Opinion
News



by Michael Sean Winters

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October 15, 2019
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In The Washington Post, a look at how some refugees from Oceania are already making America their home, after years of being held like criminals in substandard conditions. These are the people President Donald Trump wants the rest of us to fear.

In The New York Times, Nicholas Kristoff makes the case for soaking the rich. The — pardon the expression — money quote:

> That's the rot in our system: Great wealth has translated into immense political power, which is then leveraged to multiply that wealth and power all over again — and also multiply the suffering of those at the bottom. This is a legal corruption that President Trump magnified but that predated him and will outlast him; this is America's cancer.

At Politico, a report on Trump's speech to the Values Voter Summit. The Family Research Council, which organizes the event, did not see the irony. The rest of us did.

The LGBTQ town hall for Democratic presidential candidates on CNN last week was a train wreck waiting to happen, and it did not disappoint. The worst moment came when Beto O'Rourke said he thought churches, charities and religious universities should lose their tax-exempt status unless they support gay marriage. Poor Beto. So willing to pander to his audience, he forgot about the Constitution. To quote the immortal words of Justice Robert Jackson in the case *West Virginia State Board of Education* v. *Barnette*: "If there is any fixed star in our constitutional constellation, it is that no official, high or petty, can prescribe what shall be orthodox in politics, nationalism, religion, or other matters of opinion, or force citizens to confess by word or act their faith therein." Fortunately, Mayor Pete Buttigieg pushed back against Beto's horrible idea.

That same town hall was mercifully aired the same week that the Trump administration was imploding, so the endless evening of pandering did not dominate the news cycle. But it did provoke a great cold open on "Saturday Night Live."

At Salon, Shaun Richman looks at the Democratic candidates' different labor proposals, especially those put forward by Sen. Bernie Sanders and Sen. Elizabeth Warren. The two ideas in Warren's proposals that Richman thinks deserve greater attention are the creation of a private right of action in federal courts for employees (employers already have that right) and the proposal for mandatory worker participation in corporate boards for large corporations. At the end of the article, Richman concludes: "Elizabeth Warren approaches the issue of rights at work as a problem solver, and wants to enhance the institutional role of worker representation to restore a degree of macroeconomic balance. Bernie Sanders aims to radically alter the balance of power in the workplace." It is clear Warren's proposals would also alter the balance of power in the workplace, but it is a good thing for her campaign to see her portrayed as a "problem solver."

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

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