

# Ethan Allen Institute

Newsletter – April 2021 (Printer Edition)

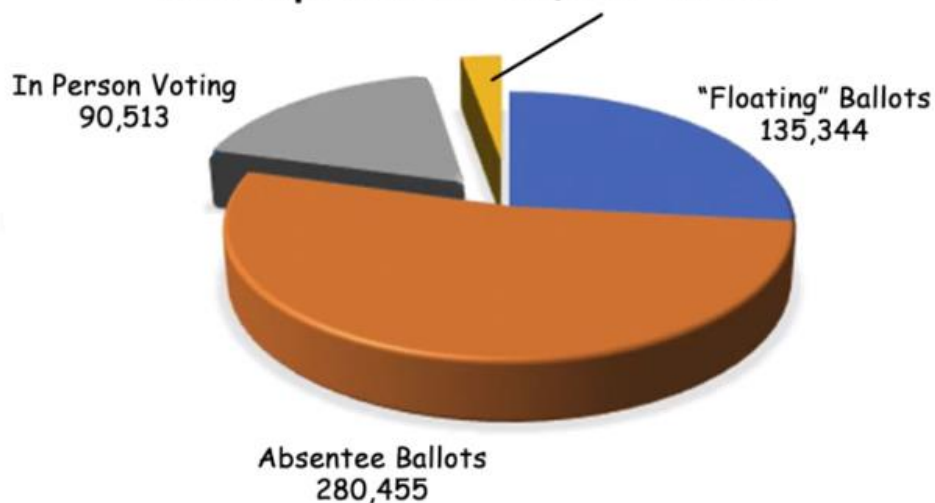
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## Top Story: Voter Fraud Video

EAI put together a 10 minute video detailing the potential for and likelihood of voter fraud in the proposed system of “all mail out” ballots with no safeguards in place to ensure ballot integrity. Key points highlighted:

- See Vermont’s Director of Elections admit that fraudulent ballots cast by one person in another person’s name likely won’t be caught and will be processed.
- See Town/City Clerks admit that there is no way to detect fraud when someone gets hold of and submits another voter’s ballot if the legitimate voter decides for whatever reason not to vote.
- See a Montpelier landlord confront Secretary of State Jim Condos with an example of college students “scooping up”, filling out, and mailing in a large number of unclaimed ballots in his apartment building.
- And, we run the numbers on how big a vulnerability this really is.

**If 5% of absentee ballots cast are fraudulent, that equals over 14,000 votes.**



You can see the video [HERE](#), and please be sure to share. Social media seems to be squeezing our reach.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=NB6UOMxpZcY>

## Special Event: A Virtual Lunch with Fox News' Dana Perino. *Act Fast! Just 30 Spaces Available!*

The Ethan Allen Institute, in partnership with Mass Fiscal Alliance, is sponsoring a virtual (Zoom) event with former press secretary for George W. Bush, current Fox News host, and author of the newly released *Everything Will Be Okay: Life Lessons for Young Women (from a Former Young Woman)*, Dana Perino.

Dana will discuss her new book, her behind the scenes experiences on the popular news program "The Five," and the state of media in politics today, and she will answer your questions on these topics.

This event will be limited to a total audience of fewer than 150, and EAI has access to just 30 invitations. First come first serve. So, act fast!

The Virtual Lunch will take place on Wednesday, April 21, 2021 from 12-1 p.m. Tickets are \$75, which includes admission to the meeting (we will email you a link as we approach the date), and a signed copy of Dana's new book, *Everything Will Be Okay*.

Click [HERE](#) to reserve your spot today.

[https://www.ethanallen.org/special\\_event\\_a\\_virtual\\_lunch\\_with\\_fox\\_news\\_dana\\_perino](https://www.ethanallen.org/special_event_a_virtual_lunch_with_fox_news_dana_perino)

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## Commentary: The New Dream of Vermont Agriculture

*By John McClaughry*

Agriculture has long been the bedrock of Vermont, combining food production and employment with rural economies and preservation of the state's ecosystems and landscapes. Over the years legislatures and governors have periodically commissioned reports to formulate plans to strengthen Vermont's agriculture. The most recent of these, created by the governor, appeared last month. It's titled the "Vermont Agriculture and Food System Strategic Plan".

