



The Daily Dish

October 29th Edition

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According to a new Associated Press-GfK poll, Americans are still iffy on the economy. Over half are saying that the nation's economy is "poor." The [Associated Press](#) reports, "Few Americans — just 17 percent — think the economy has improved over the past month, while 21 percent think it has gotten worse and the bulk — 60 percent — think it's stayed about the same."

As a reminder the Department of Veterans Affairs still has millions of paperwork burden hours on the books for vets to fill out in order to get care. When AAF looked into the widespread problem last year, it found that a hypothetical veteran could spend 5 hours just filling out the initial paperwork for care. [Click here for reforms on the over 550 forms from Veterans Affairs.](#)

If the Obama Administration goes forward with the U.N. Paris Climate deal, it could cost the U.S. up to \$45 billion per year on top of the already expensive climate regulations out of the White House. Combined with the Clean Power Plan costs, the U.S. is looking at a bill of \$73 billion annually. From these regulations, the benefit we get is less than a 0.2 degree celsius decrease in the temperature. [Click here to read more.](#)

Eakinomics: Wrong Direction

The 2015 results of the National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP) were released yesterday. The results are bad news for educational progress, which is bad news for the middle class, poverty and inequality, and global competitiveness.

NAEP is a continuing assessment that is meant to measure proficiency in reading and mathematics and have been administered to a nationally-representative sample of 4th and 8th graders since the early 1990s. Also known as *The Nation's Report Card*, it is the most reliable indicator of progress (or lack thereof) in the U.S. K-12 education system. This year, the news is bad. The single piece of progress was a single point increase in the average 4th grade reading score. The remainder is a litany of attainment backsliding: 4th grade math, down 2 to 2007 levels; 8th grade reading, down 3 to 2011 levels; and 8th grade math, down 3 to 2009 levels.

Even worse is the composition of these declines. The NAEP classifies students into four categories of accomplishment: advanced, proficient, basic, and below basic. Again, only in the area of 4th grade reading is there good news as the fraction "below basic" fell from 32 to 31 percent, while the fraction "advanced" rose from 8 percent to 9 percent. In every other category of 4th or 8th grade testing, this pattern is reversed. The 2015 NAEP is characterized by greater failure ("below basic") and less success ("proficient").

One might have hoped that after 7 years of the Obama administration's federal approach to education that included pricey education initiatives such as "Race to the Top" and the costly overreach of the ESEA waivers there would be swelling momentum of greater proficiency. The broader implications of these results are even more troubling. The most important part of "middle class economics" is the ability to get a job and successfully switch jobs. The dividing line between poverty and non-poverty in the U.S. is having a job. And the greatest source of earnings inequality is skills and education. The NAEP scores suggest that the administration's

approach is failing the taxpayers on all these fronts.

From the Forum

[Previewing Paris: U.S. to Spend an Additional \\$38 to \\$45 Billion to Meet 2025 Goals](#) by Sam Batkins, AAF Director of Regulatory Policy

[Primer: The Lifeline Program for Low Income Consumers](#) by Will Rinehart, AAF Director of Technology and Innovation Policy

[Primer: EHR Stage 3 Meaningful Use Requirements](#) by Tara O’Neill, AAF Health Care Policy Analyst

Fact of the Day

[China’s 3 export credit agencies were responsible for 8 times more export financing than the U.S. Export-Import Bank in 2014, totaling \\$101 billion.](#)