

The K.F. Stone Weekly

(Formerly "Beating the Bushes")



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THE FERTILE CRESENT (HARDY)

(A note before we begin: For those who, upon reading the title of this week's essay say "Hey Kurt, you misspelled "crescent" . . . it's got a "c" before the "s," rest assured that I do indeed know the proper spelling of the word which commonly precedes "heights" and "wrench," and follows the word "fertile." In this case however, it is the proper name of a fellow, and he spells it C-r-e-s-e-n-t -- without the "s." If it is misspelled, blame it on his parents. And so, without further ado, let us begin . . .)

This just in from the "Where-in-the-Hell-Do-These-People-Come-From-and-How-in-the-Hell-Do-They-Ever-Manage-to-Get-Elected" Department."

Crescent Hardy is a 57-year old Republican who represents Nevada's 4th District in the U.S. House of Representatives. The 4th C.D., which was created as a result of the 2010



Rep. Crescent Hardy (R-NV)

census takes up a huge chunk of central Nevada. Voters in the 4th C.D. elected Crescent Hardy in 2014, when he defeated one-term representative Steven Horsford (D) by slightly more than 3,600 votes out of nearly 131,000 cast. Hardy's victory was viewed as something of an upset; in 2012, Barack Obama carried the district by nearly 10 points.

Crescent Hardy is a staunchly conservative Republican who upon winning his seat claimed that his new job had turned him

into "[a second class citizen](#)." (How many "second class citizens" do you know who make \$174,000 a year?) In general, Hardy is given over to making outrageous statements about gays, women, minorities and most recently, the disabled. Speaking at a recent

Libertarian Party event, Hardy told those assembled that he hoped his children would never be "a drain on society" like people who were disabled. In an [audio](#) published this week by the Nevada State Democratic Party, Hardy can be heard telling attendees at the Libertarian Political Expo in Las Vegas:

"I have three children. One of them is summa cum laude and two were magna cum laude. The other one, he didn't need an education. He works for Raytheon, smarter than all the rest. He works hard, he builds things that are genius. Some people have that ability."

But they all work hard. They are raising their own families. They will not be a drain on society, the best they can. Hopefully they will never have some disability that causes them to have to utilize that."

One wonders about Hardy's math ability. First he proudly says he has three children. Next he says that **one** graduated summa cum laude and **two** magna cum laude. Then he goes on to speak about "**the other one**" who "didn't need an education," and is presumably the most successful of the bunch. To me, one plus two plus "the other one" equals four, not three. (In truth, Hardy *does* have four children; perhaps his speechwriter needs to be taken out behind the barn . . .)

But this is minor stuff compared to Crescent's fertile rhetoric: the matter about the disabled being "a drain on society." It reminds one of Mitt Romney's damning "47%" statement made before a group of mega donors during the 2012 presidential campaign.

One will recall that at that dinner (for which attendees paid \$50,000 a plate), held in September 2012 in Florida, Governor Romney told his wealthy friends: *"There are 47 percent of the people who will vote for the president no matter what. All right, there are 47 percent who are with him, who are dependent upon government, who believe that they are victims, who believe that government has a responsibility to care for them, who believe that they are entitled to health care, to food, to housing, to you name it. That that's an entitlement. And the government should give it to them. And they will vote for this president no matter what."* This is the one comment which will haunt -- let alone characterize -- Mitt Romney for the rest of his life.

The same likely goes for Crescent Hardy, who has publicly associated himself with Romney's statement. In general, Hardy's comment portrays a man who appears to be grossly insensitive to real people; people who frequently have real problems not of their own making. In characterizing the disabled -- and this could easily include children, seniors, wounded veterans, victims of catastrophic illness and those with mental and physical impairments -- as 'drains on society,' Hardy is perpetuating a myth that the federal government is always seeking new ways to expand into every aspect of our lives, forever increasing government dependency (the so-called "nanny state") and thus perpetually eroding good old fashioned American self-reliance. Like many Tea Party Republicans and half-baked libertarians, Hardy believes that government is the enemy

and should stay the hell out of people's lives; Hardy loudly claims that the federal Bureau of Land Management has "absolutely no right to enforce grazing laws" against cattle rancher [Cliven Bundy](#) and his right-wing militia. When asked to explain the basis for his claim, Hardy cited the Constitution and the Federalist Papers, which he said were 'part of the Constitution,' although he acknowledged he couldn't immediately identify a passage to support his contention.

(This claim packs a couple of whoppers into a small package. **First**, while the Federalist Papers *did* argue for the approval of the Constitution, they are not part of that document. **Second**, Article IV, Section 3 of the Constitution makes it clear that "The Congress shall have Power to dispose of and *make all needful rules and regulations respecting the territory or other property belonging to the United States*; and nothing in this Constitution shall be so construed as to prejudice any claims of the United States, or of any particular state" [emphasis added]). So much for Cresent's fertile claim.

Predictably, at the same time Hardy demands that government stay the hell out of people's lives when it comes to taxes, regulations on business and providing a social safety net and protections against discrimination, he sees no inconsistency in supporting that very same government's right to regulate the most intimate aspects of people's personal lives.

While serving as a member of the Nevada legislature, Cresent Hardy voted against a bill banning housing discrimination against gays and transgender people. Similarly, Hardy has called ENDA -- a bill aimed at federal workplace protections against LGBT discrimination -- a "segregation" law." His justification for this rather bizarre claim is that "*When we create classes, we create that same separation that we're trying to unfold somehow . . . it puts one class of a person over another. We are creating classes of people through these laws.*" After making this statement -- and realizing that he was putting his foot in his mouth -- Hardy added "*I'm not an articulate, well-spoken, back-slapping person. I'm just a regular guy trying to do this job.*" One is reminded of La Rochefoucauld's comment about "Humility being the worst form of conceit . . ."

Of course, Cresent Hardy is by no means *sui generis*. There are scores of politicians -- mostly, if not all, Republicans -- who continue perpetuating myths about how a huge portion of the American public is shiftless, lazy and perfectly content to live off of what they refer to as government largess -- whether it be welfare checks, food stamps, Social Security Disability Payments or a number of other programs currently in effect. Many of those who bray the loudest are themselves products of so-called government largess, and stop at nothing to continue providing all kinds of largess to their corporate backers. Poll after poll shows that the majority of the American public is more caring, more favorably disposed to government's providing assistance for those in need, than many of the people they vote for. It's perplexing, to say the least. One wonders

just how much longer people like Cresent Hardy will be able to get away with voicing such toxic points of view.

One can readily see Cresent Hardy becoming a major target of the Democratic Congressional Campaign Committee in 2016. Already, there are a number of potential candidates waiting in the wings to take him on in a district which, as mentioned above, Barack Obama won by 10 points in 2012. And you had better believe that whoever his opponent will be, they will make sure that Hardy's words about the disabled will come back to haunt him . . . and hurt him . . . and ultimately perhaps, defeat him.

For when it comes to insensitive, moronic rhetoric, Cresent is fertile.

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