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'The Rachel Maddow Show' for Friday, April 1st, 2011

Read the transcript to the Friday show

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Guests: Chuck Canterbury, Michael Steele

RACHEL MADDOW, HOST: Good evening, Lawrence. Thanks a lot.

LAWRENCE O'DONNELL, "THE LAST WORD"
HOST: Thank you.

MADDOW: Thanks to you at home for staying with us for the next hour.

Former Republican Party Chairman Michael Steele will be joining us in just a moment. But before we reacquaint ourselves with Mr. Steele, let us reacquaint ourselves with the governor of the great state of Ohio, a man named John Kasich.

(BEGIN VIDEO CLIP)

GOV. JOHN KASICH ®, OHIO: Have you ever been stopped by a policeman who's an idiot? I had this idiot pull me over on 315. Listen to this story. He says to me, he says—he says, you pass this emergency vehicle on the side of the road, and you didn't yield. He's an idiot.

(END VIDEO CLIP)

MADDOW: This week, Governor John Kasich made a material difference in whether or not Barack Obama is likely to be reelected in 2012.

Ohio's new Republican governor, John Kasich, has made it more likely that President Obama will be reelected next year.

Let me explain. In 2008, the Fraternal Order of Police, the country's largest police organization gave its official endorsement to Republican presidential candidate, John McCain.

(BEGIN VIDEO CLIP)

CHUCK CANTERBURY, PRES. FRATERNAL ORDER OF POLICE: There is no better choice for the Fraternal Order of Police or for this country than to elect John McCain as the next president. Today, Senator, you have earned the support of 327,000 law enforcement officers in every region of this country.

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(END VIDEO CLIP)

MADDOW: The Fraternal Order of Police endorsed John McCain in 2008. In the election before that, they endorsed President George W. Bush in his reelection campaign against Democratic Senator John Kerry. In the election before that, given the choice between, again, George W. Bush and Al Gore, the Fraternal Order of Police picked George W. Bush.

Even though unions are thought of as a key part of the Democratic Party's base, unions are presenting firefighters and police officers have sometimes been a more Republican-leaning outlier from that basic truth. And that has been a great image burnisher for the Republican Party.

Come election time, Republicans need to upgrade from their standard Daddy Warbucks billionaires for Bush image and when it comes to political imagery, cops and firefighters are a really big upgrade from Daddy Warbucks. So, Republican endorsements from police and firefighters unions have been really, really important to Republicans politically.

In Wisconsin, when Republican Governor Scott Walker wanted to strip union rights in Wisconsin, remember who he specifically exempted from that? He specifically exempted the police officers and firefighters unions who had endorsed him, Scott Walker, in the last election. He spared the Republican-leaning cops and firefighter unions and stripped everybody else's union rights.

Now, that did not stop Wisconsin police officers and firefighters from siding with the other unions in opposing Scott Walker once everybody figured out what he was up to. But, politically speaking at least, Scott Walker tried.

Governor John Kasich in Ohio—he didn't even try.

(BEGIN VIDEO CLIP)

KASICH: Have you ever been stopped by a policeman who was an idiot?

(END VIDEO CLIP)

MADDOW: John Kasich decided to use government to strip union rights in Ohio. He didn't even bother trying to exempt firefighters and the police officers for whom he has so much respect. Governor Kasich signed his union-stripping measure into law last night. Police officers and firefighters taken apart like

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everybody else, no exemptions.

When you think about what union rights are used for, when you think about what people who can bargain collectively with their employer collectively bargain for, what gets all the attention is wages, and health benefits, and hours, and pensions—stuff like that. But that is not all of it. Teacher’s unions also bargain about class size and resources for their students.

In the case of police unions—well, for example in the city of Cleveland, things have been tough for the police department recently. In the last seven years, the police force in Cleveland has shrunk by 300 officers. At this Cleveland bylined “A.P.” story notes today, the Cleveland police department was also forced to shutdown street crimes unit. They have had to shut down their car theft unit.

And even though the city of Cleveland has 22 miles of beautiful coastline along Lake Erie, 22 miles, the Cleveland police department no longer can afford a boat, a single boat. There is no boat in the Cleveland police department for patrolling—for patrolling a city with 22 miles of coastline.

In the face of those dramatic cuts, that kind of economic pressure cranking down on the Cleveland Police Department, what police officers there have used their union rights for, what they’ve been able to hold onto because of collective bargaining is having two officers per police car in some dangerous neighborhoods in Cleveland. That’s what the

union has allowed them to hold onto so far. Discussing how greedy the unions are, right?

One of the ways that unions advocate for their members’ interests is by getting involved in politics. Some unions lean Republican, some lean Democratic.

