huge Property Tax Increase Forecast. In his Dec. 1 letter to the legislature, Tax Commissioner Craig Bolio forecasted education property tax bills could increase, on average, by 9% in fiscal year 2022. Total education spending is expected to grow by 3.79% -- for a system that his hemorrhaging students and currently, in many cases, not even doing its job.

VT K-12 System Is Failing Students. “Vermont Education Secretary Dan French recently noted concerns about attendance and engagement. ‘We are starting to see symptoms for our need to begin working urgently on student support structures. These symptoms -- truancy, attendance, and student engagement concerns,’ French said. ‘With remote and hybrid learning, truancy and the broader issues of student engagement have become more significant.’” [WCAX, 12/15/20](#)

VT K-12 Schools Not Preparing Kids for College. “The Vermont Student Assistance Corp. released a summer 2020 study that examines post-secondary enrollment and completion patterns among Vermont students at two-year schools.... The study found that... among full-time students, only 17% had obtained their degree within two years. That number increases to 29% after three years and 33% after four years but still indicates there is significant room for improvement, especially if a rapid injection of skilled workers into the economy is an overarching goal.... As for how institutions can potentially boost their graduation rates, the study points to programs that address the demographic challenges that tend to prevail among two-year-degree students: the fact that most are first-generation college students (or the first in their families to attend

college), and the fact that many leave high school being underprepared, academically, for college work.” [Sun Community News, 11/30/20](#)

Record Number of Families Opt Out of VT Public School System. “An estimated 4,000 students who are not enrolled in public schools are being homeschooled, a 100% increase over last year, Agency of Education Secretary Dan French said at a press conference earlier this week. Home school advocates say enrollment in 2018 was 2295, and in 2019 was about the same. Also, private school officials report strong enrollment.” Vermont Daily, 11/20/20

Vermont School Choice Lawsuit Kicks Off. “...The plaintiffs also argue the tuition money funded by taxpayers is being spent regardless of what school students choose. In this case, it would actually save sending towns money. “It’s about 30%-40% less for a student to go to Rice than it is other schools. So, it would be saving the state money, it would be eliminating religious discrimination and it would be treating all students the same regardless of where they decide to go to school.” [WCAX, 12/14/20](#)

Act 46 Shotgun Weddings Ending in Divorce. “Readsboro and Halifax are two very small towns with very small schools, and in a lot of ways Act 46 was written expressly to deal with schools like this. There's 56 kids in Readsboro. There are 74 in Halifax. On a map, Halifax and Readsboro are neighbors, but there's a windy mountain road between the two towns.... “It was a nightmare, to hire a bus, it was \$90,000, so we paid parents in lieu of transportation,” Sumner said. "And the town wasn't happy. The parents weren't happy. It worked well educationally, but it was a nightmare geographically.” [VPR, 9/17/20](#). Four more towns have since moved to dissolve their mergers with more expected.

Legislator Points Out Conflicts of Interest with Climate Counsel. “There are already difficulties in the law – in terms of public accountability and the law’s unfortunate placement of lawyers and courts in the middle of all this. The difficulties are highlighted by the Speaker’s recent selection of persons to be on the Climate Commission who have plain conflicts between their private interests and their new – and thoroughly public — obligations. While one might have thought to put on what might be a side “Advisory Committee” persons such as the CEO of Vermont’s principal electric utility, a lobbyist, other private energy providers, the lead installer of government-funded weatherization services, etc., the Speaker has appointed them to serve as full-fledged Commission members having unmistakable public policy making duties.” [Rep. Linda Joy Sullivan \(D-Dorset\), 12/8/22](#)

It’s Science! (And Math). “Toyota President Akio Toyoda said Japan would run out of electricity in the summer if all cars were running on electric power. The infrastructure needed to support a fleet consisting entirely of EVs would cost Japan between ¥14 trillion and ¥37 trillion, the equivalent of \$135 billion to \$358 billion, he said. “When politicians are out there saying, ‘Let’s get rid of all cars using gasoline,’ do they understand this?” [WSJ, 12/18/20](#)). Well, the politicians in Vermont clearly do not.

Wisdom Born of Dumb Climate Policies. “It is becoming clearer that the problem we have in making progress on climate is not the Koch brothers. It’s us. It’s the failure of

climate mitigation advocates to think clearly, and do prudent things,” Tony Buxton, energy lobbyist for Industrial Energy Consumers Group, [Bangor Daily News, 11/24/20](#)

Climate Alarmists Want You to Eat Bugs. How about if cricket powder was cooked into a pumpkin spice muffin or a chocolate shake? Researchers at Colorado State University, the University of Wisconsin, and the University of Michigan set out to answer those questions using federal grants totaling \$1,327,781. The researchers believed “the current pressures on global food security, including climate change ... have ignited a search for more environmentally sustainable protein sources.” (Sen. Rand Paul spending report, 12/20)

