



The RIGHT WRITE-UP

The Republican Club of Comal County

*A political group of conservative Republican men and women.
Our goal is to inform about current issues and conservative candidates.*

Volume 8, Issue 2

rcocc.org

February, 2023

OUR NEXT MEETING

THE REPUBLICAN CLUB OF COMAL COUNTY

will meet on Tuesday, February 28, at 6:30 p.m. (setup at 5:00, social mixer at 5:30)
at the First Protestant Church of New Braunfels, 172 W. Coll Street.
(Enter the parking lot by the Civic Center from Coll St.)

The Club will provide light refreshments such as veggie trays, snacks, and cookies. The Club will also provide utensils, water, tea, and coffee. Members and guests can bring salads and desserts to share, if desired.

We encourage members to arrive early. This will allow time to pay dues, greet friends and guests, and partake of refreshments before the meeting starts.

Please share this meeting announcement with friends and family.

As we grow in numbers, our influence grows with our elected officials, and they will respond to our calls on legislative priorities.

Questions? Call or email our President, Al Highfield, at 830-255-1367 or at Albert.Highfield@yahoo.com.



Our guest speaker will be

Sheriff Mark Reynolds

The Sheriff of Comal County

**He will speak about updates on the jail, the Sheriff's Office, and the Radio Project.
The K-9 unit may also be in attendance.**

Please join us for this timely and informative talk.

For more information on Sheriff Reynolds, see page 4.

A Message from our Club President

Welcome to all our current members and to anyone thinking about joining our movement. This club stands for Republican Party platform issues and a conservative mindset. The grassroots of our Party are in local elections, i.e., school boards, county offices, and city officials. This year, 2023, we have two Comal County election cycles, May and November. Check our Newsletter for important dates and candidates for these offices. The support of our members as election clerks and election judges volunteering in our community keeps all of us involved in the democratic process of our governments; local, state, and national. Let all of us strive to make 2023/2024 banner years to keep conservatism and the Republican Party superior in the country, state, and county.

The Newsletter and lots of other good Club information can be found at rccc.org. Also, there are lots of photos, videos, and events posted there!

President Albert F. Highfield

“Ask me or other club officers what You can do to get involved!”

OUR PATRON PROGRAM

The Republican Club of Comal County is thankful for those who have contributed to our Club through the Patron Program during 2022 and 2023.

Suzanne Badger	Helen Horvath	Kathy Phillips
Robbie Borchers	Don Johnson	Robert Phillips
Chris Byrd	Susie LeCanu	Sue Piner
Derick Carver	Kerry Ledford	Maria Seiler
Steve Gallets	Doug Leacock	Patrick Seiler
Albert Haddad	W.Lindy Menefee	Anita Valdez
Scott Haag	Sharon Hall Monge	John Walker
Albert Highfield	Mark Montgomery	Susan Walker
Vicki Highfield	Cindi Montgomery	John Young
Marty Hiles	Naomi Narvaiz	Diane Young

Patrons donate \$100 per year per person to help us finance our election strategy. Contact our Membership Chairman, Cindi Montgomery, at 214-908-7212, to become a Patron member or for more information. Patrons receive a special personalized Texas flag name tag.

Our Officers for 2023

President	Al Highfield
Vice President	Marty Hiles
Secretary	Kathy Phillips
Treasurer	Patrick Seiler
Past President	Mary Wohl
County Chair	Sue Piner

Committee Chairs

Membership	Cindi Montgomery
Legislative Affairs	Don Johnson
Campaign Activities	Susan Walker
Hospitality	<i>(Currently vacant)</i>
Parliamentarian	<i>(Currently vacant)</i>
Publicity Chair	Audrey Johnson Scheper
Facebook	<i>(Currently vacant)</i>
Newsletter Editor	Kerry Ledford
Associate Editor	Karen Hobson
Special Events	Donna Lee
Special Projects	Ruth Chambers
Patron Program	Cindi Montgomery
Precinct Whip	Joe Carroll
Web Master	Audrey Johnson Scheper
Sergeant-at-Arms	Marty Hiles



Pictured above, our 2023 officers being sworn in by the Honorable Scott Haag, Comal County Commissioner for Precinct 2.
From left to right, Commissioner Haag, President Albert Highfield, Vice President Marty Hiles, Secretary Kathy Phillips, and Treasurer Patrick Seiler.

Sheriff Mark Reynolds

Education

Mark graduated in 1987 from Stephen F. Austin State University with a degree in Criminal Justice/Law Enforcement Administration. He graduated from the Bill Blackwood Law Enforcement Management Institute of Texas at Huntsville in 2002 and the the 241st Session of the FBI Academy at Quantico, Virginia, in 2010. Mark has Peace Officer, Master Peace Officer, County Jailer, Advanced Jailer, and Police Instructor licenses from the Texas Commission on Law Enforcement.

Experience

Mark has over 30 years of experience in law enforcement. He has been with the Comal County Sheriff's Office since January of 1990. He started in the patrol division as a patrol deputy. In 1992 he was assigned to the Criminal Investigations Division, where he stayed until 1994. He was re-assigned back to the patrol division and became the first D.A.R.E. (Drug Abuse Resistance Education) Officer for the Sheriff's Office. In 1999 Mark became the Training Coordinator for the Sheriff's Office, with the establishment of its new Training/Emergency Operations Center. As a Patrol Lieutenant, his responsibilities included supervising both patrol day shifts, the Special Operations Group (K-9, Directed Patrol and Traffic Units), the Community Resource Team (D.A.R.E., Crime Prevention, and School Resource Officers), and the Firearms and Open Records sections of the Sheriff's Office. He also served as primary Public Information/Affairs Officer and Coordinator for the Citizen Sheriff Academy. In 2014 he was promoted to Captain and was assigned to the Corrections Division. This position directly supervises all personnel in the jail, Criminal Records, Transport and Courthouse Security. Mark was elected Sheriff on November 8th, 2016, and was sworn in on January 1, 2017.

Comal County Precinct Chairs

Why do we publish the Comal County Precinct Chair List in the Republican Club Newsletter each month? Our mission as active Republicans is to support the political process. Each one of us should know what Precinct we live in and who serves as our Precinct Chair.

We should offer our assistance to our Precinct Chair for the elections. We can assist as an Election clerk or Election Judge on Election Day. We can offer to block walk to inform our neighbors of early voting. We can block walk for our chosen candidates. We can offer to take a list of Republicans to call with a reminder of the times and places to vote early. There are a number of ways an individual can help to assure a maximum Republican vote.

Studies show that when people intend to vote, but fail to vote early, a substantial percentage of that vote is lost on Election Day. There is a lot to be done. Please offer your help to your Precinct Chair.

<u>Precinct</u>	<u>Name</u>
County Chair	Sue Piner
Vice Chair	Susan Walker
Recording Secretary	Judy Walker
Treasurer	Don Johnson
Assistant Treasurer	Vicky Highfield
101	Sharon Hall Monge
102	Kaci Sisk
103	Laura Buske
104	J.B. Williamson
105	Ernie Lee
106	Chris Byrd
107	Anita Valdez
108	Albert Highfield
109	<i>(vacant)</i>
110	Joanne Martin
201	Marty Hiles
203	James "Hoss" Boyd
204	Marlin Brown
205	Steve White
206	Kathy Phillips
207	John Brewer
208	Geri Becker
301	Will Moravits
303	Kenneth Kasper
304	Amanda Ackerman
305	Isabel Ibarra
306	Barbara Harrell
307	Timothy Davis
308	Mary Lou Erben
401	Robbie Borchers
402	Melinda Rapp
403	Carolyn Besselman
404	Teri Taylor
405	Molly Vogt
406	Joe Carroll
407	Susan Walker
408	Don Johnson

Our Mission

The mission of the Republican Club of Comal County is to promote “Faith, Family, and Freedom” by providing information and education about critical political issues, by encouraging active participation in the political process, by supporting conservative Republican nominees, and by fostering loyalty to the Republican Party and its conservative ideals.

