



Today in Liberty: Judge strikes down Virginia's gay marriage ban, House Dems want vote on minimum wage

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"Americans have the right and advantage of being armed – unlike the citizens of other countries whose governments are afraid to trust the people with arms." — James Madison

— **Bonus daily quote:** *"I'm calling this storm Snowbama because it frees people from having to work."* — David Boaz, executive vice president of the Cato Institute

— **Federal court strikes down Virginia's gay marriage ban:** U.S. District Judge Arenda Wright Allen struck down Virginia's constitutional amendment banning gay marriage in an opinion issued very late last night. Gay and lesbian individuals share the same capacity as heterosexual individuals to form, preserve and celebrate loving, intimate and lasting relationships," Wright Allen wrote in the [41-page opinion](#). "Such relationships are created through the exercise of sacred, personal choices — choices, like the choices made by every other citizen, that must be free from unwarranted government interference." The judge cited the Supreme Court's decision in [Loving v. Virginia](#), which struck down the Commonwealth's ban on interracial marriage and [determined that marriage is a fundamental right](#). Wright Allen [stayed her decision](#), pending appeal in the Fourth Circuit Court of Appeals.

— **Speaking on gay marriage bans:** Sen. Ted Cruz (R-TX) has filed legislation that would protect states with bans on same-sex marriage. "I support traditional marriage. Under President Obama, the federal government has tried to re-define marriage, and to undermine the constitutional authority of each state to define marriage consistent with the values of its citizens," [Cruz said in a statement](#). "The Obama Administration should not be trying to force gay marriage on all 50 states. We should respect the states, and the definition of marriage should be left to democratically elected legislatures, not dictated from Washington. This bill will safeguard the ability of states to preserve traditional marriage for its residents."

— **No, Rand Paul didn't plagiarize the NSA lawsuit:** Shortly after the Sen. Rand Paul (R-KY) and FreedomWorks filed the NSA lawsuit, the *Washington Post's* Dana Milbank [alleged that the legal team plagiarized Bruce Fein](#), a former Reagan administration official. The accusation — well, distraction — was leveled by Mattie Fein, Bruce Fein's ex-wife and spokeswoman. Dave Weigel [has the whole backstory](#), but MSNBC [was the first to debunk the accusation](#). "I was working on a legal team," Fein said in an email to the network, "and have been paid for my work."

— **House Dems want vote on minimum wage:** *The Hill* reports that House Democrats [will use a procedural tactic to try to force a vote in the chamber on the minimum wage](#). "The Democrats will introduce a discharge petition later this month designed to force a floor vote on a proposal to hike the minimum wage, even in the face of entrenched opposition from GOP leaders," writes Mike Lillis. "The discharge petition faces a high bar, as it would require at least 18 Republicans to buck their leadership and endorse the measure — a scenario the Democrats readily acknowledge is unlikely."

— **Questions raised on debt ceiling vote:** The Senate clerk [didn't call the names of members to hide how they were voting](#), making the usual vote process [less than transparent](#). *Roll Call* reports that Republican leaders made the request to Senate Majority Leader Harry Reid (D-NV). "After the vote began," a Reid spokesman told *Roll Call*, "it was quickly clear that Republican leaders were struggling to deliver enough votes to clear the 60-vote hurdle upon which they had insisted instead of a simple majority, and a potentially catastrophic default suddenly seemed possible."

— **Law professor knocks Obama on executive power:** Jonathan Turley agrees with President Obama on many issues, but the Georgetown law professor says that he's [concerned about the concentration of power in the executive branch](#) and the administration's willingness to bypass the legislative process. "The framers created a system that was designed to avoid one principle thing, and that's the concentration of power in any one branch, because that balancing between these branches in a fixed orbit is not only what gives stability to our system, but protects us against authoritarian power, protects civil liberties from abuse," [Turley told Fox News](#). "And what we've been seeing is the shift of gravity in that system in a very dangerous way that makes it unstable."

— **Yeah, about the cost of the farm bill:** Basically, because the price of corn is likely to fall, the federal government could wind up shelling out billions to farmers thanks to revenue guarantee programs. "New economic projections released by the Agriculture Department Thursday carry a sober warning of what lower corn prices could mean for the cost of the new farm bill over the next few years," [Politico reports](#). "Indeed, from 2015 to 2017, the report shows that total government payments to farmers would jump by about \$21 billion over what the department had forecast a year ago." Well, that's terrible news for taxpayers.

