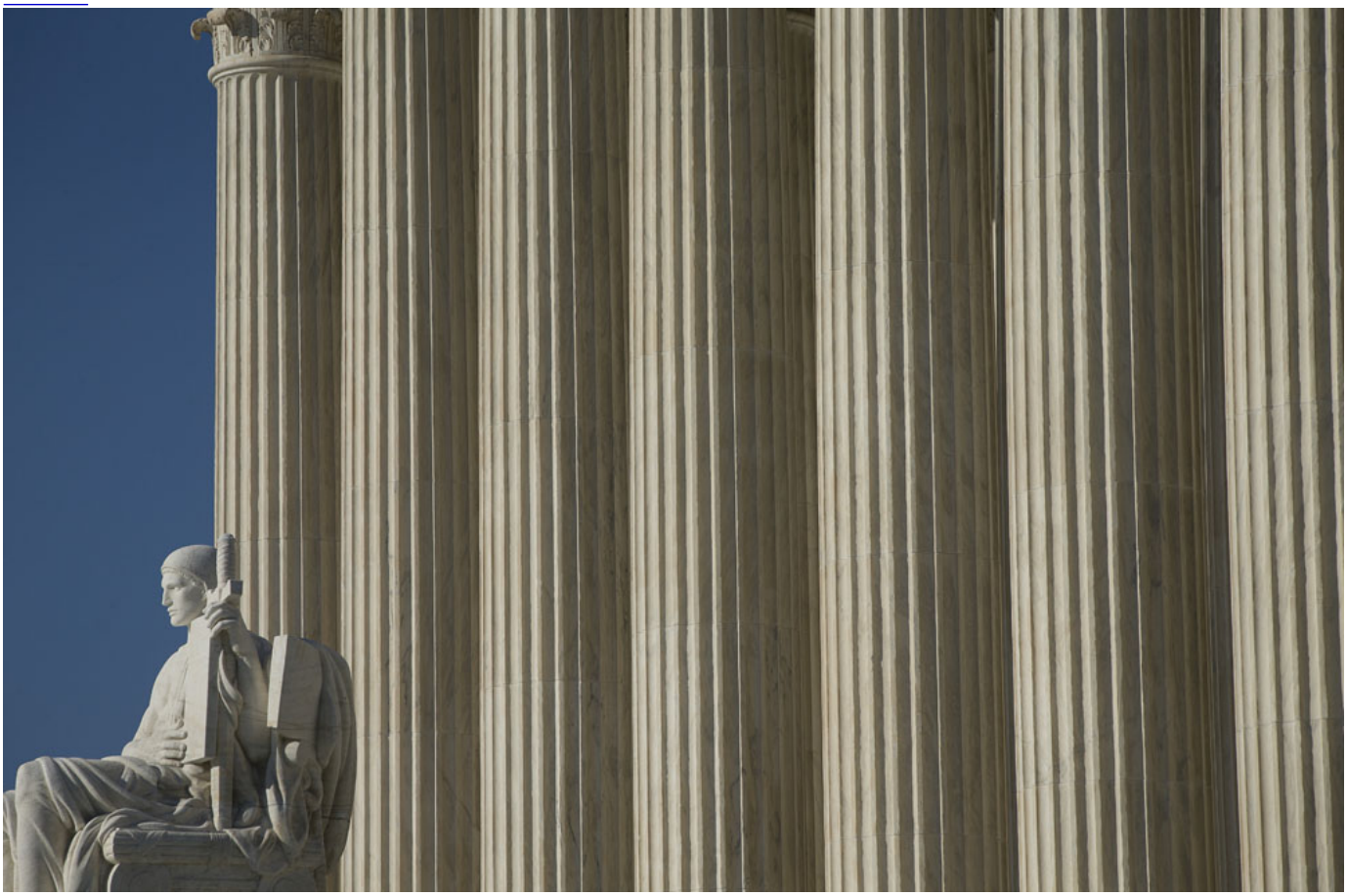
Opinion

News



The U.S. Supreme Court is seen July 9 in Washington. (CNS/Tyler Orsburn)

by Michael Sean Winters

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At Politico, a report on Ed Whelan, president of the Ethics and Public Policy Center, and his bizarre — and deeply obviously unethical — intervention in the Kavanaugh confirmation mess. I have not ever met Whelan, but he attacked me last February and wrote uninformed pieces about the Catholic Church's teaching on the right to organize. In that back-and-forth, I witnessed this same moral recklessness, and inability to assign proper values, on display in this incident. And, they also report that Whelan used the same PR firm that brought us the "Swift Boat Veterans" in 2004 to falsely malign John Kerry. Why is he still in a job, albeit on a leave of absence, at a center ostensibly dedicated to ethics? People may be shocked by this latest episode, but no one, absolutely no one, can claim to be surprised.

If you watch Fox News, you know that Sean Hannity has been sounding the alarm for weeks that Republicans need to get out and vote in this year's midterm elections. Why? Because this poll obtained by Bloomberg Businessweek shows that most Trump supporters think there is little chance the Democrats can win back control of Congress and, so, are complacent about voting in November. That is the kind of data point that indicates the blue wave could be a tsunami. But, Dems should not be complacent either. The polls all had Hillary Clinton winning handily too.

Just as I detest the histrionics on Fox, the leftie magazine The Nation does itself no favors when it publishes hyperbolic nonsense by Sarah Posner. Writing about the Kavanaugh nomination and conservative tactics more broadly, she writes, "A key tactic would be to shut down questioning on how the nominee would approach cases on abortion or LGBTQ rights by accusing Democratic senators probing these issues of being anti-religious—even anti-Catholic—bigots." Sometimes, there are anti-Catholic bigots, people who would like to drive the Catholic Church out of the public square, and Ms. Posner has only to look in the mirror to see one.

From "The Trailer" at WaPo, a reminder that all politics is local, as they look at a race in Texas that beat the blue wave, flipping a Democratic seat to the GOP only weeks before the general election. And scroll down to look at the item on governor's races this autumn. As important as it is that the Democrats emerge from November with subpoena power, it is vital that they flip some governor's mansions in advance of the 2020 redistricting, lest they end up with partisan legislative maps favoring Republicans for another decade.

Eater.com offers a fascinating look at how NAFTA changed the way Mexicans and Americans eat. This is the problem with trade deals, or better to say one of the problems: When capital is given a free rein, and there is no way for workers or communities to counterbalance the search for profit, whole sectors of the culture are changed and not for the better: Mexico is now challenging the U.S. for the most obese population on the planet, with all the negative health consequences that entails.

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At America, J.D. Long-García looks at the sad situation in Puerto Rico one year after Hurricane Maria struck the island, which was already in the middle of a fiscal crisis of enormous proportions. The road to recovery will be long: Sadly, due to inaction in Washington, the island is not even on that road yet in any meaningful way.

In The Washington Post, a new study indicates that large amounts of the polar ice cap in Antarctica retreated about 125,000 years ago when temperatures were not much hotter than they are today. The result? Sea level rises on the order of 20 to 30 feet. Sea level rise of even half that amount could destroy almost every major coastal city from Boston to New York to Miami. The migration scenario is unthinkable. But, hey, why pay attention to global warming? Our president assures us all will be well.

[Michael Sean Winters covers the nexus of religion and politics for NCR.]

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