The Republican Contract with America, 2022

- 1) A Safe and Law-Abiding America. Crime prevention and punishment is mostly a local and state affair. But the federal government promises to prosecute fully any criminal who crosses state lines or uses interstate communications to commit arson, public destruction, smash-and-grab looting, or general attacks on any federal property within the states.
- 2) Affordable Energy for an Energy-Independent America. Restoration of gas and oil energy independence; reopening of federal lands for new energy leases; fast-tracking natural gas and oil pipelines; encouragement and incentives to mine rare and precious metals inside the United States needed for batteries and new sources of energy.
- 3) A Secure Border. Immediate completion of the border wall. Deportation of all those who crossed illegally between 2017 and 2024 and all criminals convicted of felonies or serious misdemeanors; employer sanctions; an end to catch-and-release; all refugee seekers apply outside the United States; a tax on remittances sent south of the border on those here illegally and on public assistance; the end of the primacy of family considerations in fast-tracking immigration requests, replaced by meritocratic considerations of English facility, skill sets, and education. All immigration would be predicated on legality, diversity, meritocracy, and measured and manageable numbers necessary for assimilation and integration.
- 4) A Sacrosanct Constitution and Preservation of Long-Held Traditions. On record for no changes to the Constitution; no dismantling of the Electoral College; no federalization of states' voting laws; no increase in a nine-justice Supreme Court; no statehood for Washington, DC, and Puerto Rico; no end to the Senate filibuster.
- 5) The Restoration of Election Day. Encouragement to the states to limit mail-in balloting, return to the old notion of absentee balloting as an exception rather than the norm, and cut back on extended/early balloting — with the goal that 60 to 70% of ballots cast are done so on Election Day.
- 6) A "Don't Tread on Me" Foreign Policy. Strong support for the sanctity of allied nations. Deterrence against Russia, China, Iran, North Korea, and other belligerents. A realistic foreign policy of "No better friend, no worse enemy." An end to optional large, on-the-ground military engagements in the Middle East. A return of Pentagon emphasis on battle readiness rather than social justice and woke agendas, with budgets redirected to missile defense and naval and air deterrence.
- 7) Towards a Balanced Budget. Expenditures must match revenues. An update of the Simpson-Bowles National Commission on Fiscal Responsibility and Reform or enactment of its recommendations, with the aim of achieving a balanced budget in four years.
- 8) Anti-Trust, Anti-Monopoly Legislation. An end to Silicon Valley's vast monopolies, cartels, and immunity from public-utility regulations.
- 9) Strict Enforcement of the Civil Rights Act of 1964. Prohibition of the use of racial bias/advantage/preference in the operations of public local, state, and federal agencies. No federal funds allotted for critical-race-theory indoctrination.
- 10) No Federal Funds for Lawbreakers. An end to federal support of state agencies and private institutions that violate federal statutes and the Bill of Rights, whether sanctuary-city jurisdictions or campuses whose speech and trial codes violate the First, Fourth, Fifth, and Sixth Amendments. Loss of tax-free status on income from university endowments of more than \$10 billion.

IMPORTANT ELECTION DATES FOR 2023

There are two Comal County election cycles in 2023, in May and November.

The May 2023 election includes New Braunfels Mayor, NB City Council District 5, NB City

Council District 6, NBISD Trustees for Districts 2 & 4, and CISD Districts 3 & 4 and at-large.

CISD may also place a Bond Issue(s) on the Ballot.

The November 2023 election will be for Constitutional Amendments.

MAY 6, 2023, Election Dates

January 1, 2023 - First Day to Request Ballot By Mail (BBM) or FPCA

January 18, 2023 - First Day to File for a Place on the Ballot

February 17, 2023 - Last Day to File

April 6, 2023 - Last Day to Register to Vote in May Election

April 24, 2023 - First Day of Early Voting

April 25, 2023 - Last Day to Receive a Request for BBM

May 2, 2023 - Last Day of Early Voting

May 6, 2023 - Election Day

NOVEMBER 7, 2023, Election Dates

October 10, 2023 - Last Day to Register to Vote in the November Election

October 23, 2023 - First Day of Early Voting

October 27, 2023 - Last Day to Receive a BBM Request

November 3, 2023 - Last Day of Early Voting

November 7, 2023 - Election Day

The Republican Philosophy

That the rights of the individual to achieve the best that is within him, as long as he respects the rights of others, is the source of our nation's strength.

That government exists to protect the freedom of opportunity in which each individual's creative ability can flourish.

That government activities should be limited to those things which people cannot do at all, or cannot do so well for themselves.

The most effective government is government closest to the people.

That those who cannot provide for themselves should be assisted by both government and society, but that every effort should be made to help them to become self-supporting, productive citizens with pride in their independence.

That equal rights, equal justice, and equal opportunity belong to all, regardless of race, creed, age, sex, or national origin.

That the preservation of our nation and the security of our citizens depend upon the constitution, the laws, and the courts, and that respect for them is the responsibility of every individual.

That government is accountable for maintaining sound money and a responsible economy. Individual rights, liberties, and properties are continually eroded when citizens are oppressed by excessive taxation, inflation, government waste, and over regulation.

That the government is responsible for national defense and that only a strong America can remain a free America.

That it is absolutely essential to maintain a strong national defense posture in order that we may at all times negotiate from a position of strength, not weakness, in our continuing efforts toward peace and friendship.

That these concepts are the foundation of our national strength and the Republican Party, which is committed to their preservation, is the party of today and the party of the future.

The Transgender Tide Is Turning The Epoch Times, Wesley J. Smith, January 16, 2023

In recent years, transgender ideologues have mounted a cultural offensive that swept all rationality before them. First, biological science and objective reality were trashed as internal feelings came to matter more than biological facts. Then, existing procedures for dealing with transgender ideation were trashed, allowing anyone who believed themselves to be the opposite sex to simply declare their new identity—and, presto-chango—that's what they are.

Next came language engineering in which lexicon police require media, employers, colleagues, and family to use the preferred pronouns declared by transgendered people under threat of social media exclusion, loss of employment, and in some cases, losing custody of one's own children. Biden administration bureaucrats promulgated regulations that required doctors to provide transgender hormones and surgeries even if they violated their moral and religious beliefs. Catholic hospitals have been sued, some successfully, for refusing to perform transgender hysterectomies.

Soon, womanhood itself was canceled. Females began to be called by ridiculous terms such as "people with uteruses." We were told ubiquitously that "men can give birth" and "women have penises." Female athletes were forced to compete with transgender "women" in sports such as track, swimming, golf, and volleyball. Girls' and women's locker rooms were opened to anyone claiming to be female, regardless of genitalia.

Then, they came for the children. Activists took to social media platforms such as TikTok to push transgender ideology onto youth and silently invaded even the most culturally traditional households. The number of children who claim to be the opposite sex went from a bare trickle to a flash flood. In the name of preventing youth suicides, the Biden administration, medical associations, and professional journals crafted standards of care requiring that youngsters and teenagers claiming to be transgender or nonbinary receive only "gender-affirming" support—meaning that their ideation is to be accepted unquestioningly.

Under the new regime, children claiming to not be their biological sex first receive unquestioning "social affirmation"—they are never called by their "dead (given) names" and are referred to only by their "preferred" pronouns. Some schools secretly affirm these ideations by openly promoting transgender ideology in classrooms and, sometimes, hiding ongoing student "transitions" from parents. Children were invited to "family friendly" drag queen performances that had the impact—and probably the point—of sexualizing childhood.

Worse, children and adolescents are next given "gender-affirming" medical care, in which doctors prescribe drugs and hormones to prevent normal puberty. Gender transition surgeries have become increasingly routine with thousands of girls as young as age 12 having had their breasts removed. Teenagers receive invasive facial reconstruction surgeries to masculinize or feminize their faces. A few even had their genitals reconstructed.

For too long, it looked as if this subversive social revolution was unstoppable. But now, the tide seems on the verge of turning. A cultural counter-offensive is gaining steam that, if successful, could halt the transgender juggernaut. Here are some of the new developments that may be changing the tide.

Socially Liberal Countries Are Hitting the Brakes

Contrary to what the ideologues tell us, "the science" around transgenderism—particularly with regard to caring for gender dysphoric children—is not "settled."

The public health sectors in the UK, France, Finland, and Sweden—not exactly Bible-belt countries—have published new directives urging "great caution" in blocking the puberties of children or performing body-altering surgeries precisely because of the paucity of good scientific information and the potential for serious harm. The UK's recently published guidelines noted specifically that childhood gender dysphoria is often "transitory." Authorities in France, Sweden, and Finland worry that the number of children identifying as transgender has increased so dramatically that it can be deemed an "epidemic."