The plan document, the product of "1,500 dedicated and passionate food system professionals and Vermont residents", is informative and beautifully presented in full color. It urges that stabilizing and revitalizing Vermont's agricultural industry requires "bold and decisive action".

The report recites some obvious challenges, such as "development pressure on farmland, generational transfer of farm assets, [and] changing consumer preferences and markets". But in its Vision Statement for 2030 the report wanders off into what might be called "Ceres in Wonderland". That's a collection of correct and happy outcomes, an exercise noticeably infused with political correctness.

The fifteen goals declare what must be made to happen; not only obvious things like "demand for Vermont food will increase", but surprising things like "Food system organizations and stakeholders will prioritize racial equity..." and "at least 75% of Vermont residents will report that composting or managing food scraps is easy."

Then come thirty four “priority strategies” – one wonders what concern failed to be recognized as a priority. And here a curious feature appears.

Every one of the priorities begins not with a subject, but with a verb. The most popular verbs are fund, provide, establish, improve, rebuild, support, increase, and expand. There’s never a hint about just who or what is supposed to deliver on these priorities.

A common theme runs through almost all of the 34 priorities. They require ... wait for it... Funding! Investment! Allocating Resources! The report calls for a modest \$9.7 million of one-time funding the first year, and \$23.3 million a year for each of the ten years to follow, to be distributed by 33 new state government employees overseeing achievement of the Visions.

Another obligatory inclusion is the fear of climate change, about which the report offers no support other than one unattributed chart purporting to show “projected” change in precipitation events between now and 2050.

One would think that friends of agriculture would welcome the increased crop productivity caused by carbon dioxide enrichment of the atmosphere, and the longer growing seasons predicted by the climate change authorities. But that would be wrongthink. Instead, the report advocates that somebody (who?) should make payments to farmers for carbon sequestration, which their fields, forests and crops have been doing for the past two hundred years.

In sum, the report is a comprehensive and indeed elegant promotion for a Vision that appears to reward every “stakeholder” participating in its preparation. Its 164 supplementary pages contain much useful background information and a number of worthwhile ideas. But analyzing the verbs, one discovers that almost all of the many priorities require money to appear from somewhere, and it gives the strong impression that no acceptable agricultural system can exist without the all-embracing government planning, taxing, funding, directing, and providing for its every component.

A more useful plan for Vermont agriculture would analyze and come to grips with the challenges faced by its most important component - the 600 dairy farms that produce 2.6 billion pounds of milk each year. The report does recognize the potential of forage-based milk production (“grass farming”), but it doesn’t compare it to industrial-style free stall, capital intensive, high input cost traditional production.

How can Vermont dairies cope with changing consumer preferences and non-dairy milk biotechnology? What business model will allow which dairy farms to prosper when Federal price supports sink below current levels – and what becomes of the others? What farming model will sharply curtail agriculture’s share of the phosphorus fouling our lakes and rivers? What model will protect the incalculable value of the soil, the responsible and humane management of livestock, and the wellbeing of migrant laborers? Which cost-effective technologies will successful dairy farms need to employ?

The report offers little or no practical discussion of these complicated questions, probably because most of the stakeholders understand little of the complex milk pricing system and the rapidly changing technology needed to keep farms competitive. Instead, the report participants are transfixed by their glorious Vision of all the good things that could be made to happen by an all-knowing government directed by wise and right thinking people – making use of millions of dollars raised from unidentified parties, who shop at the Farmers Market and competently manage their food scraps.

