

LINKS, 8/3/11

Our Dying Economy

The National Employment Law Project has a report showing how this Depression is hollowing out middle class jobs, with 8.4% of all middle wage jobs gone (and that's on top of a process that had already started before the Depression). One profession that has shown growth among middle wage jobs, though, is "bailiffs, correctional officers, and jailers"—they make up over 81,000 of the news jobs. Sarah Jaffe has more.

Meanwhile, ALEC is pushing policies that allow private prisons to employ inmates at less than prevailing wages, effectively undercutting real businesses.

The DC Circuit has shot down an SEC rule that would make it easier to get dissident Directors in corporate board elections. To back its decision, the panel seems to have badly cherry-picked studies to claim that giving stockholders greater say in corporate governance is a bad thing.

Obama missed an opportunity to blame Republicans for letting Delta's union-busting get in the way of FAA reauthorization—and instead losing billions in the process. Instead, he blamed Congress generally.

Reuters reports on reverse mergers, in which companies use dormant shell companies to get listed on US exchanges, while avoiding the scrutiny an IPO would require. Of 122 Chinese companies that used reverse mergers to list on US exchanges, they have lost \$18 billion in market capitalization.

Our Dying Empire

David Axe reports that the arms we're giving to African troops to fight al-Shabaab in Somalia ending up in al-Shabaab's hands; the troops are selling the weapons because their paychecks are withheld from them.

Joshua Foust looks at how a shift of aid—things like USAID—to the Defense budget just as we start talking about cutting big money from national security puts such aid at risk. Meanwhile, Nancy Youssef catches the Republicans doling out an extra \$50 billion to DOD.

In 2009, USA Today reported that retired officers were getting up to \$330/hour to consult with DOD on things like weapon systems as part of a mentor system. So DOD passed rules that required those retirees to reveal their ties to defense contractors. The result? Most of the participants—all but 20 of the 158 mentors in the program when they first identified this gravy train in 2009—have left the program. (h/t POGO) No wonder Republicans are working so hard to prevent Obama from passing an Executive Order requiring transparency on other contracting—because transparency actually works.

Justice and Injustice

Radley Balko writes about Corey Maye's return home after being released from death row.

Rummy's effort to claim qualified immunity in a suit a US citizen filed for the abuse he was subjected to at Camp Cropper has failed. Here's the opinion.

Ron Wyden says he will block the Intelligence Authorizaiton bill over FISA changes and transparency. I hope he keeps his word.