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The new guidelines strongly encourage extended psychological exploration and care instead of puberty blocking and surgically altering the bodies of minors.

'Detransitioners' Are Telling Their Stories

The transgender movement has been propelled by stories of children celebrating their surgeries and worries about suicides. Now, young people who transitioned are increasingly returning to their born sex, a process known as "detransitioning." Their stories are often tragic and compelling. For example, Chloe Cole, an 18-year-old detransitioner, recounts how she was "affirmed" in her sex confusion at age 12 and had her breasts removed at 15. Now 18, she understands she is a woman and is issuing a clarion warning, saying, "My teenage life has been the culmination of excruciating pain, regret, and most importantly injustice."

Cole isn't alone. A new documentary, "The Detransition Diaries," follows three young women whose bodies were harmed by medical and, in one case, surgical "gender affirmation," issuing a warning to protect children from transgender ideology and transition procedures.

Attack of the Trial Lawyers

Cole has decided to sue the doctors who she says allowed her to be irreversibly harmed by medical and surgical interventions. Other cases are being threatened or filed. In Oregon, Camille Kiefel, 32, announced a lawsuit against the health professionals who, she says, approved her mastectomy after only two brief Zoom meetings.

If trial lawyers smell the scent of money, they could swarm the transgender medical community the way litigators did the tobacco and asbestos industries.

States Are Passing Youth-Protecting Laws

Conservative states have started enacting laws to protect children from being propagandized by transgender ideology and having medical and surgical transitions. Florida forbids discussion of sensitive sexual issues, including transgenderism, through the third grade. Several states have banned biological boys from competing against girls in sports. Some have required people to use the public restroom of their biological sex. Arkansas, Alabama, and Arizona have outlawed medical and surgical transitions in youth, with more such laws likely on the way.

Gender ideology is one of the direst cultural threats Western society faces. Not only are the bodies and minds of precious people—particularly children—at risk, but if all that matters ultimately are feelings, if we cast objective truth aside to accommodate deeply held personal desires, then the stability of civilization itself is at material risk.

The time has come for an intense but mutually respectful societal conversation that focuses not only on the causes of transgenderism and the potential benefits of transitioning such people but also on the many risks and alternatives that can care compassionately for suffering people while maintaining cultural equilibrium. Our future thriving requires nothing less.

Who's More Irrational — The Religious or the Irreligious? Dennis Prager / January 24, 2023

The truth is that today the secular have a virtual monopoly on irrational beliefs.

There are very few things conservatives, liberals and leftists agree on. But if they are irreligious, they all agree that religious Americans are more irrational than irreligious Americans.

It is a secular axiom that secularism and secular people are rooted in reason, whereas religion and the religious are rooted in irrationality.

This is what almost every college professor believes and what almost every student in America is taught. Among the intelligentsia, it is an unquestioned fact. It helps explain why, after their first or second year at college, many children return to their religious homes alienated from, and frequently contemptuous of, the religion of their parents — and often of the parents themselves.

At the time in their lives when most people are the most easily indoctrinated — approximately ages 18 to 22 — young Americans hear only one message: If you want to be a rational person, you must abandon religion and embrace secularism. Most young Americans are never exposed to a countervailing view at any time in their college life. (That's why you should expose your college-aged child, grandchild, niece or nephew to this column.)

Yet, this alleged axiom is not only completely false, it's backwards. The truth is that today the secular have a virtual monopoly on irrational beliefs.

One proof is that colleges have become the most irrational institutions in the country. Not coincidentally, they are also the most secular institutions in our society. In fact, the former is a result of the latter.

One could provide examples in every area of life. Here are but a few.

Only secular people believe "men give birth."

Only secular people believe that males — providing, of course, that they say they are females — should be allowed to compete in women's sports.

Only secular people believe that a young girl who says she is a boy or a young boy who says he is a girl should be given puberty-blocking hormones.

Only secular people believe that girls who say they are boys should have their healthy breasts surgically cut off.

Only secular people believe it is good to have men in drag dance (often provocatively) in front of 5-year-olds.

Only secular people agree with Disney dropping use of the words "boys and girls" at Disneyland and Disneyworld.

Only secular people believe that "to be colorblind is to be racist." That is what is taught at nearly all secular (and religious-in-name-only) colleges in America today.

Only secular people believe fewer police, fewer prosecutions and lower prison sentences (or no prison time at all) lead to less crime.

Far more secular Americans than religious Americans believed that the Cleveland Indians and Washington Redskins needed to change their names because "Indians" and "Redskins" were racist — despite the fact that most Native Americans didn't even think so.

Who was more likely to support keeping children out of schools for two years; forcibly masking 2-year olds on airplanes; and firing unvaccinated police officers, airplane pilots and members of the military — secular or religious Americans?

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How many Western supporters of Josef Stalin — the tyrant who murdered about 30 million people — were irreligious, and how many were religious?

Stanford University, a thoroughly secular institution, just released an "Elimination of Harmful Language Initiative." It informs all Stanford faculty and students of "harmful" words they should avoid and the words that should replace them.

Some examples: Stanford asks its students and faculty not to call themselves "American." Rather, they should call themselves a "U.S. citizen." Why? Because citizens of other countries in North America and South America might be offended.

Is that rational?

Stanford asks its faculty and students not to use the term "blind study." Why? Because it "unintentionally perpetuates that disability is somehow abnormal or negative, furthering an ableist culture." Instead, Stanford faculty and students should say, "masked study."

Two questions: Is Stanford's claim that being blind is not a disability rational or irrational? And what percentage of those who make this claim are secular?

The list of irrational (and immoral) things secular people believe — and religious people do not believe — is very long. As a quote attributed to G.K. Chesterton puts it: "When people stop believing in God, they don't believe in nothing; they believe in anything."

Yet, many people believe that the religious, not the secular, are the irrational people in our time. That, ironically, is just another irrational belief held by the secular. And, of course, it is self-serving — just as is the belief that more people have been killed by religious people (meaning, essentially, Christians) than by secular people. Yet, that, too, is irrational — and false. In the last century alone, 100 million people were murdered by secular — and anti-religious — regimes.

Yes, religious people have some irrational, or at least non-rational, beliefs.

But two points need to be made in this regard:

One is that the religious beliefs that most people call "irrational" are not irrational; they are unprovable. For example, the beliefs that there is a transcendent Creator and that this Creator is the source of our rights are not irrational; they are unprovable. Atheism — the belief that everything came from nothing — is considerably more irrational than theism.

The other point is that human beings are programmed to believe in the non-rational. Love is often non-rational — love of our children, romantic love, love of music and art, love of a pet; our willingness to engage in self-sacrifice for another is often non-rational — from the sacrifices children make for parents and parents for children to the sacrifices made by non-Jewish rescuers of Jews during the Holocaust.

What good religion does is provide its adherents with a moral, emotionally, intellectually and spiritually deep way to express the non-rational. Therefore, they can remain rational everywhere outside of religion. The secular, having no religion within which to innocuously express the non-rational, often end up doing so elsewhere in life.

So only the religious believe "In the beginning God created the Heavens and the Earth," but they do not believe men give birth. Meanwhile the irreligious don't believe "In the beginning God created the Heavens and the Earth," but only they believe men give birth.

What's Happening, America? Jack Devine, The Patriot Post, January 10, 2023

The things worth serious worry — and a few that are not.

In my 78 years living through our nation's high times and hard times, I cannot recall hearing so many people ask the same rhetorical question: What's happening to our country?

Evidently, it's not just the folks I happen to bump into. National opinion polls before and after last November's midterm elections consistently report public dissatisfaction with our country's direction.

But what, specifically, is bothering us? There are probably as many answers to that question as there are American citizens. But, for what it's worth, here's my own list of the things that I think we should be seriously worried about, along with a shorter list of the ones not worth the effort.

The top two:

1. Diminishing world stability, with the very real possibility of slipping into nuclear war. The ever-present specter of nuclear war is the one true existential crisis facing our planet and all who inhabit it. Half a century ago, with the U.S. and USSR locked in the so-called Cold War, we feared nuclear holocaust. With huge effort we managed to avoid it; but today, with more nuclear weapons than ever before, many in the hands of less dependable world leaders, the threat is greater than ever. (Remarkably, this one rarely makes the top of the list in public concerns, but it scares me to my boots.)