*- John McClaughry is vice president of the Ethan Allen Institute*

## Commentary: Vermont Public vs. Independent Schools, the Auditor's Report

*By Rob Roper*

While Vermont public school officials are carping about returning to the classroom post Covid, calling for higher taxes to pay for their pensions, and are otherwise consumed with controversies over mascot names and what flags get to fly on school grounds, Vermont families have been driving an interesting trend – using Vermont's 150 year old school choice “tuitioning” program to put their kids into independent schools.

“Tuitioning” is a benefit in 45 of Vermont's school districts (out of 110) that do not have public schools at one or more levels, so parents are allowed to use their child's per pupil portion of the education fund to pay for access to any public or approved independent school, in state or out. It is very popular in the communities that have it.

According to a [March 30 report](#) put out by the Vermont State Auditor's office, between the 2008/9 and 2018/19 school years, the number of Vermont students in the public K-12 system declined by 12 percent, falling from 85,079 to 74,930 students – a loss of over 10,000 kids. However, the number of students who tuitioned to approved independent schools increased in total from 3701 to 3842, and the number of kids tuitioning to in-state Vermont independent schools jumped 8 percent from 3147 to 3407.

This was before Covid, and does not include the more than doubling of the number of home schoolers in 2020/2021 to more than 4000, nor does it include at any point the number of Vermont parents who choose to pay out of their own pockets to send their children to independent schools, especially Catholic schools, which managed to remain safely open and in-person throughout the pandemic.

This trend is, of course, alarming to the public school bureaucracy on its own, and doubly so given the fact that two recent court cases have expanded Vermont's school choice options, and a third now pending could make tuitioning available to all. As such, the Auditor's report feels a bit like a fishing expedition looking for avenues to attack Vermont's independent schools.

If so, it doesn't do a very good job.

The main issue the report tries to highlight is cost, pointing out that the 5% of the school aged population that tuitions to independent schools cost taxpayers \$99.4 million for the 2018/2019 school year. It notes that the majority of independent schools set their tuition at the statutory “voucher” rate set by the state of \$13,910 for elementary tuition and \$15,618 for secondary school tuition, but that twenty-nine tuitioning districts voted to pay higher tuition ranging from \$990 to \$3,570 more, and this additional cost is \$3.6 million of that \$99.4 million.

But here's what the Auditor doesn't mention. The average per pupil cost in Vermont's public school system for 2018/19 was \$19,340 -- \$3,722 more than the predominant tuition rates charged by independent schools, and \$152 more than the most expensive independent school option. In other words, even the most expensive independent schools are a better deal on average for the taxpayer, and the majority of the time they are roughly 20% less expensive. And, armed with their tuitioning voucher, no family, no matter their household income, is priced out of these independent schools.

Yes, if those twenty-nine communities hadn't voted for higher tuitions for their kids and stuck with the \$15,618 per pupil rate, it would have saved the taxpayers \$3.6 million out of a \$1.87 billion budget. But, on the other hand, if public school per pupil spending were set at the independent level of \$15,618, it would have saved Vermont taxpayers roughly \$374,000,000. Your choice. (Pun intended.)

The other cost alarm the Auditor tries to raise regarding independent schools is an increase in the number of tuitioning students requiring special needs, noting that 26 percent in 2018/19 required IEPs (Individualized Educational Programs), up from 22 percent in 2008/9. But, in pointing this out, the Auditor busts the myth that independent schools "cherry pick" the best performing, least challenging students, explaining away their superior performance to public schools. In fact, according to the [Agency of Education](#), the percentage of students with IEPs in the public schools was 16.3 percent, 10 percentage points lower than the independents.

What the Auditor's report reveals without intending to is that Vermont's independent schools are actually attracting – and accepting -- more special needs students because mission driven independent schools do a better job of meeting their needs, and these schools are doing it for significantly less taxpayer money than the public schools.

If the Auditor's office wants to probe the costs and benefits of independent schools in Vermont, that's great. Transparency and accountability are good things. But how about a fair, side by side comparison with the public school system, and not just on costs, but also on student outcomes. Parents are making those comparisons themselves today, and we're seeing the results.