In Ohio, the Fraternal Order of Police state chapter there in the last election endorsed a Republican state senator named Shannon Jones. Shannon Jones then turned around and metaphorically, of course, stabbed those police officers in the back by sponsoring that Republican legislation to strip police officers and everybody else’s union rights. She had just been endorsed by the police union.

The president of the Ohio Fraternal Order of Police told Jeannie Cummings at Politico.com, quote, “She neglected to tell us it was her plan to dismantle collective bargaining. In just a few short months, we have had a dramatic

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transformation of the feelings of my membership.” Yes, I would guess.

It’s not just in Ohio. It’s on the national level, too. The national president of the Fraternal Order of Police—seen here endorsing John McCain in 2008 -- he is a former county police officer from South Carolina. His name is Chuck Canterbury.

Mr. Canterbury told “Politico” today that despite his union’s past Republican leanings, his members are, quote, “shocked” by what Republicans are doing across the country right now. Quote, “Who are these evil teachers who teach your children, these evil policemen who protect them, these evil firemen who pull them from burning buildings? When did we all become evil? There’s going to be a back lash,” he said. “We are going to hold them accountable.”

Joining us now is Chuck Canterbury, the national president of Fraternal Order of Police.

Mr. Canterbury, we’re very happy to have you here. Thank you for your time tonight.

CANTERBURY: Thank you, Rachel. We’re glad to be here.

MADDOW: When you say there’s going to be a backlash, we’re going to hold them accountable—who is “them” and how do you intend to hold them accountable?

CANTERBURY: Well, first of all, “them” are politicians that decided to place the X on the

target of police officers, firefighters, teachers, public employees in this country. We have become the face of the economic crisis, and those that want to blame us also seek our endorsement, and our membership is—along with all other public employees, are going to put their feet to the fire from now on. We’re going to make sure that they support us and our efforts, and they support the right to collectively bargain, or they are not going to give support, not getting PAC funds and they’re not getting shoe leather out working in their districts for them.

MADDOW: It seems like an important turn in Wisconsin when even though police officers and firefighter unions had been spared from Wisconsin’s union-busting legislation there, that firefighters and police officers still marched on the capitol. They slept in the capitol rotunda along with the other protesters. They stood with the protesters, even though they themselves were spared, a

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real sign of solidarity.

Did there used to be a split between police officers and firefighters unions and the rest of the union movement and is that split closing, do you think?

CANTERBURY: I'm not sure it was a split. I think it was a healthy competition between fire and police, and there always will be, two public safety sectors that have different jobs.

But there's no split now. We are united. Standing together with our firefighter brothers and sisters, as well as the teachers, the nurses, any other public employee who has lost the right to collective bargaining or who has yet to obtain that right, we are going to stand together united. I've never seen it like this in my 32 years in law enforcement and Fraternal Order of Police.

And I believe that you're going to see an uprising, strong voices from within the communities, knocking on doors. I am going to Ohio Wednesday to help our brothers and sisters in their effort on the referendum, and I think you're going to see that all over the country.

I'm not surprised that the Wisconsin police officers supported the people's right to assemble and the people's free speech in Wisconsin. You know, we are citizens. That's what we defend is the Constitution.

MADDOW: In terms of the politics here—not being just about passing legislation, not being

just about fighting on policy terms but really trying to win the argument here—when you look at the polling data about how Americans feel about police officers, the support for collective bargaining rights for police officers is off the charts high. Americans believe that police officers and firefighters as well ought to have collective bargaining rights.

What do you think is important for people to understand about what police officers used their collective bargaining rights for? I mentioned some of the things have been argued for in the Cleveland Police Department just as an example. Is that an appropriate example how police officers have used collective bargaining to shape their work environment?

CANTERBURY: Absolutely. I mean, staffing levels, you know, in my 32 years, I've never seen management that agreed with the rank and file on how many people needed to be on

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the streets.

Just recently, the mayor of Camden said that after laying off 44 percent of the police department that there would be no reduction in service. Well, they no longer respond to minor incidents. Crime is up in Camden, and, you know, who wouldn't have thought that was going to happen, but yet they had the audacity to go on television and say that first responders and the citizens would not be in jeopardy. It's just absolutely not true.

You know, public unions in this country and private unions have brought laws against child labor, workman's compensation, the 40-hour work week, employment security, that was brought on by unions. That was never brought on by management.

MADDOW: Your union, your membership is not hostile to Republican Party politics by any stretch of the imagination. We know about your—the Fraternal Order of Police endorsing John McCain, for example, against Barack Obama.

