Opinion



Beneficiaries of the federal Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals program attend the "Keep Our Dream Alive" binational meeting in 2017. The Dreamers, as DACA recipients are known, gathered at a section of the U.S.-Mexico border wall in Sunland Park, New Mexico. (CNS/,Reuters/Jose Luis Gonzalez)



by Michael Sean Winters

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At the Hill, Kevin Appleby, now with the Center for Migration Studies but formerly the USCCB point man on migration for years, warns the Democrats not to take the "chain migration" ransom President Donald Trump has placed on the heads of the Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals (DACA) recipients. Build the wall if you must: It won't work, and it can be torn down. But family-based migration policies are humane and must be defended.

Is the GOP looking at another special election loss? Look at the race in western Pennsylvania to replace former GOP Congressman Tim Murphy, who was forced to resign after allegations surfaced that he had encouraged a woman with whom he was having an affair to get an abortion. Murphy was "pro-life." Interestingly, the Politico story on the race does not mention if the Democratic candidate, Conor Lamb, is pro-life or not, which matters in southwestern Pennsylvania. At City & State Pennsylvania, they detail that Lamb's position is ambiguous, and so it is. I am willing to bet the only reason he is ambiguous is that he is worried about funding from big Dem donors. Note to Democratic National Committee Chair Tom Perez: Lamb looks ridiculous trying to have it both ways. As DNC chair, you need to let candidates knows that it is okay to be pro-life and tell the litmus test brigade to chill out.

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Kudos to Cardinal Timothy Dolan for his statement on Martin Luther King Jr. Day, which not only praised the civil rights leader but also took a swipe at Trump's boorish remark about "shithole countries." I will have more on that tomorrow. In the meantime, I will note that Trump displayed his ignorance in saying the U.S. should desire more immigrants from countries like Norway. Norway mostly resisted the fascists in the 1940s. He should have said Finland, which collaborated with the fascists. That said, and given the president's mistake, I think it is now permitted to label those Republicans who defend the president quislings!

In the category, "Thanks, Barack Obama," about a year ago, the then-president decided to offer clemency to Chelsea Manning, commuting her sentence. Manning, then known as Bradley, was the traitor who leaked thousands of national security documents to Wikileaks, placing dozens of career government workers, like CIA agents, at risk. Then, Manning decided to become a woman and a transgender activist and, now, a candidate for U.S. Senate against Maryland Sen. Ben Cardin. I comforted that Cardin, who is one of the real workhorses in the Senate, will not have much difficulty defeating Manning, but her presence in the race helps keep the Democrats focused on issues other than infrastructure. Should have left her in jail, Mr. Obama. Silver lining: I hope someone will demand that Manning acknowledge the fact that accepting a pardon or commutation is, as well, an admission of guilt. Then, we in the press can ask Joe Arpaio if he, too, admits his guilt.

[Michael Sean Winters writes about the nexus between religion and politics.]

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