*- Rob Roper is president of the Ethan Allen Institute.*

[https://www.ethanallen.org/vermont\\_public\\_vs\\_independent\\_schools\\_the\\_auditor\\_s\\_report](https://www.ethanallen.org/vermont_public_vs_independent_schools_the_auditor_s_report)

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## Events

**April 21.** 12-1 pm – Virtual Lunch with Dana Perino. Click [HERE](#) to reserve your spot today. [https://www.ethanallen.org/special\\_event\\_a\\_virtual\\_lunch\\_with\\_fox\\_news\\_dana\\_perino](https://www.ethanallen.org/special_event_a_virtual_lunch_with_fox_news_dana_perino)

**March 18.** In Case You Missed It: EAI's Rob Roper takes on VPIRG's Paul Burns about All Mail balloting on VPR's Vermont Edition. Listen [HERE](#).  
<https://www.vpr.org/post/new-bill-would-make-mail-voting-permanent-vt-what-does-mean>

**March 30.** In Case You Missed It: Rob Roper is a guest on Linda Kirker's Sound Off show, channel 15, St. Albans. Watch [HERE](#).

**Stay Tuned:** Annual Jefferson Day Event. Each year since 1993 the Institute has sponsored a Jefferson Day event in the month of his birth (April). :Last year, because of

COVID, we pushed our event back to November (featuring a virtual Art Woolf, available on our website. This year we face the same problem, so we're postponing our 28th annual event to the late fall, in the hope that we can have an in-person dinner event once again. Meanwhile, suggestions for a speaker or program will be gratefully received by [john@ethanallen.org](mailto:john@ethanallen.org). "Error may be tolerated when reason is left free to combat it."

**New Conservative Network Forming:** Tom McLinden of Stowe has announced the formation of a new Conservative Action Network "to promote conservative ideals, and push back against the tidal wave of the progressive/socialist ideology overtaking Vermont." The network already played a key role in getting the VTGOP to adopt a resolution opposing the proposed sales tax on services. Other issues the group would like to focus on include Carbon Taxes/TCI, elections and ballot integrity, and culture conflicts. The group is looking for people willing to ACT – writing letters, pressuring officials, circulating petitions, attending rallies, etc. If you're interested in joining the team and getting to work making a difference, please email [tom@mclinden.net](mailto:tom@mclinden.net).

**"Liberty Network."** Former gubernatorial aspirant John Klar has announced a new venture, "Vermont Liberty Network," a nonprofit resource to explore constitutional, fiscal, and social issues. Klar, an attorney, says he seeks to bring liberty-supporting Vermonters together through this information and communication resource: [vtliberty.net](http://vtliberty.net). Recent topics have included the content of various Vermont bills, particularly regarding race issues, fiscal overextension, tax policy, the Governor's COVID orders, and free speech.

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## March Roll Calls!

[SENATE VOTES TO BAN GUNS IN HOSPITALS \(20-9\), 2021](#)

[SENATE VOTES TO STUDY BANNING FIREARMS IN CAPITOL \(19-10\), 2021](#)

[HOUSE SUPPORTS 0.5% PROPERTY TRANSFER TAX ON TRANSACTIONS OVER \\$1 MILLION \(53-95\), 2021](#)

[HOUSE VOTES AGAINST INCOME TAX SURCHARGE ON "THE RICH" \(21-125\), 2021](#)

[SENATE VOTES FOR PERMANENT ALL-MAIL-OUT VOTING \(27-3\), 2021](#)

[HOUSE VOTES TO REMOVE RIGHT TO BEAR ARMS WITHOUT DUE PROCESS IN CASES OF ALLEGED DOMESTIC ABUSE \(102-44\), 2021](#)

[HOUSE VOTES TO ALLOW MONTPELIER'S NONCITIZENS TO VOTE IN CITY ELECTIONS \(103-39\), 2021](#)

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## News & Views

**Vermont 41st in Return on Investment.** [WalletHub.com](https://www.wallethub.com), using 30 metrics on the quality and efficiency of state government, ranked Vermont 41st among 50 states on taxpayers. Despite the low overall ranking, Vermont did well in selected ROI areas such as, for example, education and health yet the state's total taxes-per-capita pulled the overall rating down to 10th worst in the nation." - Lou Varicchio, SunCommunity News, 3/23/21. Number 1 on ROI: New Hampshire.

