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# Inside Politics

[Greg Pierce](#)

## GORE'S EVASION

"Last week at the Society of Environmental Journalists conference in Wisconsin, former Vice President **Al Gore** took questions from journalists about global warming for the first time in years. I attended to ask him about factual errors in his movie, 'An Inconvenient Truth,' "**Phelim McAleer** writes in Investor's Business Daily.

"You wouldn't know it from the sparse media coverage, but the British High Court found so many errors in Gore's movie in 2007 that British schools no longer can show the film without the equivalent of a health warning," Mr. McAleer said.

"I asked Gore if he intends to correct the record. He dodged the question, and the so-called reporters defended his right to be evasive by shutting off my mic.

"The encounter was disappointing but not surprising. I served years of hard time as a liberal journalist in Europe and learned that covering the environmental beat meant toeing the line of extremism - no inconvenient questions allowed.

"But it is now time for journalists, and the consumers and businesses that will pay the ultimate price, to start questioning the conventional wisdom about global warming and exposing its true cost. If alarmists like Al Gore get their way, millions of American families will watch as their dreams of a prosperous and pleasant future disappear."

## BOOST FOR GOP

"Republicans won a pair of special elections on Tuesday in Tennessee and Oklahoma, picking up seats held by Democrats for decades," **John Fund** writes at [www.opinionjournal.com](http://www.opinionjournal.com).

"Combined with this month's capture of the Albuquerque mayor's office by a Republican

for the first time in 28 years, Democrats have reason to be nervous about the approaching November 3 off-year elections. Given their lackluster performance in these races, they could face serious turnout problems that will boost GOP performance," Mr. Fund said.

"In Tennessee, Republican businessman **Pat Marsh** won 56 percent of the vote to defeat Democrat **Ty Cobb**. It wasn't as if Mr. Cobb had a name unknown to voters. His brother **Curt** had held the seat before resigning to take another government office (and it probably didn't hurt having the same name as a baseball legend). But Mr. Cobb attributed his defeat to the fact that 'a lot of people based their opinions on national issues the health care issue was the main one.'

"A couple of states over, national issues may also have played a role in the GOP capture of an Oklahoma House seat held by Democrats since 1965. Republican **Todd Russ** won 56 percent of the vote even though registered Democrats have a two-to-one edge in the district. The twin victories mean Republicans have captured a total of six state legislative seats from Democrats in special elections this year. The other wins came in Delaware, Texas, New Hampshire and Virginia."

## FOOD FIGHT

"Apparently, the Obama White House believes in diplomacy with **Mahmoud Ahmadinejad** but not **Glenn Beck**," Chuck Raasch writes in USA Today.

"Two days after the president won the Nobel Peace Prize, **Barack Obama**'s communications director was on national television essentially declaring a message war on a major cable network that employs the abrasive commentator Beck, who recently called the president a racist," Mr. Raasch said.

"White House Communications Director **Anita Dunn** accused Fox News of operating 'as either the research arm or the communications arm of the Republican Party.'

"It's hard to understand this as a calculated move for a White House that has far bigger things to worry about - Iranian President Ahmadinejad's nuclear ambitions being just one - than drive-by rants on cable television. But it's part of a new strategy of more aggressively confronting conservative media that Dunn had forecast this month to Time magazine. White House battles with the media didn't begin today, or even with **Spiro Agnew**'s feuds with the 'nattering nabobs of negativism' in the paranoia of the Nixon White House.

"But Dunn's attack ran contrary to her boss's earlier actions of engaging Fox. And over the long haul, any hint of a bunker mentality from the White House is good for no one.

"Fox commentators, of course, ate the attack up as if they had gotten inside the proverbial henhouse. Fox News portrays itself as the network that dares ask what CNN won't because it wants access or MSNBC can't because it is so aligned with the Democrats. What is better for that story line than to get into a food fight with the White House?"

## DEJA VU

"Watching Washington policymakers in action, I sometimes think they make mistakes because of unrealistic goals, flawed thinking, blind obedience to party or dubious information. And sometimes I think they make mistakes because they are - how to put this? - clinically insane," Chicago Tribune columnist **Steve Chapman** writes.

"There is no other way to explain what is going on at the Federal Housing Administration, which provides federal guarantees for home mortgages. Given the collapse in real estate prices, the weak economy and the epidemic of foreclosures, banks are acting with more caution than before. They now commonly require home buyers to make down payments of 20 percent to qualify for a loan. But the FHA often requires only 3.5 percent," Mr. Chapman said.

"That's the equivalent of playing pool with a guy named Snake, and it's had two predictable effects. The first is that the agency is insuring about four times as many home loans as it did just three years ago. The other is that the number of FHA-approved borrowers who are not repaying their loans is climbing. Since last year, the default rate has jumped by 76 percent.

"Another likely consequence looms: you and I eating the losses."

## BUDGET GIMMICK

"When the Senate Finance Committee released CBO scoring of its health care reform proposal last week, we warned that its claim of reducing future budget deficits was achieved only through dishonestly assuming that Congress will implement a 21 percent reduction in Medicare payments that is scheduled under current law," Cato Institute senior fellow **Michael D. Tanner** writes in a blog at [www.cato.com](http://www.cato.com).

"We pointed out that Congress has been supposed to make those reductions since 2003, and never has. Now - surprise, surprise - Democrats have introduced a bill to eliminate the scheduled cut, at a cost of \$247 billion. But Democrats cleverly are putting the new spending in a separate bill, so it won't change scoring of health care reform. Have they no shame?"

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