Given that, do you feel like you have any insight into where all of this anti-union rights stuff is coming from, all of a sudden? It's happening all over the country, and even federally, all of a sudden, even though it is not really what Republican politicians campaigned on in the last election.

CANTERBURY: Well, you know, I think the radical right wing of the party—I think the Republican Party has been hijacked. I think

everybody is running scared. The midterm elections, a lot of incumbents lost, and they believed and probably still believe that there's an anti-union sentiment in this country.

But the polls are not showing that. You know, 61 percent of Americans three weeks ago polled by "USA Today" believe that public employees should have the right to collectively bargain. Those numbers are steadily increasing around the country. And that's fabulous with only 17 percent of the United States unionized.

MADDOW: Chuck Canterbury, national president of the Fraternal Order of Police—thank you very much for joining us, sir. It's really nice to have you here on the show with us tonight.

CANTERBURY: Thanks for having us on, Rachel.

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MADDOW: It is pretty clear what the short term effects are of the great Republican overreach of 2011. Republicans in these states with these union-busting efforts are way less popular than they were, say, six months ago. The long term implications of the Republicans' self-inflicted snafu remain to be seen.

We will welcome back to the show, the former Republican Party chairman, Michael Steele, in just a moment. Mr. Steele is frequently illuminating, and always fun to talk to.

We'll be right back with him.

(COMMERCIAL BREAK)

MADDOW: Last night, Ohio's new Republican governor, John Kasich, signed into law the union-stripping bill. The bill strips most collective bargaining rights from about 350,000 people who work for a living in the great state of Ohio.

But that is not the end of that story. Opponents of that bill now have 90 days to collect enough signatures to put that measure up for a statewide vote.

If Democrats and unions and people who support Democrats and unions on this union-stripping bill in Ohio can get all the signatures that they need, then this union-stripping measure will be on the ballot in November.

Sooner than November, though, will be recall elections for some of the Republican state senators who supervised the union-stripping

thing in Wisconsin. As of today, it looks like there will be at least one of those elections. The recall signatures were turned in for one Republican senator today. It was a surprise because we're still a month away from the deadline, and they got all the signatures together and got them in a month early.

If the Wisconsin state senator Republican recall efforts succeed, recall elections for state senators in Wisconsin won't be held in November, they will be held sooner than that. Those recall elections start six Tuesdays after the signatures on those recall petitions are verified. So, they could be held in the next couple months.

But even sooner than that is this upcoming Tuesday, when what would otherwise be a sleepy Wisconsin Supreme Court election has turned into a big proxy battle for what people think about Republican Governor Scott Walker's union-stripping in the state of Wisconsin. It

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is a conservative incumbent state Supreme Court justice. He used to be a Republican leader in the state assembly. And he is being challenged by a Democrat who supports union rights.

If you do not believe me that this sleepy little state Supreme Court election is turning into a national gig, consider that the Republican justice today received an endorsement from Sarah Palin. Yes. It's true.

Joining us now is a man who has been asked way too many questions about Sarah Palin in his career already.

MICHAEL STEELE, FORMER RNC CHAIRMAN:
Yes.

MADDOW: Michael Steele, former chairman of the Republican National Committee. I'm sorry in advance.

STEELE: That's all right. That's all right. How are you?

MADDOW: I'm good. But I'm glad that you are—I know you were here. You were able to hear the interview with the head of the Fraternal Order of Police.

STEELE: Yes.

MADDOW: And that is a union that not only blends the direct value of its endorsement to Republicans on a regular basis, but it has this huge political impact to have a big, highly visible police officer's union make a

Republican endorsement. And they are really not at the Republican Party now, and I want to know how that makes you feel.

STEELE: Well, no, it's perfectly reasonable and absolutely understandable. And I think there's a whole lot about what's been happening in Wisconsin and Ohio and elsewhere around the country has been a real big missed opportunity by the GOP at the national level to really sit down and layout the argument. Well, now, I appreciate everything that you said up at the beginning. It was a wonderful indictment of Governors Walker and Kasich.

But what you did not touch on, which is what the driving force is, is the cost of public employee contracts at this point—whether it's in New York or Wisconsin or elsewhere. When you're looking at, you know, in the case of Wisconsin, for example, where you have public union employees outstripping in terms of benefits private sector employees—the same

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is true by almost three-to-one in Ohio.

These governors, whether Republican or Democrat, -- I mean, Governor Cuomo faces the same issue in New York, handling it differently because of strong union presence there, and , of course, being a Democrat, but the reality is not lost on him. He's got to balance his budgets, and these contracts that were negotiated long before now, Rachel, these are—we are talking about the cost of contracts that were negotiated 10 years ago that are coming due, and you can't afford it. So, where do you draw the line? Where do you draw the line?