2. Our porous U.S. southern border. In the past two years, there have been about five million illegal entries detected, along with untold numbers of undetected entries. About 1.5 million asylum hearings are now scheduled, stretching years into the future. Our open border is an avenue for illegal drugs, feeding an epidemic of lethal overdoses. It's a humanitarian crisis both for the illegal entrants and for our own citizens.

And right behind them:

Education. Academic performance in America's public schools is declining across the board. Teachers unions have huge political clout — they fight school choice, and they wield enormous control over the education, values, and thinking of our next generation.

The economy. Every trip to the supermarket triggers new sticker shock. The 40-year-high inflation is a bone-crushing tax that hurts everyone, the poor most of all.

Crime. Crime rates are up sharply in American cities; subways are unsafe; mass shootings occur regularly; violent anger erupts in all settings — at work, at home, on the roads, on cruise ships, even on Disney World lines.

Energy. The chaotic, premature rush to green energy, here and worldwide, is having direct adverse effects on energy cost, supply, and reliability — with little corresponding benefit.

Woke culture. We've lurched way past the principle of mutual respect for differing views, and into the never-neverland of mandated compliance with patent nonsense. Exhibit A: Today's transgender mythology can tell us that our son is a daughter; that failure to use preferred pronouns (even the nutty ones) is not only impolite, it may be illegal; and that gender-affirming surgery (i.e., mutilation) is compatible with a medical doctor's Hippocratic oath to do no harm.

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On the other hand, I'd suggest that you not lose much sleep over the following hot topics: Climate change. It's inevitable. Like fauna and flora since the earth's beginning, mankind must adapt to climate change, not pretend that we can control it.

Abortion. The issue is where it belongs, and where it should have been all along: in the hands of voters.

COVID. Let's stop using the pandemic as the universal excuse to do whatever we choose (like "forgiving" student loans). Although COVID is still around, death rates have been consistently low for the better part of a year. The disease is endemic — we'll be wrestling with it forever — but for now the public health crisis is over.

Trump. The former president injected himself into the midterms and the outcome was not pretty. The January 6 riot was two years ago. Move on — both are old news.

OK, listing things to worry about is the easy part. What to do about them? A few thoughts:

Democrats, step up. Please stop sweeping our problems under the rug. Our border crisis persists because the administration consciously looks the other way. Redefining the word "recession" doesn't make the economy better. To fix problems, we must face up to them.

GOP, step up. Be the adults in the room. Voting in favor of a 4,000-page omnibus bill that will cost almost \$2 trillion is legislative malpractice. Stop spending money we don't have.

American public: Remember that we're all in this together.

No Scientific Evidence for 'Gender Identity'

Thomas Gallatin, The Patriot Post, January 12, 2023

Some in the scientific community expose the myths behind the "scientific" claims of the "transgender" lobby.

Leftists love to insist their rationale for their social and political opinions primarily rests upon "science." Indeed, "follow the science" has become an overused trope thrown at any who dare question the Left's radical claims, whether it be climate change, COVID, or the biggest social contagion of our day, "transgenderism."

From a scientific — or, more specifically, a biological — perspective, what exactly is a "transgender"? Well, an international group of clinicians and researchers recently sought to address this "gender identity" issue from a purely biological perspective, and they published an article about it.

The international group of scientists, known as the Society for Evidence Based Gender Medicine (SEGM), effectively threw a bucket of cold water on the "transgender" lobby by noting that there is no biological evidence to support the claims of gender nonconformity. The article states: "The assumption of the core biological underpinning for 'gender identity' and 'gender dysphoria' remains an unproven theory: while biology likely plays a role in gender nonconformity, currently, there is no brain, blood, or other objective test that distinguishes a trans-identified from a non-trans identified person once confounding factors such as sexual orientation are controlled for."

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In other words, there is no scientific evidence that backs up the claims of the "transgender" activists who assert that individuals can be born into the wrong bodies. This reality should come as little surprise to most sober-minded folks, as feelings don't make facts. However, with more and more academics and intellectuals capitulating and pushing the insanity of "transgenderism" into the wider culture — and, more specifically, onto children — the need to confront the activists' promulgation of scientific misinformation is becoming critical.

So, why did SEGM wait until now to publish this badly needed piece of rationalism? The impetus likely was a prominent gender doctor publishing a "pro-affirmation" paper that was filled with several scientific myths. Furthermore, with an increasing number of medical professionals green-lighting medical transitions for children, the lack of modern studies expounding sound science begged for correction.

The SEGM member who wrote the article, J. Cohn, highlighted five myths promoted by the pro-transgender movement. These myths include the claim that "gender identity" is a biological trait. Cohn observes, "A biologically 'ingrained' gender identity would appear to be in direct conflict with observations where gender dysphoria has resolved, either spontaneously, or with help of psychotherapy, at a variety of ages." He notes research showing that upwards of 90% of children who express some form of gender dysphoria ultimately grow out of it, accepting and embracing their biological sex as they become adults.

Cohn debunks several brain studies often touted by the media as scientific evidence for "gender identity." He notes, "Brain studies that purport to distinguish objective differences in brains of trans-identified individuals are highly flawed: the differences disappear once confounding factors such as sexual orientation (or exposure to exogenous hormones) are controlled for." Furthermore, "Other studies rely on extremely small sample sizes, find nothing conclusive, or detect no signal."

In other words, scientists have not found a "transgender brain," and, if anything, the brain differences mirror the differences observed in homosexuals. "When we scan the brains of the heterosexual type," says Ph.D. student of neuroimmunology Samuel Stagg, "we find they are more typical for their natal sex. This is because sexual orientation correlates with a brain that is sexatypical."

The notion that everyone has a "gender identity" that is unearthed based not upon their biological sex but upon some sex-based stereotypes of preference and behavior lacks any scientific support. Dr. Quentin Van Meter, a pediatric endocrinologist, says that there is "zero point zero zero" scientific evidence for "gender fluidity" and "gender identity."

Indeed, the whole "trans rights" lobby is grounded upon the false scientific claim of the existence of "gender identity." It is a scientific myth that, as Manhattan Institute fellow Leor Sapir insightfully noted back in 2015, has everything to do with creating a political movement in order to claim special social privileges. "It's not obvious why there would have to be an argument for 'brain sex' in order to give people the rights to identify as they please," Sapir pointed out. "But in the American civil rights tradition, if you can convince a judge that being transgender is like being black, then you can tap into this entire body of judicial precedent and civil rights laws that immediately applies and gives you all the policies you want."

In the end, it's all about gaining political power and influence. Scientifically speaking, there is no such thing as a "transgendered" individual. Feelings don't make facts, and fantasies don't create reality.

A Declaration Against Wokeness

By Quin Hillyer, Commentary Writer, Washington examiner, January 24, 2023

Just for the record, against the woke inversion and perversion of reality, here are things I don't just believe but insist to be true or wise, or both. So sue me.

Gender and sex (the state of being, not the act) are the same thing. Except in the case of vanishingly rare chromosomal abnormalities, sex is determined at birth by simple anatomical observation.

The act of sex, along with any ceremony and customs related to it, such as a wedding, is essentially a private matter as long as choices are free, public health isn't menaced, and minors aren't involved. The state has no business forcing any third party to participate in or endorse any activity pertaining thereto. Sex acts in public are a different matter, and may reasonably be regulated by the state.

Skin color and ethnicity have nothing to do with character. Skin color and ethnicity have nothing to do with inherent guilt. They also have nothing to do with inherent predilections toward economic systems or codes of behavior or values or work ethic. Public laws should make no distinctions, none at all, based on race. Public policy should be colorblind. Colorblindness is not racism, and indeed is the very definition of non-racism. Racism is attitudinal, not a matter of "power relations." There is no such thing as "whiteness" in terms of character or personality, although house-paint colors can be said, roughly speaking, to show various shades of whiteness. We are not collectively or individually responsible for the sins or accomplishments of our ancestors. We are not collectively or individually meritorious because of the sufferings of our ancestors. We are individual human beings, responsible for our own choices, our own flaws, and our own actions.