Rewilding Your Property: “In their current condition, our home region’s rich forests aren’t close to reaching their biodiversity or carbon storage potential. With 84% of Vermont privately owned, the path to reach this potential is through forever-wild conservation of private land. “- Jon Leibowitz, executive director of Northeast Wilderness Trust, Middlesex .(VtDigger 11/7/20)

Touché! “The city government of Paris has been dealt an unlikely punishment: a fine of 90,000 euros, equivalent to \$110,000, for appointing too many women to senior positions and breaking France’s gender-equality rules. The offense dates back to 2018, when Mayor Anne Hidalgo appointed 11 women and five men to her senior team at a time when administrations around the world were trying to increase female representation in governments. But with 69% of the positions going to women and 31% to men, Paris broke national government rules to promote equality, which require that at least 40% of new positions should be allocated to each gender.” [WSJ, 12/ /20](#)

All Hail Carbon Dioxide! Without it, Pfizer wouldn’t be able to distribute its COVID-19 vaccine (at -77° F).

College Tuitions Compared. “Base undergraduate tuition at Purdue will remain at \$9,992 per year for Indiana residents and \$28,794 for out-of-state students through 2022-23. Students and their families will have saved more than a billion dollars on educational and living expenses by 2023, versus what they would have paid if Purdue had increased tuition and fees at Big Ten institution averages over the 10 years of the freeze... Total student borrowing is down 32% since 2011-12, and the loan default rate for Purdue borrowers is 2.2%, compared with 7.1% for the average borrower from a four-year public university.” Purdue news release 12/15/20. UVM: In-state tuition \$18,802 , Out-of-state tuition \$43,690. UVM President Suresh Garimela, who came to UVM from Purdue, has kept UVM tuition flat for three years now.

Thanks a Lot. “It is frankly a bit of a disgrace that we had failed to speed up the development of vaccines before this. The private sector found them unprofitable, the public-health establishment preferred to lecture us on eating junk food and the World Health Organisation announced in 2015 that the greatest threat in the 21st century to human health – health, mind you! – was climate change. Which suggests that it was not focused on its day job.”- Matt Ridley, Telegraph (UK) 12/10/20.

Get Woke to This Reality About Wokism. “For all the protesters’ radical pretensions, the woke movement has been easily co-opted by the most rich and powerful in society..... Wokeness is not some capitalist plot to divide up the working class, leaving people of similar economic interests bickering among one another about their relative privilege. But that certainly is the effect of it. And that suits the bosses just fine. More than that, wokeness offers the elites who embrace it a false sense of moral authority – a way to salve their consciences and to appear progressive without giving anything up themselves.” Tom Slater, [Spiked, 12/26/20](#)

Book of the Month: Believe in People

Bottom up Solutions for a Top-Down World

By Charles Koch and Brian Hooks

New York: St. Martin’s Press, 2020

There’s probably no American, other than Donald J. Trump, who arouses more fury among the Left than 85 year old Charles Koch, the surviving of the two Koch brothers who leads America’s second largest privately held company, Koch Industries. (Brother David, a noted philanthropist who gave millions of dollars to cancer research, died in 2019).

To the Left, notably acolytes of Bernie Sanders, the Koch Brothers are the epitome of evil – selfish, greedy, corrupt, formidable obstacles to the Left’s yearned-for advance to the happy world of socialism. As so often occurs, this caricature by the Left is not only off the mark, but largely if not totally false.

First, a necessary disclosure: Long, long ago I was a friend of Charles’ early friend and house intellectual George Pearson, and I once wangled \$250 out of young Charles to try to set up a National Council Against Compulsory Service. That Left-Right endeavor failed when I couldn’t find enough Left figures to sign on (they bitterly opposed the military draft, but weren’t willing to rule out compulsory youth national service, mandated by the government for the common good.)

During my 19 years as CEO of the pro-libertarian Ethan Allen Institute, it never solicited or received support from, or even had any communications with, the Koch interests. Since then, there have been two \$5,000 contributions for unconditional general support, in two different years. That compares with VPIRG’s expenditure of \$120,000 to support lobbying by its 13 lobbyists in 2020.

Four years ago Charles Koch wrote a book titled Good Profit. It’s about the Market Based Management philosophy of Koch Industries, which Charles described in some detail. In my review of it, I wrote that Koch sums it up thus: “Allowing the people the freedom to pursue their own interests (within the limit of just conduct) is the best and only sustainable way to achieve societal progress. For individuals to develop and have a chance at happiness, they must be free to make their own choices and mistakes, rather than be forced to accept choices made for them by others.”

His new book *Believe in People* contains an autobiographical section on how Charles took his father’s company (Rock Island Refining) from \$12 million in revenues in 1961 to over \$120 billion in revenues today. The story of Koch Industries’ success – and Charles admits mistakes made along the way – is of interest especially to students of business. But the real value of the book is Charles’ explanation of the principles he

learned over the past 60 years - principles that go far beyond profitably producing goods and services for Americans.