And that's the balancing act that a lot of these governors are having to face.

MADDOW: In terms of making that argument, though, and making that the national argument, to hear you say that makes a lot of—liberals in particular, but I think Democrats broadly, very excited and hopeful that Republicans will take your advice because of three things. Number one, states that are highly unionized do not have worse budget problems than states that are not highly unionized, because the idea that Republicans take police officers like members of the Fraternal Order of Police and say, you know what, they're the problem, they're the reason things are wrong in the states, is an argument that Democrats would love to have.

And one last thing, if this is a budget issue, then how do guys like John Kasich and Rick Scott in Florida and Scott Walker in Wisconsin

and Rick Snyder in Michigan—how do they explain responding to a budget problem by giving away hundreds of millions of dollars in state revenue that would help close the budget deficit and instead giving it away to business? If you want to make it a budget fight, Democrats win.

STEELE: But that gets to the philosophical difference between where

you sit and how I sit and how we look at the dollar that comes into state

government, where the dollar comes from and how it is turned around either

through tax policy, fiscal policy, and et cetera. They believe and I

believe so rightly that those investments those business are able to make

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enable the public sector, which drives the economy, at the end of the day -

it is not the contracts for the union workers, whether they're fire or police that are driving the economy, it is—it is actually the wealth that's created by the small business owner who invests in that economy.

And it's a philosophical difference of how we view those dollars being put to the best use. We think it belongs in the private sector, not the public sector.

MADDOW: But if you're saying the reason that all of this has happened is not because of ideological commitment to get rid of unions, not because of an ideological—

STEELE: I don't think that's it. Right.

MADDOW: And you're saying that that's not what it is, that it's all about the budget, these decisions to give away these multimillion dollar and in some cases over billion dollars of tax revenue, what is now tax revenue, to give it to states, if it is about the budget, that is a huge budget buster. That makes state deficits impossible to close.

And so, you can't be a deficit hawk who wants to give away the revenue to the businesses, even if you have a beautiful Ayn Randian conception of what those businesses will do with formerly state money.

STEELE: Well, it is not giving it away. First off, it's not giving it away. There's a finite amount of

cash coming into the state coffers. And those dollars that come in have to be, you know, generated and multiplied in a way that they can take care of safety net issues they need to take care of, those who needed through Medicare, Medicaid, and other types of programs, but also to have those dollars go out and back into the community in a way in which they're going to create and generate additional tax dollars.

And that to me is a philosophical debate that this party, Republican Party, has not made very concisely in states like Wisconsin and Ohio and elsewhere, at a time when I think it is an appropriate argument to make.

MADDOW: Well, on Tuesday, the state Supreme Court election, this would usually be a sleepy local affair in Wisconsin, but it's becoming exactly the place for that kind of argument. Sarah Palin is weighing in on the Supreme Court election with an endorsement.

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What does that do to a race like this? Obviously, we can say, you know, we can have these arguments over these two candidates we otherwise would have never heard of. What does it do to the race itself to have all this national attention on it?

STEELE: Well, it will change the dynamics. With Sarah coming into that race, there will probably be other national Democrats that will come into that race and support.

And I love how you set it up—the judge who was conservative, the incumbent is a conservative but the other was just a Democrat. I'm sure that she's probably have some liberal leanings to her. So, let's, you know, let's level it out a bit.

And that national ying and yang is going to come to bear down on this race.

My problem with judicial races—I generally have a problem with sort of getting our judges and having them subjected to the political process like this. I would love to have my judges of whatever stripe they happen to be to be free and clear of that as much as possible, because their decisions are going to be made over a long period of time. It's not just a short term solution or correction that's going to be made as a result of something you don't like that happened yesterday. This is going to be a longer term commitment that is going to be made by a judge. And I'd just like to have that as clear and free as possible.

MADDOW: I have to say, I completely agree

with you. I think judicial elections at any level are creepy.

STEELE: Yes.

MADDOW: So, look, another thing on which we agree.

But I think that we—I think that it is a great sign that you and I both agree that these fights in the states ought to be the basis for a national big picture argument about people who work for a living between Democrats and Republicans.

STEELE: I agree.

MADDOW: And the reason that I would be electorally excited about that as a liberal is because John Kasich in Ohio, Rick Scott in Florida, Scott Walker in Wisconsin, Rick Snyder in Michigan—these guys have approval ratings right now that are like sub-Cheney. Polls say

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they would all lose if they were up for election today. I mean, they are putting Ohio and Florida, Wisconsin and Michigan over in the Democratic corridor.