Absent clear cases of abuse or abandonment, parents own ultimate responsibility and ultimate authority for the upbringing of their children. Yes, in very limited circumstances, the state may act in loco parentis, but even then usually as delegates of the parents in situations where the delegation can automatically be rescinded, or otherwise only in extremis. Governmental officials or other authorities or individuals who do not defer to parental rights should themselves bear the major burden of proof as to why they, the officials, should not lose their jobs or positions of authority. (Again, this rule applies absent specific and rigorously observed legal guidelines involving abuse or abandonment.)

The right of free speech exists prior to government, and it is all but absolute except in unambiguous cases of threats of violence or of tightly defined examples of defamation — or for volume, such as when not the content but the loudness or location disturbs the peace. Outside those narrow exceptions, an alternate opinion is no grounds for negative sanction or for public restriction. And "shouting down" other speakers is not itself a form of protected speech; it is a denial of the speech rights of others, and it should be penalized.

In a constitutional republic with rights to speech and procedural safeguards in legal proceedings, nobody ever has the right to deface or destroy or abscond with anyone else's property, or occupy property not one's own without a permit, or commit violence except in obvious self-defense. There is no such thing as a right to riot, and there is no "communal rage" exception to this rule. On the flip side, vigilante justice is no justice at all, but is instead its own form of lawlessness, unjustified and vile.

Finally, God and government make us equal in our liberties and equal in legal proceedings, not equal in outcomes.

Here I stand. So should we all.

Misplaced Faith in Big Government

Cal Thomas, Patriot Post, February 2, 2023

Too many Americans have come to rely on the government for what it was never created to do and less on themselves.

While most of the public and media attention the past two years has been focused on high prices and inflation, these issues take second place over the public's top concern, which is big government, according to a new Gallup poll. Concern over the uncontrolled southern border is in third position.

Gallup reports "the government ranks as the top problem for both Republicans and Republican-leaning independents (24 percent) and Democrats and Democrat-leaning independents (18 percent)." That last figure may come as a surprise to some as Democrats are often regarded, at least by Republicans, as the party of government.

We have heard much of this before. People claim to hate big government, its intrusiveness, the entire tax system, overregulation of businesses and further loss of confidence in it by many following the displays of ineptitude during the COVID-19 pandemic. There are more reasons to dislike big government, but these are some of the most prominent ones.

Some Democrats often reply to statements about people who claim to dislike big government by saying "You may say you hate it, but when you need it, it's there." It's a clever rejoinder, but it misses the point. Government is no longer limited, as the Founders intended. It is everywhere, including and increasingly in decisions we used to make for ourselves. If you are old enough to remember drinking out of garden hoses and riding bikes without helmets you know what I mean.

Cutting even the rate of spending increases, much less reducing actual spending, gets you slammed as uncaring about children and the poor. That has been a fraud perpetrated by some politicians to help preserve their careers in government, something else the Founders never intended.

One suggestion for reducing the size and rising cost of government comes from Andrew Biggs, a senior fellow at the American Enterprise Institute. Writing in the Wall Street Journal, Biggs says this about Social Security, the largest federal spending program after Medicare: "Social Security is expensive because it's more than a safety net. The average new retiree in 2021 received an annual benefit of nearly \$21,000, 1.5 times the poverty threshold without counting their own savings." The benefit will keep rising to \$59,234 by 2050. People with the highest incomes receive a monthly check, which is ridiculous. One no longer needs to be retired, as once was the case, to receive a government check.

Biggs writes that capping Social Security based on a person's savings and income would help reduce the national debt, though comprehensive reform is most needed.

The real problem is that too many Americans have come to rely on the government for what it was never created to do and less on themselves. Part of this is an outgrowth of the "entitlement mentality" that has turned government from a last resort to a first resource.

No modern president better addressed the dangers to personal and economic freedom than Ronald Reagan, who was part of a generation that endured the Great Depression and World War II. Some of his most famous quips were: "We who live in free market societies believe that growth, prosperity and ultimately human fulfillment, are created from the bottom up, not the government down." And "Government does not solve problems; it subsidizes them." And "I hope we once again have reminded people that man is not free unless government is limited. There's a clear cause and effect here that is as neat and predictable as a law of physics: As government expands, liberty contracts."

That last one is the main point and it is largely ignored by those who wish to keep on growing government, even as our liberties shrink.

LGBTQ+ 'Pride' Is Totalitarian

Dennis Prager, Patriot Post, January 31, 2023

Tolerance is about behavior. "Pride" is about thought.

This past Saturday night, the New York Rangers National Hockey League (NHL) team did something almost unbelievable. Though scheduled to wear LGBTQ "Pride" jerseys during pregame warmups, not one member of the team did so.

Another recent example of defying LGBTQ+ "Pride" jersey demands in the NHL — which is run by people who are as governed by cowardice as those who run Major League Baseball, the National Football League and the National Basketball Association — was a player for the Philadelphia Flyers, Ivan Provorov, who refused to wear a "Pride" jersey 10 days earlier.

As reported by Fox News: "Provorov refused to participate in pregame warmups where players wore Pride-themed jerseys and wielded hockey sticks wrapped in rainbow Pride tape. 'I respect everyone,' he told reporters after they won the actual game against the Anaheim Ducks. 'I respect everybody's choices. My choice is to stay true to myself and my religion.'"

Provorov is Russian Orthodox. (Question: has one Protestant or Catholic NHL player refused to wear a "Pride" jersey?)

Perhaps the New York Rangers organization was aware of the amount of support Provorov received: "Multiple news outlets including the Post Millennial, OutKick and Washington Examiner have since reported that the Philadelphia Flyers Provorov jerseys have been selling out in multiple stores online."

The Flyers and, apparently, the Rangers learned the truth about their fans: the vast majority of them — and presumably of Americans and Canadians in general — do not wish to discriminate against those who are LGBTQ+ but they do not want their teams to go on record as expressing "Pride" in those who are LGBTQ+.

This mirrors society at large. The vast majority of Americans believe in tolerance of LGBTQ+ individuals but not in organizations expressing pride in them.

Why is this?

Because "Pride" is not about tolerance. "Pride" is totalitarian.

Tolerance is about behavior. "Pride" is about thought.

The proof is that while there are laws governing tolerance, there are no laws governing pride. And if there were, most people would understand that such laws would enter the realm of thought control.

Most people could not articulate the totalitarian nature of LGBTQ+ "Pride." But they do sense it. That is why Provorov's jersey became the Flyers' best-selling jersey. Contrary to the pablum written by virtually every sports writer in North America (there is no more sheeplike group than sports writers), people do not oppose LGBTQ+ jerseys, nights, hockey sticks, illumination and other displays of obsequiousness because they hate gays. They do so because they intuit that this is totalitarian — that they and their teams are being forced into groupthink.

That is why the Left chose the word "pride" and not "tolerance" — "pride" is about thought. Unlike liberalism and conservatism, leftism is totalitarian. And totalitarianism controls thought as well as speech.

The only difference between the American Left and communist totalitarianism is opportunity. All leftists want to control speech and eventually thought. Thus, if you treat gays in your daily life just as you treat heterosexuals, it is not enough. You must go much further. You must express "pride" in gays and lesbians — and not in just gays and lesbians, but in the bisexual, the transgender, the "queer" and the nonbinary. You must not only say, but think, "I am proud of people who consider themselves neither male nor female" — as if such mental illness is an achievement.

So, too, you must refrain from thinking, let alone saying, that having a mother and father is generally best for a child or that one man married to one woman is best for society. And you must refrain from expressing any reservations about teachers no longer calling their students "boys and girls"; about "drag queen story hours" for 5-year-olds; or about giving hormone blockers to children.

The next time you read about "thought control" in North Korea, understand that North Korea's thought control differs from "Pride" days and nights at sporting events — and from the rest of the Left — only by degree. The Left in America, like the Left in North Korea, demands your mind, not just your behavior.

DeSantis Is Right on African American Studies

Rich Lowry, January 24, 2023

No reasonable person opposes teaching American history fully and truthfully.

Florida Gov. Ron DeSantis stands accused of a long parade of horrors to which has now been added a new count — allegedly opposing the teaching of African American history.

Florida rejected the College Board's pilot Advanced Placement African American Studies course, and the decision has been treated in progressive quarters like the curricular equivalent of George Wallace standing in the schoolhouse door.

