

# Richmond Times-Dispatch

[OPINION:](#) | [Editorials](#) | [Letters](#) | [Commentary](#)

Monday, June 22, 2009 |

Richmond, VA: 79° Feels Like: 79° Partly Cloudy

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 [RSS 2.0](#)

-- Recent Entries --

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Go

## Catholics Make the Best Judges

Bart Hinkle

June 22, 2009 9:02 AM

Or not. But they do make up a majority of Supreme Court justices. Sotomayor could make it 6-3.

[Comments \(2\)](#)

## Genius at Work

Bart Hinkle

June 22, 2009 9:00 AM

The little touches make this report on Kafka International Airport especially good.

[Comments \(0\)](#)

## The Ladies of the Club

Bart Hinkle

June 22, 2009 8:52 AM

Sonia Sotomayor has resigned from a private club with a discriminatory membership policy. The story got only modest play, since it wasn't, ah, on par with Augusta National.

[Comments \(0\)](#)

## Attention Magnet

Bart Hinkle

June 22, 2009 8:50 AM

Virginia's gubernatorial race is drawing scrutiny from far and wide.

## Bart's Blogroll

- [The Agitator](#)

Libertarianism with a focus on law enforcement

- [A Tiny Revolution](#)

Great snark from the left

- [Altnet](#)

Lefty e-zine with stuff you won't find anywhere else

- [Bacon's Rebellion](#)

Serious policy analysis with a Virginia focus

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Needs no introduction

- [Mickey Kaus](#)

The master of the craft (with exclams!)

- [Obsidian Wings](#)

Intelligent liberalism

- [TNR's Open University](#)

Really intelligent liberalism

- [Policy Soup](#)

The voice of Fairfax business

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Libertarian principles, conservative politics

- [Raising Kaine](#)

Cheerleading for the Democratic Party

- [Real Clear Politics](#)

A daily fix for political junkies

- [Reason Hit & Run](#)

The voice of Reason (magazine)

- [Richmond Talks Back](#)

Lengthy rebuttals to the Times-Dispatch opinion section

[Comments \(0\)](#)**Countercheck Quarrelsome**

Bart Hinkle

June 22, 2009 8:45 AM

In response to Gov. Kaine's [piece last week](#) excoriating House Republicans for fouling up transportation in Virginia for the rest of the century, House Speaker Bill Howell [offers his own](#) version of who's to blame:

**Fourth, in 2007, it was House Republicans who enacted a number of the transportation initiatives we had been promoting for years. As a result, next year Virginia will issue more than \$550 million for transportation projects from the \$3 billion in bonds the General Assembly authorized in 2007. The road, rail and transit improvements—for which Mr. Kaine now takes full credit—can be directly traced to these Republican initiatives.**

**Fifth, this year it was Republicans who stood alone in advancing new transportation funding. Our plan, allowing Northern Virginia and Hampton Roads to retain a portion of revenue from economic growth for regional transportation improvements, was summarily rejected by Democrats in the state Senate.**

**Finally, when Gov. Kaine called a special session in 2008 to consider his final transportation tax plan, not a single member of the Democrat-majority Senate would even introduce it. And when delegates were given an opportunity to vote for his plan, it failed to receive a single vote. Not one Democratic legislator voted for Gov. Kaine's last transportation tax plan, the sole reason for which he had called the special session.**

- [River City Rapids](#)  
Strictly Richmond stuff
- [Say Anything](#)  
Red meat for conservatives
- [Shaun Kenney](#)  
A view from Virginia's right
- [Slantblog](#)  
Observations and occasional art from the Fan District
- [Talking Points Memo](#)  
Red meat for liberals
- [Tapped](#)  
Liberal policy blog
- [Tech Central Station](#)  
Technocentric conservatism
- [Political Animal](#)  
More liberal wonkishness
- [Andrew Sullivan](#)  
Pro-conservative, anti-theocrat
- [Virginia Leftyblogs](#)  
A compendium of local leftishness
- [Virginia Political Blogs](#)  
Where to go to read the rest
- [Vivian Page](#)  
A nice Democratic lady
- [Waldo Jaquith](#)  
Good stuff from Charlottesville. Plus dogs!
- [Matthew Yglesias](#)  
Policyblogging from the center-left

[Comments \(1\)](#)**Good for What Ails Ya**

Bart Hinkle

June 19, 2009 12:50 PM

Get your daily dose of free-market analysis at the Cato Institute's new [health care policy site](#).