STEELE: Relax. Relax.

MADDOW: Democrats to lose in the next election.

STEELE: Relax. Relax. Let me say something.

MADDOW: I am too excited to relax.

STEELE: Well, let me tell you—I know you are. I can see that. I can see.

(LAUGHTER)

STEELE: And I'm excited for you, but for a different reason.

MADDOW: OK.

STEELE: And that's because a year from now, or in the case of these individuals who are going to be running for re-election three years from now, I give you the example of our good governor from Indiana who did the exact same thing in terms of—Mitch Daniels—in terms of attacking budget deficit and problems in his state seven years ago. His approvals were exactly where they are for these young governors now. He was overwhelmingly reelected once the policies—again, like I said with the judicial nominations, that process goes over time.

So, let's see how their economies are doing and how these governors manage the economy now that they've gotten their way and their wish. And see what happens.

MADDOW: Don't you think it is important in the Mitch Daniels example, that Mitch Daniels—he passed that executive order stripping union rights.

STEELE: Yes.

MADDOW: This year in the legislature, the legislature wanted to make it permanent so it wouldn't expire as an executive order.

STEELE: Yes.

MADDOW: Mitch Daniels said, please don't do that, please table it. I don't really want the heat. I mean, if you want to take Mitch Daniels as the example here, he's the example I would have brought up about what good news for

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Democrats.

(LAUGHTER)

STEELE: No, no, no. I think Mitch had other reasons for deciding not to want to take the heat. He's taking some heat. But I think this is going to be an exciting political cycle.

And my hope is we are able to elevate the arguments to really talk about the philosophical divisions that are going to divide—not divide—but drive the country in the next few years.

MADDOW: And with cops and firefighters on the liberal side, I am more excited.

STEELE: They are not on the liberal side.

MADDOW: They are now. They weren't before, but they are now.

STEELE: Oh, please.

MADDOW: Michael Steele, former chairman of the Republican National Committee, a good sport and good guy—thank you so much.

STEELE: Thank you.

MADDOW: So, do you know who Brent Musburger is? He is a famous sportscaster. And for a long time, he was the most famous sportscaster in the world. He was the face of CBS. And on April 1st, 1990, CBS fired Brent Musburger and nobody believed it because they did it on April 1st. You can look it up.

True.

This year it has sort of happened again. I will explain in a second.

We'll be right back.

(COMMERCIAL BREAK)

MADDOW: Starting tomorrow, U.S. military officials tell NBC News, that American aircraft will no longer be flying combat air missions over Libya. Since the Libyan intervention, the Pentagon says U.S. planes flew more than 1200 combat sorties, including more than 430 of what they call strike missions, meaning they pulled the trigger. They dropped ordnance.

As of tomorrow, that is over for the U.S. The U.S. air role in Libya will be support only, which they say means things like surveillance, reconnaissance, electronic jamming, and midair refueling. So, as of tomorrow, no

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combat. The new support-only mission starts tomorrow, which is April 2nd.

Which means today is April 1st, which means there are things in today's news, even some things in today's news about Libya that you may reasonably have thought were a joke, but they are not, which is both terrible and wonderful. And that is next.

(COMMERCIAL BREAK)

MADDOW: Today is April 1st, April Fools' Day, which means that a lot of sources of what you think might be factual information instead put out fake factual information today as a joke.

Por ejemplo, this official U.S. Army press release announcing that new standard head gear for our nation's army will be an adorable cowboy hat with tassels.

Or this very well-done article in "The Orlando Sentinel" announcing that Michael Jordan, cigar and all, 48-year-old Michael Jordan will be coming out of retirement, playing with the Bobcats tonight against the Orlando Magic. Well done.

I like this honoring April Fools' Day even in the news thing very much, and it's not just because way born on April Fools' Day and I support the holiday generally, but because I just generally like creative wackiness.

One side effect of the creative wackiness with which we commemorate April Fools' Day, though, is that there are some news stories

that appear around this time of year that are very hard to tell apart from very good jokes. That I think is the case with this item from PoliticalCorrection.org, calling out Texas Congressman Louie Gohmert for his particular take on what is wrong with the war in Libya.

I'm not sure actually if Congressman Gohmert is for the war in Libya or against it. But understanding that now is probably less important than understanding Louie Gohmert's conspiracy theory about what the Libyan war is really all about.

(BEGIN VIDEO CLIP)

REP. LOUIE GOHMERT ®, TEXAS: Maybe there's intention to so deplete the military that we're going to need that presidential reserve officer, commissioned corps and noncommissioned corps, that the president can call up on a moment's notice involuntarily, according to the Obamacare bill.