White House press secretary Karine Jean-Pierre called the state's decision "incomprehensible." DeSantis wants to "block," according to Jean-Pierre, "the study of Black Americans." She noted, ominously, "These types of actions aren't new, especially from what we're seeing from Florida, sadly."

Florida Sen. Shevrin Jones, a Democrat, said the rejection of the course amounts to a "whitewash" of American history. Jones maintains that "we're back at square one, seeing that we once again have to defend ourselves to be legitimate in America."

Never mind that there's obviously a difference between objecting to the ideological content of a pilot course that hasn't yet been adopted and erasing the history of African Americans as such.

This is the typical game of pretending that the only way to teach the history of African Americans is through the tendentious political lens favored by the left.

When red states push back against critical race theory, its proponents make it sound as if students will, as a consequence, never learn about the Transatlantic slave trade, the 13th Amendment, or Frederick Douglass.

This is preposterous. No reasonable person opposes teaching American history fully and truthfully. (In Florida, the controversial "Stop WOKE Act" itself stipulates that instructors should teach the history of African peoples, the Middle Passage, the experience of slavery, abolition, and the effects of segregation and other forms discrimination.)

The problem is when the curriculum is used as an ideological weapon to inculcate a distorted, one-sided worldview, and here, Florida has the College Board dead to rights.

The College Board hasn't released the pilot curriculum publicly, but, as conservative writer Stanley Kurtz and a publication called *The Florida Standard* have documented, it really goes off the rails when it addresses contemporary issues. The curriculum presents the Black Lives Matter and reparations movements favorably and recommends the writings of a clutch of writers on the left, from Robin D.G. Kelley to Michelle Alexander, without rejoinder.

Bias aside, with the state of American historical and civic knowledge in near collapse, who thinks high school students need to be brushing up on "Black Queer Studies?" The curriculum explains that this topic "explores the concept of queer color critique, grounded in Black feminism and intersectionality, as a Black studies lens that shifts sexuality studies towards racial analysis."

Surely, if anyone wants to marinate in this dreck, he or she can wait to do it in college, which specializes in wasting the time of students and spreading ridiculous cant and lies.

This is the more fundamental point. Such "studies" programs — African American, women's, queer, etc. — are intellectually corrupt and inherently biased at the university level and should be kept far away from the realm of K-12 public education.

It shouldn't be a surprise that an AP curriculum developed with the input of practitioners of African American studies at the university level would contain all the same perversities and warped ideas.

Florida should be commended for saying "no," and other states that care about sound education should do the same.

African American history is American history. It should be taught — and has been — as an inherent part of the American story. Only when we are confident that all students know that story should we be willing to entertain further specialization, and never if it is the poisoned fruit of "identitarian" courses at universities that take it as a given that their students should be encouraged to thoughtlessly adopt progressive attitudes and beliefs.

This fight isn't about blocking history or erasing the country's sins, but drawing a line between hifalutin political advocacy and thorough, truthful instruction in the American past.

Objecting to the LGBT Agenda

David Harsanyi, The Patriot Post, January 20, 2023

The "don't hide behind religion" jibe is one of the dumbest and laziest smears going.

Philadelphia Flyers defenseman Ivan Provorov refused to take a pregame skate Tuesday night in the team's LGBTQ+ warmup jersey, citing his preference "to stay true to myself and my religion," which is Russian Orthodox. "I respect everyone. I respect everybody's choices," said the only player who refused to participate in Pride Night.

You can imagine the hysterics Provorov's apostasy sparked among the enlightened sports commentariat. TSN's Pierre LeBrun claimed Provorov "obviously does not respect 'everyone.' If he did respect everyone, he would have taken part in warm-up and worn the Pride Night jersey. Don't hide behind religion."

The "don't hide behind religion" jibe is one of the dumbest and laziest smears going. It's a favorite of bullies who act like they can bore into the souls of the heretics. It's bad enough that LeBrun contends that the only possible reason someone might be disinclined to celebrate same-sex marriage or the sweeping "+" (I wonder if LeBrun could coherently explain what it means?) is deep-seated bigotry. But when these amateur theologians declare that dissenters are "hiding" behind faith, they're not only arguing that religion is a mask for bigotry but that no genuine faith could possibly have a problem with the cultural norms he adopted about five minutes ago.

Of course, many orthodox faiths, not only Russians but Orthodox Jews, Catholics, Muslims, Lutherans and so on, believe same-sex relationships are sinful. Their adherents have believed that for centuries, if not millennia. A person of good faith can "respect" others — they can even respect people for taking a stance — without celebrating their choices. In a truly open and diverse society, we don't demand everyone abandon their tradition and critical thinking to skate lockstep in a rainbow flag. Dear Lord, it's such vacuous virtue signaling.

Because it shouldn't be forgotten that the LGBTQ+ movement encompasses an entire open-ended ideological agenda, not merely the ability of gay people to live in peace or marry. Some of the other Flyers, for instance, spent time celebrating the achievements of a "nonbinary" 13-year-old. As old-fashioned atheist, I don't care who you sleep with, but I do still cling to the antiquated notion that humans have immutable biological characteristics and that objective truths can't be wished away. To my mind, that 13-year-old kid is a victim of an irrational, destructive and trendy pseudoscience. Yet folks like LeBrun will help normalize the quackery while hiding behind the idea of "tolerance."

Most of the National Hockey League press also groused that hypocrite coach John Tortorella, a long-time figure in the NHL, hadn't suspended Provorov for his sins. As coach of the U.S. national team, Tortorella once threatened anyone who refused to stand for the national anthem with a benching (a stance he regrettably reversed). The obvious difference is that those players weren't asked to endorse the lifestyle choices of strangers but were voluntarily representing the United States — and every person in it — at international tournaments. That so many people are unable to distinguish between the act of honoring your country and celebrating who people sleep with says a lot about how warped our values have become.

Indeed, the notion that Provorov is bringing this acrimony on himself because, as a bigot, he simply couldn't get himself to put on a jersey with a rainbow, seems preposterous. Provorov takes on all risk, with no reward. He will be forever smeared by the closed-minded people who write about him. In today's world, dissenting from the progressive faith takes a lot of spine. Most players — most people — would rather not risk being denigrated and bullied by the mob. Who can blame them?

NYT Quietly Admits DEI Is a Failure

Emmy Griffin, The Patriot Post, January 20, 2023

The Times actually says something very important, but will anyone listen?

New York Times opinion writer Rose Wong penned a piece earlier this week that discussed the faddish Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI) workplace training model. She writes: D.E.I. trainings are designed to help organizations become more welcoming to members of traditionally marginalized groups. Advocates make bold promises: Diversity workshops can foster better intergroup relations, improve the retention of minority employees, close recruitment gaps, and so on. The only problem? There's little evidence that many of these initiatives work.

Yes, this interesting admission was in The New York Times — the harbinger of all things woke and progressive. Her commonsense take was backed by the two largest studies on the effects of DEI training. As Wong points out, diversity training has been around in the workplace since the 1960s and has had little to negative effect on DEI goals long term.

In one of the studies, researchers Frank Dobbin and Alexandra Kalev noted: "We have been speaking to employers about this research for more than a decade. With the message that diversity training is likely the most expensive, and least effective, diversity program around."

These trainings have a price tag that is astronomical. After the death of George Floyd and the ensuing riots, the grifters who run these diversity workshops raked in \$3.4 billion in 2020. According to ReportLinker, this industry is expected to reach \$17.2 billion by 2027.

Though Wong does mention the fact that DEI trainings are a highly profitable industry, her leading theory posits the notion that it's because these trainings are mandatory that they aren't effective.

That definitely could be part of it. People don't like being preached to and resent moral trainings given to them at their workplace, which is hardly a moral authority. More importantly, DEI training has merged into critical race theory crap.

Critical race theory (CRT) tells minorities that they are oppressed, that perpetual victimhood gives them special knowledge, and that they are deserving of reparations — though the original sin of racism is never going to be absolved. CRT tells white people that they are oppressors and inherently deplorable and that because of their conscious (or unconscious) racism, they can have no voice, no prominence. Furthermore, anything that they or their ancestors accomplish is forever tainted by their skin color. CRT has become the tenets of the religion of antiracism. As the astute conservative thinker Thomas Sowell once wrote: "The word 'racism' is like ketchup. It can be put on practically anything — and demanding evidence makes you a 'racist.'"