**And we need a debt-funded federal bailout why?** "The state's General Fund, Transportation Fund, and Education Fund receipts were a combined \$32.82 million, or 23.8 percent above monthly consensus expectations. On January 19, 2021, the consensus revenue expectations were upgraded substantially for fiscal year 2021 as compared to the August 2020 forecast. General Fund revenues collected for the month totaled \$108.65 million, or \$31.4 million above the monthly consensus revenue target. - [Vermont Business Magazine, 3/23/21](#).

**Pension Progress.** Somebody is finally listening to our repeated concerns about the \$5.6 billion in unfunded pension and post-employment health care liabilities for the two state retirement funds. Treasurer Beth Pearce has proposed modest but necessary reforms. Speaker Jill Krowinski (D-Burlington) has stated her determination to get House action this session - despite howls from the teachers and state employees unions, for which no reform is acceptable. EAI is glad to lend its support.

**Vermont's Pension Fund Bailout.** Gov. Scott has pledged \$150 million to support reducing the annual payments and \$5.6 billion unfunded liability of the state's two union pension funds. The State will use COVID bailout money to replace the \$150 million. Writes the Wall Street Journal (3/30/21): "Democrats in Washington have bailed out spendthrift states, giving Vermont a budget surplus. Democrats in Montpelier want to use some of the windfall to bail out union pensions, though the federal language supposedly bars that. But the unions want to raise taxes rather than agree to any reform. Your progressive governments at work."

**Welfare Spending.** The Center for the American Experiment (Minneapolis) computed how much each state spent on welfare programs per person under the poverty line (2018). The national average was \$17,127. Massachusetts was highest at \$38,728. Vermont was fifth, at \$27,779.

**Activists Can't Identify Systemic Problems in Systemically Racist System.** The House Commerce and Economic Development Committee took up H.366., An act relating to promoting economic opportunity for BIPOC-owned businesses. As testimony was coming to a conclusion, Rep. Charlie Kimbell (D-Woodstock) thought he was throwing the witnesses a softball question but was also raising a critical question about many existing economic development programs designed to help all businesses regardless of the race of their owners. If we're going to create and fund a new program, where and how are the current programs failing? Mark Hughes, Executive Director,



Vermont Racial Justice Alliance, responded after some confusion, “I don’t really have an answer for you now. You say specifics. Where I get thrown off on that question is when you say specifics.” He then recited some statistics and spouted some jargon before concluding, “But specifics I don’t have for you today.” [EAI, 3/11/21](#)

**TCI Without a Vote?** “Massachusetts is the only state that won't be putting the (TCI motor fuel tax increase) issue to a vote. [Gov. Charlie Baker’s] administration says the 2008 Global Warming Solutions Act gives the governor the authority to ratify the climate agreement without legislative approval.” – Chris Wade,(Salem (MA) News, 3/26/21.) Gov. Phil Scott vetoed the Democrats’ Global Warming Solutions Act last September, in part because “the Council’s plan would not need to be passed by both houses of the Legislature, nor presented to the Governor for approval.” Could he possibly emulate Gov. Baker and put Vermont into TCI without approval of both houses of the legislature?

**Inequality Not.** “We can now show that if you count all government transfers (minus administrative costs) as income to the recipient household, reduce household income by taxes paid, and correct for two major discontinuities in the time-series data on income inequality that were caused solely by changes in Census Bureau data-collection methods, the claim that income inequality is growing on a secular basis collapses. Not only is income inequality in America not growing, it is lower today than it was 50 years ago.” - Economists Phil Gramm and John Early, WSJ 03/24/21.