[Comments \(6\)](#)**How About "Grand Master of Time, Space and Dimension"?**

Bill Taggart

June 19, 2009 12:38 PM

Apparently Senator Barbara Boxer (D-CA) has a problem with a military guy calling her "ma'am."

During a Senate hearing the a couple days ago, she asked Army Corps of Engineers division leader Brigadier General Michael Walsh to call her “senator” instead of ma’am.

Apparently “ma’am” was insufficiently respectful or deferential to the Senator. Internet commenters seem to be divided as to who was being disrespectful to whom.

Comments (4)

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### **Yoo-hoooo! Anyone Home?**

Bart Hinkle

June 19, 2009 11:02 AM

Okay, so this video by the RPV is agitprop. In today’s networked world, I’m not sure you have to be a chairborne ranger to do a chief executive’s job.

But c’mon—it’s funny, high-production-value agitprop. I give it two thumbs up!

Comments (1)

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### **Logic = Oppression?**

Bart Hinkle

June 19, 2009 9:32 AM

An interesting article from the Manhattan Institute on the idea that a wise Latina woman more often than not will etc., etc.:

**The quality of the thinking that standpoint theory gives rise to may be shoddy, but it resists easy challenge since that would require evaluation resting on something other than identity politics, and it is precisely such a more objective, less personal, approach to knowledge that standpoint epistemology negates.**

Comments (8)

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### **Pot, Meet Kettle**

Bart Hinkle

June 19, 2009 9:11 AM



**Reason's** Cathy Young explains that liberals and conservatives are equally guilty of griping about the hate speech emanating from the other side of the aisle while ignoring the hate speech emanating from their own side.

[Comments \(4\)](#)

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### **Nice Try, But. . .**

Bart Hinkle

June 19, 2009 8:53 AM

On today's Op/Ed Page, Bud Levin explains how my column on education spending last Friday missed the boat.

[Comments \(3\)](#)

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### **Save Those Fees**

Bart Hinkle

June 19, 2009 8:49 AM

California could save a lot of money on legal fees—it's being sued for racial quotas in state contracting—if someone out there would just look up a little ol' Supreme Court case called **Croson v. Richmond**.

[Comments \(2\)](#)

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### **There Oughtta Be a Law!**

Bart Hinkle

June 18, 2009 3:52 PM

It's pretty clear from this news video about the Bucko's Pantry price-gouging settlement that the political philosophy of some gasoline consumers in Virginia boils down to, "Man, that s\*\*\* ain't right. There oughtta be a law!"

Regrettably, there is.

Backfill [here](#)

[Comments \(6\)](#)

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### **Quote—But**

Bart Hinkle

June 18, 2009 9:25 AM

ABC insists that its Obamacare infomercial will present all sides of the debate. Of course it will. The more pertinent question is, **how** will it present those views?

It's possible to give a lot of air time to one point of view in a manner that, in fact, largely rebuts that point of view. Look at the coverage of the tax-day tea parties, for instance.

It's also possible to give a lot of air time to an argument in order to refute it. NPR is a master at this: After a reporter quotes a conservative, the next word is frequently "but." Here's a typical example.

**Update:** And, of course, you can give opponents one token quote for every three quotes you favor from the side you like.

Comments (16)

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### **Smart, Not-so-Smart**

Bart Hinkle

June 17, 2009 2:28 PM

As the paper reported today, Dominion is rolling out smart-grid technology.

Let's hope the company has covered this particular base:

**A critical component of this grid is a new generation of "smart meters" which can communicate with the grid to determine when electricity is relatively scarce or plentiful.**

**Now a report in the Register describes how a researcher from security firm IOActive will demonstrate security flaws in these meters that could bring the grid down. Mike Davis, a senior security consultant for IOActive, says that the software in the vast majority of meters uses no encryption and requires no authentication before accepting commands to perform critical operations like updating their own software.**

N.B., Davis is not speaking about Virginia but about smart-grid technology in general.

Comments (5)

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### **GOP Karma**

Bart Hinkle

June 17, 2009 1:48 PM

It's almost starting to look like a law of nature: The more vocal a Republican politician is about protecting the institution of marriage from them homa-sekshuls, the more likely he is to end up splashed all over the front pages in an adultery scandal.

It's enough to make you think there's a God out there with a wicked sense of humor, isn't it?

Comments (10)

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### **On the Road**

Bart Hinkle

June 17, 2009 1:12 PM

Over the weekend Gov. Tim Kaine excoriated state Republicans for holding up progress on transportation.

