Opinion
News



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If you want to know why Democrats lose elections, read this article by Peter Berkowitz at RealClearPolitics, in which he examines recent research about politically intolerant Americans. The money quote:

> The core finding, contrary to their expectations, was that "the most politically *intolerant* Americans" lived in neighborhoods that tended to be home to a higher proportion of whites and people who were "more highly educated, older, more urban, and more partisan themselves." Drawing also on the research of University of Pennsylvania professor Diana Mutz, the authors explain that "white, highly educated people are relatively isolated from political diversity. They don't routinely talk with people who disagree with them; this isolation makes it easier for them to caricature their ideological opponents."

If you look at the staffs of Democratic candidates, it is these people and their children who largely populate those staffs.

I linked to this article in my column yesterday but want to make sure readers see it: Robert Christian at Notre Dame's Church Life Journal on "The Roots of American Catholic Polarization." The Catholic Church in this country — bishops, educators, parents, everybody — have failed miserably to teach our children about Catholic social teaching. Nature abhors a vacuum, and so millions of Catholics now try to make their faith fit their politics, rather than evaluate their politics in light of their faith.

In The New York Times, a look at the dreadful situation in parts of Puerto Rico some 18 months after Hurricane Maria. The Democrats in Congress are refusing to pass increased emergency funding for other disasters until the administration sends more money to the island, while Trump continues to have mini-tantrums every time someone mentions the island. I hope the Dems are actively organizing along the I-4 corridor, home to the largest group of Puerto Rican exiles.

Also at the Times, Frank Bruni wades into the debate about whether or not Mayor Pete Buttigieg is gay enough — he is and the question is stupid. But his best line is about Joe Biden, "I feel just as strongly that Democrats need to show some

proportion, realism and reason as they assess and react to candidates (or, in Biden's case, probable candidates). " I have not been shy about warning fellow lefties — ditch the politically correct, identity politics, or prepare for Trump's second term. Is anyone listening?

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Relatedly, at Medium, Jeannie Etchart is grateful for the time Joe Biden gave her a hug. For the record, Biden would hug men as well. He grew up in a time when concerns about "personal space" were not on anyone's radar screen. He is right to recognize that times are changing and he must change with them, but he is also right not to grovel in front of the outrage police.

At the Atlantic, Emma Green makes the case that religious rhetoric is fine, but that the real test for Democratic candidates is whether or not they mount effective outreach efforts to the religious community. Neither Green, nor the two people she mostly quotes — Michael Wear who worked at the faith-based office for President Barack Obama, and Shaun Casey, director of the Berkley Center at Georgetown — say that the real reason faith-based outreach is important is because pastors are prima donnas who need near constant stroking. All three are right that you need someone to do that, but potential applicants be forewarned: You need an advanced degree in sycophancy.

The late Cardinal Francis George said that LifeSiteNews was "diabolical." If you doubt the late cardinal was correct, look at this article about the appointment of Archbishop Wilton Gregory to Washington. This is the face of the "pro-life" movement?

At ProPublica, a look at the effort by the Internal Revenue Service to take on wealth citizens who dodge about $50 billion each year. Surprise, surprise, the rich deploy armies of lawyers and accountants to fight any audit and end up paying pennies on the dollar. Getting new resources to the auditing team, especially the Global High Wealth Industry Group, at the IRS should be a Democratic priority and a democratic priority.

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

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