



Tavis Smiley PBS talk show host, PRI radio host

America in Denial

Americans seem to be in a perpetual state of denial. About our past, our present and our future. A friend of mine teases that even Americans who don't live in a state of denial, tend to be frequent visitors.

What are we in denial about? Most things, but especially the state of our union. It seems that without regard to who occupies the Oval Office, come January we hear that predictable refrain in the president's annual address, "The state of our union is strong." I guess it depends on how you define "strong," but you'd have to have a very liberal definition of "strong" to be bragging about the present state of our union. Let's face it, we're in the deep end and a whole lot of folk don't have life jackets.

I'm proud to be an American, I just want Americans to have more to be proud of -- a high quality education, a good-paying job, a place to call home, some savings on which to retire. Most Americans aren't asking for much, and they realize there's no victory in victimization. They just want a chance to get in the game, play by one set of rules and have a shot at winning. The recent jobs report underscores that many Americans have gotten tired of standing on the sidelines waiting for their number to be called. So the August unemployment rate falls (slightly) because hundreds of thousands of fellow citizens have given up even looking for jobs. How does America win again if we can't even field a team?

We are in a state of denial about the present -- how bad things really are.

The late Texas congresswoman Barbara Jordan once said that the American people all want essentially the same thing: to live in a nation as good as its promise. Nobody is asking for more, and nobody ought to settle for less. But, in truth, America is not yet a nation as good as its promise. There's a huge gap between the promise of America and the possibility in America for ALL citizens.

Author Jeff Faux argues in his new text, *THE SERVANT ECONOMY: Where America's Elite is Sending the Middle Class*, that our much-touted service economy is fast becoming a "servant"

economy. He argues that debt-laden 20-something college graduates will become 30 and 40-something, burdened with even more debt, working part-time dead-end jobs. In the desperate competition for fewer career opportunities, personal dignity will go the way of decent pay. As I read the book, I kept saying to myself, "This is what happens to the middle class, say nothing of the poorest Americans!"

We are in a state of denial about our future -- if we think that the salvation of the nation rests on another tax cut, another voucher, another election, or another stock market boom.

"This is really the story of America, how the market system, especially in the global era, took away a lot of jobs in America that used to provide a middle class income, especially in the manufacturing sector. Instead of the government helping to create new skills, new industries, and so on, the government teamed with the most powerful and richest interests in this country. That's how campaigns are made, and since those 30 years, they have continued to side with the top 1 percent and totally ignore the bottom -- the poorest people -- and once in a while say something about the middle, but really only pay attention to the top," economist [Continue on page 11]

North Carolina moves forward when you take three easy steps.

② Vote for Walter Dalton for Governor and the Straight Democratic Ticket.

Walter Dalton - Governor
www.WalterDalton.org

Congressman Mel Watt
12th District
www.WattForCongress.com

Linda Coleman - Lt. Governor
www.LindaColeman.org

Roy Cooper - Attorney General
www.RoyCooper.com

Beth Wood* - State Auditor
www.BethWoodCampaign.com

Walter Smith
Commissioner of Agriculture
www.VoteWalterSmith.com

Wayne Goodwin
Commissioner of Insurance
www.WayneGoodwin.org

John Brooks - Commissioner of Labor
www.BrooksLaborComm.com

Elaine Marshall - Secretary of State
www.ElaineMarshall.com

June Atkinson*
Superintendent of Public Instruction
www.JuneAtkinsonNC.com

Janet Cowell - State Treasurer
www.CowellForTreasurer.com

① Vote for Barack Obama for President.

③ Turn your ballot over -- and vote for Democratic Judges.

North Carolina Supreme Court: Sam J. Ervin, IV*
N.C. Court of Appeals: Linda McGee*
N.C. Court of Appeals: Wanda Bryant*
N.C. Court of Appeals: Cressie Thigpen*



Election Day Nov. 6
Vote early now through Nov. 3!
Go to www.GottaVote.org

Questions about voting?
Call 1-855-Vote-171

Paid for by the North Carolina Democratic Party. Authorized by the candidates named herein. Not Authorized by publicly financed candidates.* www.ncdp.org.