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(END VIDEO CLIP)

MADDOW: Congressman Gohmert says maybe U.S. troops have been sent to participate in this international war thing in Libya because President Obama wants to deplete U.S. military strength in order to give himself the pretext that he needs to call up his own private army—which is the true secret purpose of health reform.

What? It's just not just Obamacare, it is Obam-army. Not an April Fools' joke apparently. Do not be hoodwinked by the frivolity of this pseudo-holiday. No, Louie Gohmert means this.

We know he means it because the people from PoliticalCorrection.org caught up with Mr. Gohmert and asked him about it at that tiny Tea Party rally that took place at the Capitol yesterday. They asked him if he really did mean it about this secret Obama army that's hidden inside health reform. Mr. Gohmert confirmed that is what he meant.

So file this under not kidding, no matter what the calendar says.

There's also one more. Today, Republicans in the House passed this bill, H.R. 1255. In this bill, they say if the Democratically-controlled Senate does not do what the Republicans in House want them to do by a certain date, then something passed by the Republicans in the House will just instantly become law, presto, even if it's only passed the House. Without the Senate also passing it, and without the

president signing it, House Republicans declared today whatever they pass will just become the new law of the land, because they said so.

So, like we're having a heated argument, really heated argument—and in the middle of it I say I hereby declare if the next word you say is not avocado, then I win this argument and you lose. And you say, what? And I said, ha, I win. You said what, no avocado!

That's what just happened in Congress today—the real Congress, the actual United State House of Representatives. They voted on it and everything. It is total nonsense, but it is what they did, and they did it on April Fools' Day, which I recognize makes it seem all the more possible that this is too dumb to be true, but in John Boehner's Republican-controlled House of Representatives, avocado. Nothing is too dumb to be true. Suspend your disbelief. Ah!

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(COMMERCIAL BREAK)

MADDOW: OK. I know we did the whole “I’m not sure I should believe this story because it is April Fools’ Day” thing. I’m supposed—right now in the script, I am supposed to be talking about something else, something else that will pique your interest about our last segment on tonight show, which is about jobs, and it’s a really good segment and I know I’m supposed to be piquing your interest in that right now.

But I am actually sorry. I have—I have to do this as a late add instead, OK? There’s an article that was just posted by “The Wall Street Journal.” I’m quite sure the reason they have given it the date line of April 2nd, even though it’s already posted and today is still April 1st, is because they knew no one would believe this if I said that this was posted on April 1st. Nobody would believe this is true.

Look at this. “Transocean Cites Safety in Bonuses.” Transocean Limited had its, quote, “best year in safety performance, despite the explosion of its Deepwater Horizon rig that left 11 dead and oil gushing into Gulf of Mexico. The world’s largest offshore rig company said in securities filing Friday.

Transocean filed paperwork today on April Fools’ Day, informing regulators that they are paying their executives big bonuses for their good safety year in 2010. In 2010, the year the Transocean rig blew up and killed 11 people and caused the worst accidental offshore oil spill in the history of the world. This was their safe year.

Look at this. Look at this. This is from the filing. “Notwithstanding the tragic loss of life in the Gulf of Mexico, we achieved an exemplary statistical safety record.” Other than that, Mrs. Lankin (ph), how did you—I mean, really?

We have been checking this out since “The Journal” posted it. And as far as we can tell, this has been what’s going on behind the scenes and in the control room while I’ve been talking about other things, as far as we can tell, this is actually real and not a joke. As I say, “The Wall Street Journal” posted this with a predate on it. It’s listed as being April 2nd, even though today is April 1st and it’s already up.

If we find out that this was, in fact, a joke, I will be very happy about it and I will run the most relieved correction of my natural born life. But I fear this is real.

(COMMERCIAL BREAK)

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(BEGIN VIDEO CLIP)

UNIDENTIFIED MALE: So, what do you see?

UNIDENTIFIED KID: Tyrannosaurus (ph). That is the (INAUDIBLE). This is the Late Cretaceous.

(END VIDEO CLIP)

MADDOW: The Late Cretaceous.

Some little kids love dinosaurs and can spook you out by knowing way more than you would expect any kid to know about the scientific names of dinosaurs, the differences between them, how to recognize them.

Some kids are dinosaur kids. Some kids, in sort of the same way, are construction equipment kids. Have you ever known a kid like this?

Our executive producer Bill Wolff has a construction fascinated kid who identifies all sorts of different types of heavy machinery on sight. He is already as basically a toddler way past Tonka, way past backhoes versus bulldozers. He's a heavy equipment expert.

So, the first part of this segment is for Bill's son and for any other kid you know who finds heavy duty construction equipment oddly compelling.