This week, state Republicans are wondering why Virginia ranks “dead last” in requesting federal stimulus funds for roads.

Transportation Secretary Pierce Homer says they were just trying to be thorough, which reminds me about the old joke about the foreman at a construction site who sees one of the workmen carrying one sack of cement at a time, when all the other workers are carrying two. He confronts the worker and demands an explanation.

“Well,” says the goldbricker, “I guess they’re just too lazy to make two trips.”

Comments (1)

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**Oops!**

Bart Hinkle

June 17, 2009 12:41 PM

Defenders of waterboarding, black-site prisons, rendition, indefinite detention, and the like rely on circular reasoning: They have nothing against harsh treatment of terrorists, because terrorists don’t deserve any better. And how do they know the individuals subjected to harsh treatment are terrorists? Because the government says so. And how does the government know? Because. . . .

. . . well, sometimes (as in the cases of, e.g., Maher Arar) it doesn’t. Turns out Arar was innocent. Oops! Wrong guy—sorry about the torture! (Although, in Arar’s case, the U.S. never has even apologized.)

Here’s another example.

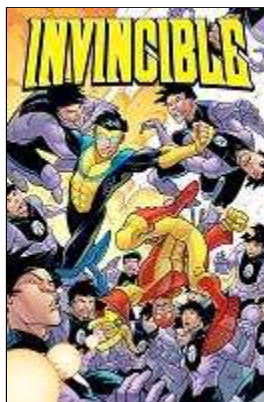
Comments (5)

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**Uninsured? What Uninsured?**

Bart Hinkle

June 17, 2009 9:32 AM



Some right-wing talking points on health care:

**According to “Income, Poverty, and Health Insurance Coverage in the United States,” a**

**Census Bureau report published last August, of the 45.6 million persons in the U.S. that did not have health insurance at some point in 2007, 9.7 million, or about 21%, were not U.S. citizens. . .**

**Also among the uninsured are 17 million Americans who live in households where the annual income exceeds \$50,000; 7 million of those without coverage have incomes of \$75,000 a year or more. . .**

Just because they're talking points doesn't automatically disprove them!

And just because they're non-citizens or earning good money doesn't mean they're NOT uninsured!

**UPDATE::** Steven Malanga explores the issue of the “invincibles,” i.e., the young, healthy, gainfully employed people who don't have health insurance because they don't want it:

**Some 45 percent of uninsured adults without children who earn more than three times the poverty level are in their 20s and 30s, and 93 percent of this group report their health as good or excellent.**

Of course, if you are an insurance provider—private or government—those are **precisely** the type of people you want paying premiums, right? Hence the appeal of mandated coverage.

[Comments \(4\)](#)

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#### **Diversions**

Bart Hinkle

June 17, 2009 8:18 AM

For the multitasker on Benzedrine, [Pwong 2](#).

For some inventive arena shooting, [Heavy Weapons](#).

[Comments \(0\)](#)

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#### **That's Some Pretty Opaque Transparency You've Got There**

Bill Taggart

June 16, 2009 10:48 AM

Prior to and upon taking office, President Obama pledged to increase transparency in government, including White House operations. In an [executive memorandum](#) issued in the early days of his presidency, the President stated that his administration:

**is committed to creating an unprecedented level of openness in Government. We will work together to ensure the public trust and establish a system of transparency, public participation, and collaboration. Openness will strengthen our democracy and promote efficiency and effectiveness in Government.**

***Government should be transparent. Transparency promotes accountability and provides information for citizens about what their Government is doing.***

[MSNBC now reports](#) that Obama's White House administration is fighting to block access to names of

visitors to the White House, “taking up the Bush administration argument that a president doesn’t have to reveal who comes calling to influence policy decisions.”

**Despite President Barack Obama’s pledge to introduce a new era of transparency to Washington, and despite two rulings by a federal judge that the records are public, the Secret Service has denied msnbc.com’s request for the names of all White House visitors from Jan. 20 to the present. It also denied a narrower request by the nonpartisan watchdog group Citizens for Responsibility and Ethics [CREW] in Washington, which sought logs of visits by executives of coal companies.**

The watchdog group CREW formed in 2003 during the Bush administration, to increase open government. CREW has now filed a lawsuit against the Department of Homeland Security under the Freedom of Information Act, seeking disclosure of the White House visitor records. Any bets as to whether the Obama administration will raise the same arguments the Bush administration did, which a federal judge rejected in 2007?

Comments (3)

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Page 1 of 94 pages

[1](#) [2](#) [3](#) [>](#) [Last](#) [»](#)