**The Usual from Single Payer Quebec.** “Number of Quebecers waiting more than a year for surgery more than quadruples”. Montreal Gazette 3/21/21

**Minimum Wage Benefits?** “A 2014 analysis by economists Joseph Sabia and Richard Burkhauser found that the vast majority of workers who would benefit from a minimum-wage increase live in nonpoor households. According to Mr. Sabia, “only 13 percent of workers who would be affected live in poor households, while nearly two-thirds live in households with incomes over twice the poverty line, and over 40 percent live in households with incomes over three times the poverty line.” Such findings would seem to underscore the limits of using minimum-wage laws to address poverty. Most workers who earn minimum wages are not a family’s sole breadwinner. They tend to be teenagers living at home or senior citizens working part-time to stay busy in retirement. According to Mr. Sabia, single mothers made up less than 5% of those who potentially would benefit from a minimum-wage hike.” – Jason Riley (WSJ 2/17/21)

**Federal Debt.** “The federal debt...has leapt into uncharted territory. Debt held by the public—the kind the government has to pay back—broke above 100% of the economy in fiscal 2020. Even without new Biden spending, CBO says it will reach 102.3% in fiscal 2021” “The last time federal debt exceeded 100% of GDP was in 1946. Debt held by the public never exceeded 40% of GDP even during the Reagan defense buildup, and it reached 47.9% in 1993 before declining until the 2008 recession. It has kept growing since, and exploded in the last two years, as the nearby chart shows.” (WSJ 2/1/21)

**Biden Jobs Plan.** AFL-CIO president Rich Trumka “was also skeptical about the ‘green jobs’ that Mr. Biden keeps saying will replace them: “You know, when they laid off at



the mines back in Pennsylvania, they told us they were going to train us to be computer programmers.” Readers may recall that John Kerry, Mr. Biden’s climate envoy, recently said workers who lose jobs in fossil fuels will be able to make solar panels. Sure, if they move to China, where most solar panels are made.” (WSJ 02/10/21)

**How Republicans Enriched the Rich (sic).** Democrats have criticized the 2017 Republican tax bill as “tax cuts for the wealthy”. The IRS has now released data on individual income taxes for tax year 2018, showing the number of taxpayers, adjusted gross income, and income tax shares by income percentiles. The new data shows how taxes changed in the first tax year after passage of the Tax Cuts and Jobs Act. “The share of reported income earned by the top 1 percent of taxpayers fell slightly, to 20.9 percent in 2018 from 21 percent in 2017. Their share of federal individual income taxes rose by 1.6 percentage points to 40.1 percent” – Erica York, Tax Foundation 2/3/21.

**Matti Taibbi Nails Propaganda Media.** “Reality in Soviet news was 100% binary, with all people either heroes or villains, and the villains all in league with one another.... Other ideas were not represented, except to be attacked and deconstructed. Also, since anything good was all good, politicians were not described as people at all but paragons of limitless virtue — 95% of most issues of Pravda or Izvestia were just names of party leaders surrounded by lists of applause-words, like “glittering,” “full-hearted,” “wise,” “mighty,” “courageous,” “in complete moral-political union with the people,” etc. Some of the headlines in the U.S. press lately sound suspiciously like this kind of work:  
— Biden stimulus showers money on Americans, sharply cutting poverty.  
— Champion of the middle class comes to the aid of the poor.  
— Biden's historic victory for America.”