This piece of equipment you see in action here is called a concrete pump. It is a very boring name for a very impressive thing. It sort of looks like a crane or like a cherry-picker, but

instead of raising a person up to a high remote location like a cherry picker does, and instead of elevating a high point of leverage for picking things up and moving them around like a crane does, what a concrete pump does instead is it uses a really long remotely operated boom arm to pump stuff, to move liquid really far, with a lot of force, in a precisely directional way.

It's like a fireman's bucket line on steroids. It is a multi-story conveyer belt, but for goo, instead of for delicious chocolate. It is a fire hose that places liquid where you want it, instead of squirting liquid up and away.

As the name implies, a concrete pump can pump concrete. It can also pump water. And it is probably because this equipment can pump both of these things, that if you live in the great state of Georgia, you may see sometimes soon trucking down the road in the great mess of blinking lights and oversized load signs and

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escort vehicles—one of the largest types of these machines in the entire world.

A company with the spectacular name of, ready? Putzmeister. Oh, yes, happy Friday. It's called Putzmeister. Putzmeister makes a concrete pump where the remotely controlled arm is 70 meters long, 230 feet long.

The truck bed where the pump starts is 230 feet away from the end of the boom, out of which it is shooting concrete or water. Amazing! Which is also where part of the segment that's really cool for kids might end, depending on your kid. That's because the reason Georgia residents may be seeing one of the biggest concrete pumps in the world traveling down the highway soon is because it will be on its way to Fukushima in Japan.

There's great need to get a huge amount of water into those busted reactors, right? But those reactors are already so damaged and so radioactive, that you want to keep living humans as far as you can from the reactors while still using human ingenuity and attention to convey as much water into them as humanly possible. A 230-foot long remotely operated boom that shoots water out of the end of it greatly increases what is humanly possible in this problem.

And so, a former nuclear weapons factory on the Georgia-South Carolina line that is called the Savannah River Site, they are sending over their 70-meter Putzmeister concrete pump to Japan.

We spoke with the company today, found another 70-meter giant concrete pump will be coming from Los Angeles as well, once both the one in Georgia and the one in California retrofitted so that they will pump water instead of pumping concrete. They are both are scheduled to be sent on April 9th.

Putzmeister has already sent two slightly smaller pumps to Japan, a 58-meter concrete pump has been working there since March 22nd, and this 62-meter pump was sent out yesterday. Another 62-meter one will be sent next week, making five total. Enormous concrete pumps that this one company is sending.

How they are sending them is quite amazing. Look at this plane that you can see here. This is a Russian-made Antonov 124, the world's second largest cargo airplane. You see how huge it is, right?

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Still, to get those two American pumps to Japan, to get these two 70-meter long pumps, that ones that weigh almost 200,000 pounds, for that, they're going to need a bigger plane, not a Boeing 747 sized plane, not an Airbus A-380 size, but rather a gigantic Russian-built Antonov 225, which is not the second largest cargo plane on Earth. That's the largest cargo plane on Earth. And it will be the largest cargo plane on Earth holding the largest concrete pump on Earth which we will be sending over from here to help in Japan, which is cool.

(COMMERCIAL BREAK)

MADDOW: I was looking at something on "The Daily Kos" Web site yesterday or maybe the day before. I was not looking for this particular thing. It was something else.

But this caught my eye and this has been bugging me ever since. And I've decided I want to say something about it at the end of the show on Friday. It is a simple thing but the kind of graph that tends to upset the common wisdom.

This is the stock market going back to 1993, smoothed out a lot. But this is it. The blue line stands for growth, stock market going up. The red line stands for shrinking for downturns.

It also just so happens that the blue line also stands for Democratic presidents in that red/blue way we've gotten used to in political reporting. Blue stands for stock market growth and for Democratic administration. Red stands for downturns and a Republican

administration.

And if you focus just on this part, you will see that regardless of how you personally are doing, this part of our nation is living large. Despite what you hear about the economy at home, the stock market is in tall cotton and the reason the stock market is doing so well is that the companies whose stock makes up the stock market, those companies are doing very, very well. Very well. Very, very well.

The government released new figures last week on just how very, very well companies are doing. In the last three months of 2010, American corporations were cranking out profits at a record rate. They have not grown like this since 1950. If they clipped along like this for a whole year, they'd make \$1.68 trillion—trillion with a T as in totally rich.

Trillions my Friday night friends are large, very large. They are very large. Trillions divide up

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into great big slices.

I would like to congratulate my sort of bosses at G.E., General Electric, which owns nearly half of this network. They cleared \$14.2 billion last year.