People of common sense can see right away how destructive, divisive, and nonsensical this ideology is. And, of course, they are going to resist these ideas. It also very clearly is a denomination of secular religious teachings. How can one conduct a business when the workers are actively divided? Even Wong in her piece points out: "Many of these trainings run counter to the views of most Americans — of any color — on race and equality. And they're generating exactly the sort of backlash that research predicts."

Actor Morgan Freeman once made the apt observation that racism comes to an end when we stop giving it power. In his words, "Stop talking about it." This sentiment should go even further: The overcorrection that squarely advocates for reverse racism — namely CRT through DEI — harms everyone and helps no one.

That is why it doesn't work.

Barn Doors and Horses

Cal Thomas, The Patriot Post, January 10, 2023

The great frustration for many is that the illegal immigration solution is simple, but not applied.

After months of ignoring the problem and demonstrably false claims by his Homeland Security secretary that the southern border is "secure," President Biden is finally visiting the area this week as part of a trip to Mexico.

Last week, the administration announced it would immediately begin turning away Cubans, Haitians and Nicaraguans who illegally cross the U.S.-Mexico border. Why are laws against illegal border crossings being selectively applied to this group of migrants? Most people believe laws are supposed to apply to everyone. Try claiming an exemption for speeding if you are pulled over and watch the reaction of the police officer.

NBC News reports migrant crossings in fiscal 2022 alone hit 2.76 million, a record. More than 100 countries are represented among the migrants, including Chinese and Russians. No one knows the exact number of "gotaways," or how many have smuggled drugs into the country, or plan to commit a terrorist act.

Biden's attempt to show he is doing something about this reminds me of the idiom "closing the barn door after the horse has left." It's too little, too late.

Vice President Kamala Harris was initially assigned the task of fixing the problem, but all she did was visit a few Central American countries to find out the "root causes." The problem has gotten worse and her assignment has been almost universally judged as a failure.

There are "root causes" to the rise in criminal activity around the country, but just as the first response ought to be arresting and jailing criminals in order to protect the public, so, too, should the wall be finished for the same reason. Migrants can apply at established border crossings and have their asylum claims investigated to see if they are coming here for economic benefits or if they fit the legal definition of persecuted.

According to the website [statista.com](https://www.statista.com), the unauthorized immigrant population in the U.S. totaled 11.39 million as of last August. Fox News announced there have been over 600,000 total migrant encounters at the border since Oct. 1, a new record for the months of October, November, and December.

Biden's "plan" was criticized by the Center for Immigration Studies (CIS) as a "shadow immigration system" that includes "minor changes to tactics, but no change to long-term strategy." CIS has also called it "unconstitutional," which it is. Presidents cannot unilaterally repeal laws passed by Congress and signed by previous presidents of both parties.

Andrew Arthur, the Center's fellow in Law and Policy, elaborates: "The administration claims that this plan will allow aliens 'to enter the United States lawfully through' those ports of entry, but in reality 'entering' without a visa through a port of entry is as 'illegal' as crossing the border without a visa between the ports of entry, regardless of whether you have an appointment to do so."

Last week White House Press Secretary Karine Jean-Pierre, ludicrously claimed the border chaos is the fault of the previous administration. In fact, the Trump administration built 458 miles of border wall and immigration declined somewhat during the Trump years.

Lying in Washington is an art and clearly Jean-Pierre has not been there long enough to even merit an undergraduate degree in misinformation.

The great frustration for many is that the solution is simple, but not applied — finish the wall, deport those here illegally and charge those who have committed crimes while here and either deport or incarcerate them.

Problem solved, but when politicians who have other agendas in mind are in charge, the problems are rarely solved and usually get worse. Even partially closing the "barn door" now won't help.

Capitalism, Education, and Texas

By Sid Miller (in an email), January 9, 2023

America loves capitalism! And why wouldn't we? Thanks to the free flow of capital, along with a rules-based marketplace and credible courts to call balls and strikes, America has developed the largest, wealthiest middle class in history.

One of the best aspects of capitalism is choice. Capitalism gives us many choices and a world of variety, thanks to competition. When someone lands on something people want, others jump in to take advantage of this new market or product. Some of them will innovate. It's why we have 100+ flavors of delicious coffee at H-E-B, as well as nearly every other thing we shop for in this country.

America hates socialism! Why wouldn't we? Socialism is a system of constraint, using government force to impose government's wishes, whether we want them or not. Force is a monopoly. Only the government may use it. And since the government has no competition, there is no innovation. There is no evolution. There is no opportunity to dream and build something better. Instead, you get stagnation and decline.

The government ALWAYS spends other people's money (tax dollars) on other people (recipients of a benefit). As a result, quality and value, the results markets seek, aren't the priority.

In most markets, choice, variety, and competition rule. But in one market, perhaps the most important, we have turned off our brains, denied our lived experience, and conceded the argument to the socialists.

I am, of course, talking about the marketplace of ideas called education. In this, America is a socialist country, and we are really bad at it.

The United States today spends more money per public school student than any country in the world. Despite this largesse, our educational outcomes are embarrassing and getting worse.

Socialism is an ideology of diminishing returns. As our socialist education systems become more bureaucratic and inefficient, the bureaucracy seeks to preserve itself. Instead of cutting wasteful, unnecessary staff, it's the programs for the kids like music, art, and FFA that get axed. Thus, the system perpetuates a downward spiral of diminishing quality and expectations.

Just look. What programs have been cost cut from your kids' district?

Since education was nationalized in the 1960s, America's public schools have been producing diminishing quality and competitiveness, as any review of international outcomes over time will confirm.

The rise of public school unions has further entrenched the socialist system and created a class of citizens who benefit from the status quo. These are petty fiefdoms that jealously guard against reforms that could weaken their power.

As other countries are getting better at educating kids, America is getting worse. This is a recipe for sustained decline far beyond just education. And that's before even talking about the woke, anti-American garbage being forced on our hostage students.

I am not speaking ill of the millions of hardworking and well-intentioned educators—God bless y'all. It is an indictment of a failed system. My wife, Debra, and I were public school teachers long before politics.

It is discouraging to see so many of my fellow Texas Republican elected officials insist that only this dreadful socialist system has the legitimacy to deliver education to our kids and that any kind of capitalist market reform to bring variety, choice, and quality to education is a betrayal. What horse hockey!

The education marketplace shares the characteristics of every other marketplace. Every other marketplace has been strengthened by competition and freedom. So will education. In fact, the biggest beneficiary of such reform is the public school system itself. Finally forced to cut costs and focus on quality education, competition could save this failing model.

If you always do what you have always done, you will always get what you have always gotten. Today's public school system is not worthy of our kids. It's not worthy of our ambitions. It is not worthy of Texas.

We know that path. We must simply have the courage, convictions, and integrity to walk it.

GOP Stronger After Speaker Fight

Douglas Andrews, The Patriot Post, January 9, 2023

Despite what Democrats and their Leftmedia toadies claim, the Republican Party is better for having vigorously debated the issue of our next speaker.

Everyone had their say, the competing factions agreed to some significant reforms, and then the Republican conference voted up a speaker of the House. So what's wrong with that?

Plenty, if you to listened to Joe Biden or Chuck Schumer or Dan Crenshaw or the mainstream media.

On Saturday, California Congressman and longtime House Minority Leader Kevin McCarthy finally won enough votes to become speaker. It took 15 votes and more than a few frayed nerves, but Republicans got it done just as we said they would. They had to, after all. And in so doing, they reaffirmed the truism that real freedom is often messy, often contentious, but ultimately indispensable.

"Sure, it looks messy," said Wisconsin Congressman, Marine, and Iraq War veteran Mike Gallagher, "but Democracy is messy — by design. That's a feature, not a bug, of our system." (And by "democracy," he no doubt meant republican democracy or representative democracy.)