**Even the NYT Gets It!** “Historically, many progressives [supported](#) immigration restrictions as a way to keep U.S. wages high. Today, working-class Americans — including many Asian-American, Black and Latino voters — tend to favor more restrictions than progressive Democrats, [who are often high-earning professionals](#), do. This contrast may play a role in Republicans’ [recent gains](#) among minority voters. New York Times, 3/22/21

**Read This One Two or Three Times.** “Historically, it’s not the good guys who are out burning books and censoring speech. It isn’t the caring, empathetic people who try to destroy lives based on something someone said years ago, often while young, often taken out of context. It isn’t the good guys who take undisguised glee at the ruining of lives, families and careers. You know who does these things? Horrible, awful people. Selfish people. People with serious mental and emotional problems who seek some sort of vindication for their deficient characters by taking power trips while imposing suffering on others. Treat these tyrants as what they are: awful people who shouldn’t be listened to and who need to work hard on joining the better half of the human race. And remind them of it, over and over.” -- [Glen H. Reynolds, NY Post, 3/11/21](#)

**New Favorite Term: “Woke Supremacists.”** “It was the woke supremacists, by the way, who said that me [Sen. Tim Scott] and Herschel Walker were the coon squad.... If you watch the folks who are yelling the loudest right now, it includes people who are at

their wit's end because there are African Americans willing to speak their minds from a conservative perspective.” – [Sen. Tim Scott, 3/12/21](#)

**Tocqueville on Democratic Socialism.** "Democracy and socialism are not interdependent concepts. They are not only different, but opposing philosophies... Democracy extends the sphere of personal independence; socialism confines it. Democracy values each man at his highest; socialism makes of each man an agent, an instrument, a number. Democracy and socialism have but one thing in common—equality. But note well the difference. Democracy aims at equality in liberty. Socialism desires equality in constraint and in servitude." (Address to the French Convention, 1848)

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## Happy Opening Day!

### **Book of the Month: Jackie Robinson**

*A Biography*

By Arnold Rampersad

Ballantine Books, 1998

562 Pages

Before reading *Jackie Robinson: A Biography* by Arnold Rampersad, I would have picked Jackie Robinson and Babe Ruth as the two baseball players who truly transcended baseball. After reading *Jackie*, I now believe Jackie Robinson belongs alongside heroes like George Washington in the pantheon of most impactful Americans.

It's easy to think of such greats as predestined for greatness. But there was nothing predestined about Jackie Robinson. His mother Mallie lived as a meager sharecropper in Georgia with an unfaithful husband, before fleeing to Pasadena, California where Jim Crow was still highly active. Without a father around, Jackie joined a gang of teenagers engaged in minor crime during the 1930's. He was "not likeable" to many of his peers because he was so competitive at everything (33). Thanks to the influence of a black man named Carl Anderson, Jackie gained a deeply personal Christian faith. He moved on from the gang and into school sports, eventually playing in baseball's Negro Leagues.

When Brooklyn Dodgers owner Branch Rickey was first looking for a candidate to become the first black player in professional baseball, he identified the most physically gifted players in the Negro Leagues, of which Jackie was one. Rickey then looked into the candidates' character, and again Jackie checked out. Also importantly, Jackie was known to "resent segregation" a mark in his favor, that put him above other talented black ballplayers like Roy Campanella (124). But the final confirmation was in their shared faith. Rickey and Robinson were both Christian Methodists, a point Rickey used as final confirmation that Jackie was the one (127).

Most Americans know the miraculous story of how Jackie accelerated racial change in sports and across American culture by stoically taking abuse and death threats from white fans, umpires and players, both teammates and opponents. Rampersad's book also documents the criticism of a minority of black press and fans, who felt he was too outspoken or too quiet at times.

While these ten years of Jackie's life were the most influential in transforming America, Jackie's ambition for creating lasting racial change using cultural, political and economic mechanisms is also evident in the final fifteen years of his life. His cultural contribution started with his playing career but did not stop there. He gave dozens of speeches across America, often to audiences of at-risk youth: "Brotherhood is a big word for a big idea. You should be learning to be a good human being and a good American. They're one and the same thing, really. You become a better human being by being a better American" (262). Sadly, toward the end of his life, he thought his efforts in reaching black youth were futile. "As I look around today and observe how lost and frustrated and bitter our young people are, I find myself wishing that there was some way to reach out to them and let them know that we want to help. I confess I don't know the way."