Goldman Sachs, which never wanted the bailout anyway, they recorded more than \$8 billion in net earnings.

G.M., welcome back to life, thanks to help from the American taxpayers

G.M. made \$4.7 billion.

And Google, the new economy, with \$18.9 billion in profit.

But, hey, what was wrong with the old economy? If you're an oil company like ExxonMobil not much. Exxon made \$149 billion.

So, the stock market is doing great. Corporations are doing great. And the bosses of corporations—they are also doing great. After the great recession, these guys rebuilt fat city really fast and now they are living in it.

Check it out. Last year, CEO pay jumped 27 percent. What? Typo?

No. Last year CEO pay jumped 27 percent, reported in "USA Today."

In technical terms, that is an awful lot on top of an already God awful lot. The paper's top

dog was this guy, Philippe Dauman, I think that's how you say his last name, D-A-U-M-A-N. He's the chairman of Viacom, \$84.5 million. Yes. That guy's recession is over.

Yours may or may not be, depending whether or not you are average. The government reports that average worker pay grew just 2.1 percent last year, which is the technical way of saying almost nothing, flat, going nowhere.

So, the rich guys are getting way richer. Think about this, CEO pay up 27 percent in the year. You, my average friend, is not getting way richer. Average worker pay flat. Twenty-seven percent from CEOs, flat for average workers.

I am not trying to start a class war here. I'm just saying this is what's going on. The CEOs are doing way better. Average workers, not, underlined.

But today, we got what passes for good news

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for the commoners. The government's new jobs report said unemployment fell a tick to 8.8 percent. The economy added 230,000 private sector jobs. It sounds like a lot and it's better than nothing, but we did lose 8 million jobs in the Great Recession and we have a lot of ground to make up.

Ezra Klein writing today at "The Washington Post" at this, quote, "At this rate, getting back to the 5 percent unemployment rate we saw in early 2008 will take us until 2018." We can't wait that long.

We are in fact in a recovery, as you can see in this graph from calculated risk. We are in a recovery. It's just an incredibly slow recovery after an incredibly frightening fall.

And while all of this is happening, while the stock market is recovering and CEOs are making bank, it is regular people who work for a living, the ones who cash pay checks who are being told it's time to sacrifice, right? Politicians at the state and federal level keep saying we're broke. We're broke. We're broke. We have to have some shared sacrifice.

But when they say shared sacrifice, what they mean is they mean cutting teacher pay by amounts that really matter. They mean laying off half the school district staff in Philadelphia while the state works to shovel a huge, new, bigger hole in the state's deficit in order to give hundreds of millions of dollars to corporations. They mean raising taxes on working class families and the elderly in Michigan—raising taxes on working class

people and the elderly in Michigan in order to finance hundreds of millions of dollars to give away to business.

They mean cutting programs that help poor people heat their homes.

That is an Obama administration proposal, by the way.

They mean declaring a financial emergency making the budget way worse with a bunch of corporate giveaways and then cutting money from programs for the disabled, like they're doing in Florida.

This economic strategy is costing the nation a bundle. All we hear about is cuts, right? It's one thing to talk about cutting spending. The thing that is being lost in translation is that this is not just cutting. This is a transfer of wealth—a wealth that specifically might otherwise be able to close a budget deficit and,

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instead, it is being shoved out the door to corporate interests and to the people who frankly are already doing great right now in the economy.

Check this out. The national deficit Republicans keep warning us about, the serious moral threat they say it poses, that deficit would be cut in half if we let the Republican Bush era tax cuts for the richest people in the country expire. The deficit would be cut in half if the Bush tax cuts were allowed to expire. Ezra Klein again posting this graph.

The other big thing we could do to fix the nation's budget is to start making corporations pay their share. Senator Bernie Sanders, the master of populist righteous outrage, posted a list this week of what he calls the 10 worst corporate income tax avoiders.

Number one on Senator Sanders' list: Exxon Mobil, \$19 billion in 2009 profits. What do they pay in taxes? Goose egg. They got \$156 million in an IRS rebate.

Number two from Mr. Sanders: Bank of America, \$4.4 billion in profits in 2010, paid nothing in taxes. They got a \$1.9 billion tax refund.

Number three: General Electric. Hi, boss. Twenty-six billion dollars in profits over the last five years, no taxes, \$4.1 billion refund from the IRS, Senator Sanders says. And nothing due to Uncle Sam in 2010.

When you pay your taxes it always hurts, right? But you think, I'm doing my part. Imagine what part you could do if your income was \$26 billion over five years, if you actually paid any taxes on it. Those are the haves who are also now the get-mores. Who should pay for that and why?

Have a good weekend.

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