— **REAL ID provisions targeted for repeal:** Rep. Steve Daines (R-MT) will introduce legislation to repeal provisions of the REAL ID Act that, ostensibly, turn state drivers licenses into national ID cards. "The Montana Republican said Thursday his bill will ensure Montana and other states aren't penalized for failing to comply with the REAL ID Act," [The Missoulian notes](#). "Montana lawmakers passed a bill in 2007 banning compliance with REAL ID, citing its cost

and saying it threatens personal privacy.” A number of states have refused to implement provisions of the 2005 law, either because they don’t believe should have to meet federal standards, and/or they view it as an unfunded mandate. The Obama administration [began enforcing the law last month](#).

— **We’re winning, folks:** Sen. Lindsey Graham (R-SC) once declared that the Republican Party wouldn’t be built “around libertarian ideas.” The establishment Republican senator isn’t too fond of the liberty-based philosophy, especially as it relates to foreign policy. But Jack Hunter notes that libertarian ideas, despite Graham’s protests, [are taking the GOP](#) by storm. “[No one is trying to build the GOP around those ideas anymore](#). Even [some hawkish conservatives say the neocons are in dire need of a reality check](#),” writes Hunter. “[The Republican Party’s current libertarian trend](#) also reflects [a shift in American attitudes across the board](#). Fox News’ Charles Krauthammer declared [America’s ‘rising libertarianism’ the biggest story of 2013](#),” adding that “[e]ven for non-libertarians Republicans, [building the GOP around the ideas of liberty seems like a more winning strategy](#) than [anything else the party has come up with as of late](#).”

— **FCC backs down on newsroom bias study:** The Federal Communications Commission is backing down on [a proposed study of bias in newsrooms](#), including newspapers, an industry that it doesn’t regulate. “The Federal Communications Commission is quietly changing course on a controversial study after parts of the methodology were roundly criticized by GOP lawmakers and commissioner Ajit Pai for encroaching into editorial decisions and content at TV stations,” [notes AdWeek](#) via [Hot Air](#). “The Multi-Market Study of Critical Information Needs, which aimed to help the commission figure out how to lower entry barriers for minorities in broadcasting, may now be on hold. At the very least, the controversial sections of the study will be revisited under new chairman Tom Wheeler and incorporated into a new draft.”

— **Income tax reduces labor supply:** Matt Mitchell of the [Mercatus Center](#) makes the argument that the individual income tax reduces the incentive to work and has the effect of reducing the labor supply. “[W]hen the government taxes the population, the income effect makes people work more while the substitution effect makes them work less,” [writes Mitchell at Neighborhood Effects](#). “But then when the government spends this money on transfers, the income effect makes people work less, offsetting the income effect on the taxing side, leaving only the substitution effect. What’s more, if the subsidy is phased out as incomes rise (which most subsidies are), then a substitution effect on the expenditure side rears its ugly head, encouraging even less work.”

— **Common Core opposition not just from conservatives:** Some establishment politicians would have us believe that opposition to Common Core education standards is coming only from fringe conservatives. But that’s not true. Hardly a conservative state, New York, for example, [has taken action to delay some of the standards due to pressure from teachers unions](#), a traditional Democratic constituency. “The New York Board of Regents, which sets education policy for the state, voted Tuesday to recommend giving students more time to meet the graduation requirements associated with the tests and to give teachers a two-year reprieve from any consequences associated with the test results,” notes *U.S. News*, adding that New Hampshire, Rhode Island, and Massachusetts have also acted to delay testing requirements. *Politico* has more this morning [on the Common Core backlash from states](#).

— **Behind the scenes of Atlas Shrugged 3:** [Galts Gulch Online](#) has [posted an interview with Kristoffer Polaha](#), who will play John Galt in the final chapter of the [Atlas Shrugged movie series](#). The film is slated for release in September.

— **Upcoming candidate interview:** United Liberty will be chatting with [Karen Handel](#) this afternoon. She's a Republican candidate for Georgia's open U.S. Senate seat. Look for that to run early next week.

— **Happy birthday:** We're a day early on this, but we wanted to go ahead and wish Brandon Morse a happy birthday. The [Misfit Politics](#) founder turns 30 this year. Give him a follow on Twitter at [@TheBrandonMorse](#).

If you work for a liberty-minded organization, think tank, or candidate, please send tips, news, or event information to [jason-at-unitedliberty\(dot\)org](mailto:jason-at-unitedliberty(dot)org).