A lot of good came out of the negotiations, too — and all of it good for those who respect the Constitution and appreciate limited government. As one of the 20 Republican holdouts, Dan Bishop of North Carolina (American Conservative Union lifetime rating: 100), yesterday explained: Twenty courageous members of the House Republican conference made sure that we've ... nailed down a vision for a Republican majority so that we know what we're doing together. We have restored genuine parliamentary participation to the body, rather than have it run in a Pelosi-style [with] backroom-deal-making. We have agreed to specific and achievable fiscal commitments to prevent the Democrats from winning every negotiation. And there's several other details, but the big one, or a big one for me and that I worked on personally, we have nailed down in complete detail the terms of a select committee to investigate the weaponization of the federal government against Americans and to make sure that it is sufficiently vested with authority to get the job done.

That select committee is indeed a big win. Republicans and conservatives generally have been set upon in recent years by a federal law enforcement and intelligence apparatus run amok, and the committee that Bishop is talking about would focus on these agencies' abuses in a way much like the Senate's Church Committee of the 1970s — a select committee that investigated abuses by the CIA, NSA, FBI, and IRS.

Anyone else think a little sunlight might help disinfect those agencies?

Another win for the holdouts was to allow a single member of the House to raise a motion to vacate the chair — that is, to raise what's essentially a no-confidence vote on the speakership. This is a return to the rules that were in place before Nancy Pelosi trampled them. "That's been in parliamentary law in the United States since the country began until Pelosi eliminated it at the beginning of the last Congress," said Bishop. "It's not weakening Kevin McCarthy. It's providing the speaker with the tools he needs for Republicans to go to the mat for the American people."

To be clear, we expect a lot of opportunistic hand-wringing and pearl-clutching from the Left, but we don't expect it from our side. Still, we got it from a few grandstanders, most prominent — and most disappointing — of whom was Texas Republican Dan Crenshaw.

On Wednesday, Crenshaw blasted the holdouts, accusing them of looking for a "scalp," calling them "terrorists," and ranting: "Behind closed doors tell us what you actually want, or shut the f**k up. They need to be men and adults and say what they want, instead of playing these little games, that's what we're asking." Crenshaw gave an awful lot in service to our country fighting actual terrorists, so we're willing to give him a lot of latitude here, but he should also know better.

Crenshaw's fellow Texan Ted Cruz took him to task: "My view is 'settle down.' This will work out and it'll be fine. That kind of overheated rhetoric, calling people 'terrorists,' is not terribly conducive to anything resembling Republican unity. It's not conducive to having strong leadership for the next two years in the House, engaging in vitriol and personal attacks."

As it turns out, the holdouts made their case and got their concessions. And the country will be better for it. Despite what the Democrats and the Leftmedia would have us believe.

All in all, it ended as a good week for Liberty.

Fatherless Homes, America's Plague

Scarlen Valderaz, The Patriot Post, January 5, 2023

Contrary to popular feminist belief, women cannot do it all, especially when it comes to raising children.

Fatherless homes are a crisis that plagues our country. The statistics surrounding fatherless homes are not the greatest. Below you will find some statistics about fatherless homes taken from The Fatherless Generation:

- ◆ 63% of youth suicides are from fatherless homes (US Dept. Of Health/Census) — 5 times the average.
- ◆ 85% of all youths in prison come from fatherless homes — 20 times the average. (Fulton Co. Georgia, Texas Dept. of Corrections)
- ◆ 71% of pregnant teenagers lack a father. [U.S. Department of Health and Human Services press release, Friday, March 26, 1999]
- ◆ Daughters of single parents without a father involved are 53% more likely to marry as teenagers ... and 92% more likely to get divorced themselves.

Now let us compare the statistics from homes that include an involved father:

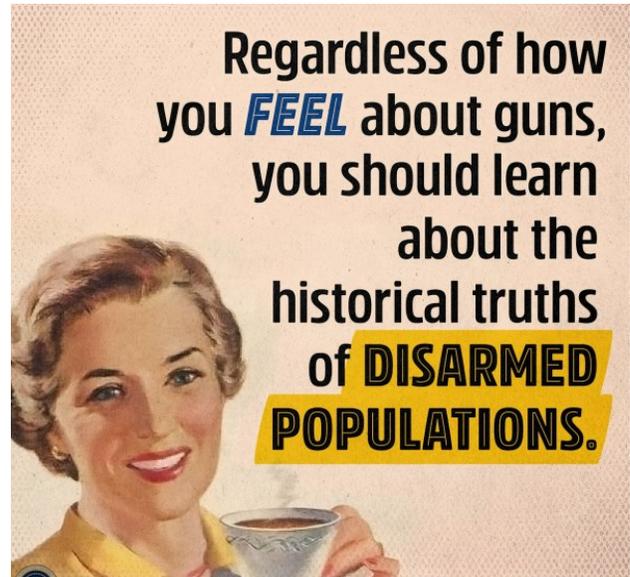
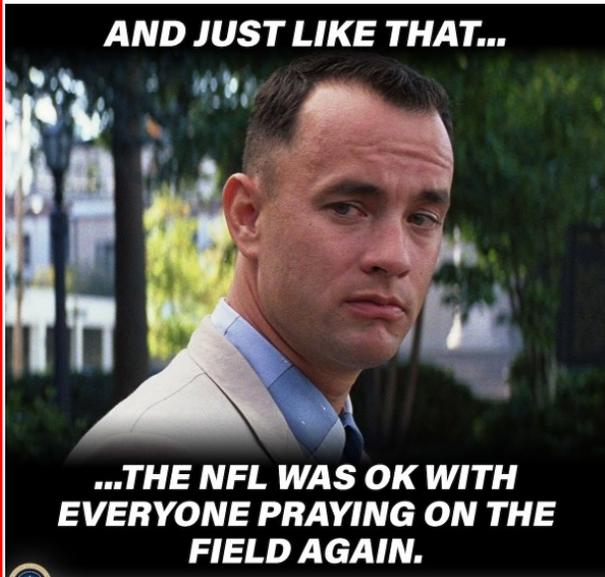
- ◆ Children with fathers who are involved are 70% less likely to drop out of school.
- ◆ Children with fathers who are involved are 40% less likely to repeat a grade in school.
- ◆ Adolescent girls raised in a two-parent home with involved fathers are significantly less likely to be sexually active than girls raised without involved fathers.

The science tells us that the destruction of fatherhood does not produce great results, so why is the restoration of fatherhood not a priority for our country? The answer is control. It is far easier to control a population that is confused and emotionally broken. Children raised in instability will search for stability outside of the home. This is where the state comes in and becomes the parent.

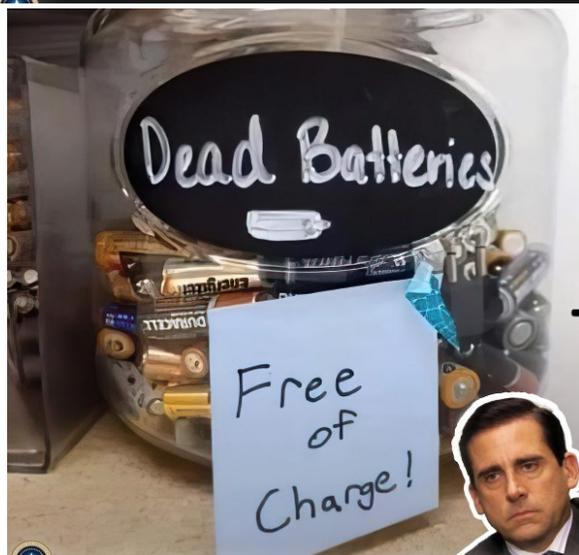
Many public schools across the country have taken the approach of caring for the whole child. This means that the school provides wraparound services such as education, healthcare, mental care, and food for those children living among food deserts. This approach sounds convenient and even loving, but what this approach does is release a child's parent from responsibility. Whether the intentions are pure or not, the approach should not be to take over parental responsibility.

Fathers are essential to a child's upbringing. Of course, the father must be present, loving, and productive to yield fruitful results. And when a father is not present, elders, fathers, and the community must step up to become a positive figure in the child's life. Contrary to popular feminist belief, women cannot do it all, especially when it comes to raising children. Many single mothers work multiple jobs to ensure their children are taken care of. This leaves daycares and schools to fill in as a parent for that child.

Our country must begin to have a serious conversation around fatherlessness and fatherhood. A change in culture must happen, and we must expect more from young men as a society. We cannot continue to hold men to lower standards, and coming from a fatherless home must not be the reason we hold anyone to lower standards. The restoration of our country begins with our family values and the tradition that made this country great. It is time to make fathers great again.



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