News



by Michael Sean Winters

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In The New Yorker, a look at how upper-crust Republicans in Greenwich, Connecticut, home to H.W. Bush and Grandpapa "Prescott" Bush-style Republicans, came to support President Donald Trump. Put this in the file marked "Defining Deviancy Down." Turns out that appealing to people's power angels works just as well as appealing to their better angels.

What has happened to Sen. Lindsay Graham? In his latest tirade, he announced his intention to fight any effort to extend the additional $600 payments to unemployed workers. I mean, with so many people unable to pay the rent or utilities because they lost their job, we wouldn't want to ease the pain or anything. But, his choice of metaphor to convey his determination was unintentionally apt: "Over our dead bodies."

In The New York Times, David Axelrod and David Plouffe offer advice to the Joe Biden campaign, most especially about the need to adapt to the COVID-19 environment in which videos from the basement are not going to cut it. Their advice is sound and the fact that the Biden campaign has no real digital campaign going is shocking. And, let me ask again: Where is Mike Bloomberg with his promised millions to defeat Trump? Now is the time to spend it, highlighting the inconsistencies and idiocies that come from the president's mouth and which endanger the lives of

thousands more people.

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Relatedly, and from CNBC, a report on big dollar donors pressuring Biden to *not* select Sen. Elizabeth Warren as his running mate. Which is one more reason he *should* select her! Remember FDR's 1936 "I welcome their hatred" speech.

Of course the uber-rich do not want Warren anywhere near the policymaking table but her policy chops are exactly why she outpaces other potential Veep nominees in the most recent polling, with 36% of Democrats naming Warren as their first choice compared to 19% for Sen. Kamala Harris, 14% for former Georgia state legislator Stacey Abrams and 13% for Sen. Amy Klobuchar.

At Politico, a report on the failure of the two largest Senate Democratic elections organizations to put their money into the race to defend Sen. Doug Jones, the incumbent senator from Alabama who is the most endangered Democratic incumbent. They should be "all in" no matter the prospects. Jones may or may not be able to win in Alabama in a presidential year, but official Democratic organizations can't afford to send the signal that they are not investing in red states. How else do you flip them?

The U.S. Supreme Court tomorrow is set to hear a challenge to the Trump administration's expansion of the contraception mandate, issued under the terms of the Affordable Care Act. Ephrat Livni at Quartz looks at some of the issues and specifically at the number of women-led corporations that are fighting to overturn the administration's expansion. The compromise the Obama administration proposed for religious organizations was fine by me, and I thought the Supreme Court's ruling in *Hobby Lobby* was correct insofar as it applied to abortifacients but wrong as it applied to other forms of contraception. But, it will be interesting to see if the high court overturns Justice Antonin Scalia's holding in the 1990 *Employment Division* vs. *Smith* case and, if so, on what grounds.

From the file "you can't make this stuff up," legislators in Louisiana voted to restrict voting by mail in elections this year. And, they cast their ballots — you guessed it — by mail. The Advocate has the story.

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

Editor's note: *Don't miss out on Michael Sean Winters' latest. Sign up and we'll let you know when he publishes new Distinctly Catholic columns.*