Jackie thrust himself into national politics in the early 1960's. His personal support was enough to sway New York local and state elections, and even influence presidential elections. Acting as unpaid consultant for Richard Nixon's 1960 presidential run, he may have gotten Nixon into the White House if Nixon had not ignored his advice about reaching black voters. Jackie kept a dialogue going with President John F. Kennedy, who he said offered "moral leadership" but didn't have the guts to promote policy that would improve racial relations (359). Jackie joined a Freedom March in San Francisco in the 1960's to condemn segregation, "at one point... limping along" because of an old knee injury.

As Jackie's celebrity was eclipsed by such luminaries as Malcolm X and Martin Luther King, Jackie still forged his own path. According to young lawyer Martin Edelman, who Jackie mentored, "he brought to his business, day in and day out, an incredible sense of determination, a sense of morality, and a value system that people he did business with felt was very special." In one of the many times Jackie faced criticism from the black community along political lines, Jackie said "there are black bigots as well as white bigots." This was a response to a black civic leader who proclaimed the "problem was not that Hitler had killed many Jews but that he had but killed enough of them" (404). According to Jackie, "if I have to give up my right to say exactly what I believe to earn popularity and admiration, you can keep the popularity and admiration." (373)

While Jackie believed that politicians could legislate some positive racial changes, he believed black economic freedom to be equally vital, in the tradition of Booker T. Washington. In 1957, Jackie became the first black vice president of a major American corporation when he started his position with Chock Full O' Nuts, a coffee company in NYC. This step was important in showing that blacks could compete in business alongside their white counterparts, just as showed personally how blacks could compete alongside whites in sports (many sportswriters claimed that the Dodgers only won when Jackie was playing well). In 1964, Jackie became a key sponsor of "Freedom National Bank," which would become one of the largest black owned banks in the US by serving NYC's black community. "symbolic of the determination of the Negro to become an integral part of the mainstream economy" (386).

For many people, becoming the leading touchpoint for racial reconciliation would have entitled them to take a step back from divisive cultural issues after their playing career. But the life lessons Jackie learned while playing baseball stayed with him the rest of his life. His zeal for racial reconciliation may have contributed to his rapid decline in health, culminating in his death in 1972. He was only 53 years old.

Since the Civil War, there has been a cultural consensus in America that the best way to achieve national cultural change is to convince the undecided that non-violent action is superior to violent action, both morally and practically speaking. Jackie strengthened that consensus with his refusal to fight back in the 1940's and 1950's, and MLK followed in his footsteps. We can only hope more of us will remember that tradition so that we can heal our deep racial wounds.

- Review by David Flemming, policy analyst at the Ethan Allen Institute

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## The Final Word

### **April Survey: Who Pays to Fix Pensions?**

Who should be primarily responsible for shouldering the costs of fixing/reforming Vermont's underfunded and unsustainable public pension programs?

- The State Legislature out of existing revenue sources.
- State & Municipal Employees/Pensioners through increased payments and/or lower benefits.
- Vermont taxpayers through new and/or higher taxes.

Click [HERE](#) to take the survey.

<https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/PensionCosts>

### **March Town Meeting Week Survey Results**

If Vermont's public schools can't or refuse to open for in person classes, should education fund dollars be re-directed to the parents of students so that they can choose and access functioning alternatives for their children's education?

- Yes. The most important thing is getting kids into working education environments now. 91% (81)
- No. The most important thing is to maintain the public school system for the future. 9% (8)

Vermont legislators are considering making the mailing of live ballots to all voters, regardless of request, a permanent feature of Vermont elections. If we are to have "all mail-out" voting, should some form of verifiable voter ID be required in the system to ensure ballot security?

- Yes, require ID. 96% (85)
- No, rely on the honor system. 4% (4)

Do you think the recent political focus on "systemic racism" has helped or harmed the goal of achieving a less racist society?

- Helped. 2% (2)
- Harmed. 98% (86)

Should transgender biological males be allowed to participate in women's sports, into women's locker rooms, receive scholarships reserved for women, etc.

- Yes. 2% (2)
- No. 98% (86)