The key principle is that “progress happens from the bottom up – the combined efforts of millions of people, each using their unique knowledge and abilities are what improve the world. Every person can make a difference, and everyone has something to contribute. All of us can discover, develop, and apply our talents to succeed by helping others. Our individual actions may seem small, but they can bring us a lifetime of fulfilment, and taken together, the best possible future – not only for ourselves, but for everyone.”

A cynic might dismiss such writing as something ghost written to ennoble a business leader’s lifetime of increasing his stockholders’ wealth - but not so fast. In the remainder of the book Charles describes how he has distributed much of his enormous wealth, and raised millions more from other philanthropists and just plain citizens, to underwrite Social Entrepreneurs and community organizations working to improve neighborhoods, cities, and lives. Through his nonprofit organization Standing Together, led by co-author Brian Hooks, he has partnered with seven hundred business leaders and philanthropists, over a thousand professors at three hundred colleges, tens of thousands of K-12 teacher and educators in skilled trades, and most impressively, over two hundred community-based groups helping over a million people struggling in poverty and more recently from the pandemic.

Charles’ preeminent role model is Frederick Douglass, the brilliant and articulate ex-slave who awakened generations of Americans – and does still – to the evils of slavery, racism, and injustice, and the shining promise of liberty and opportunity for all. He goes on to describe some of today’s inspiring Social Entrepreneurs that Stand Together is supporting: former gang leader Antong Lucky, Mauricio Miller (Family Independence Institute), Alice Marie Johnson, Dana Smith (The Phoenix drug recovery center), and many more.

Those who believe “the rich and the big corporations” are monstrous threats to democracy and human wellbeing ought to at least digest Charles’ libertarian condemnations of corporate welfare and government-rigged deals for the rich. Koch Industries practices what Charles preaches. It has steadfastly opposed ethanol subsidies and mandates, even though it owns several ethanol refining plants, and he strongly opposed on principle the “border adjustment tax” in the 2017 Republican tax bill even though, in the short run, it would increase Koch’s corporate profits.

For the record, Charles admits that his efforts to engage in partisan politics in 2012 was a discouraging failure, although a political action group that he helped launch (but does not mention), Americans for Prosperity, still plays a useful role in battling for the libertarian causes of lower taxes, less government, and greater opportunity (although, alas, not in Vermont). Not surprisingly, Charles has no interest in the political fortunes of Donald J. Trump (not mentioned in the book), who is clearly not much concerned with or even aware of what Charles believes in.

Charles writes “In conclusion, my North Star remains a society in which every person can realize their potential – a society of mutual benefit, in which individuals succeed by creating value for others. It would be a more just, inclusive, prosperous, and peaceful society than any yet seen. Such a future is within our reach, if all of us play our part – if all of us believe in people.”

I highly recommend *Believe in People*, no doubt because I have shared that pro-liberty empowerment philosophy for over fifty years. After reading it I sent in my own

contribution to Stand Together and volunteered to help in its work. Visit believeinpeoplebook.com to get aboard.

- *Review by John McClaughry, vice president of the Ethan Allen Institute.*

The Final Word

January Survey: Taxes or Spending Cuts?

If Vermont experiences the revenue shortfalls anticipated for FY2022 as a result of Covid's economic impact, should the legislature raise taxes or reduce spending/programs?

Raise taxes.

Reduce spending/programs.

Take the survey at: <https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/taxorcut>

December Survey Results: New Social Media Platforms

Many people are finding Facebook and Twitter frustrating due to censored conservative content. EAI is considering joining alternative social media platforms and would appreciate your input.

Do you participate on social media at all?

Yes, regularly. 50% (22)

Yes, but seldom. 25% (11)

No, not at all. 25% (11)

Have you joined Parler?

Yes. 30% (13)

No, but I plan to. 14% (6)

No, and I don't plan to. 57% (25)

Have you joined MeWe?

Yes. 30% (13)

No, but I plan to. 19% (8)

No, and I don't plan to. 67% (29)

How would you feel about EAI participating on these platforms?

Excited! I would follow and interact with EAI on these platforms. 40% (17)

Meh. I prefer to interact with EAI on Facebook and Twitter. 19% (8)

I don't care. 42% (18)

Check out the Bernie Movie, *Free Lunch Express!*

Vermonters Brad Broyles and Len Britton have been involved in Vermont politics for a long time. Len ran against Patrick Leahy for the US Senate in 2010 with Broyles as his campaign manager, pulling in 31% of the vote. Now these two are taking on Vermont's other senator but in an entirely different arena -- popular culture.

Both Broyles and Britton have backgrounds in Hollywood, the former as an actor and the latter as a screenwriter. Now they have combined their love of politics, Vermont, and film to create a hilarious satire of America's favorite communist's rise to fame and power.

If you're looking for something to relax with after staying up passed midnight last night, look no further. You can find in on Amazon and other streaming sites.

