Opinion
News



by Michael Sean Winters

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At Foreign Affairs, Aaron David Miller examines Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu's plans to annex part of the West Bank, a disaster that no one seems able to prevent. It will bury the already ailing two-state solution, which remains the only viable long-term solution for the region. Yet, Netanyahu seems to have the wind at his back: Israeli politics are almost as fractured as Palestinian politics, and he always seems to eke out a win. Let's hope the wind changes, and fast. Friends of Israel have to see the folly of pursuing annexation.

In Oklahoma, voters decided to expand Medicaid, the government-run health insurance program for low-income people. The Affordable Care Act ordered states to expand it, but the Supreme Court overruled that portion of the law, allowing states to decide whether or not to expand the program. Here is the thing: President Donald Trump won Oklahoma by a margin of 65% to 29% over Hillary Clinton in 2016 and is still trying to get the Affordable Care Act overturned in the courts. And 50.5% of voters decided to support Medicaid expansion. More evidence of how out of touch the president is with the American electorate.

In Colorado, Republican primary voters ousted five-term Rep. Scott Tipton in favor of a newcomer, Lauren Boebert, who is a restaurant owner and gun rights activist. Politico has the story. Whatever she serves at her restaurant, she serves conspiracy theories on the campaign trail: She expressed support for the wacky QAnon theory! If you watch Fox News, you know they are trying every night to paint the Democrats as extremists, but they need to get their own house in order. Cf. Matthew 7:3: "Why do you look at the speck of dust in your brother's eye."

I don't always see eye-to-eye with The Washington Post's Jonathan Capehart, but it turns out I do see eye-to-eye with his Aunt Gloria! She wants Joe Biden to select Elizabeth Warren as his running mate. Capehart reports that his aunt said, "She has the qualifications and experience. There is a lot to restore in the world and the country. There is no time to train anyone." I love that line: There is a lot to restore in the world and the country.

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Two-for-two: I also do not always see eye-to-eye with the Post's editorial board, but they got it right in assessing the Supreme Court's decision striking down Blaine Amendments that bar religious schools from participating in tuition tax credit programs. "The winners were low-income parents who want the best for their children, and their sons and daughters who might benefit from what wealthier families take for granted: choice in selecting an appropriate school," the board wrote. This is exactly right. I am a strong defender of public schools and of teachers' unions, but public schools and Catholic schools have learned how to live together for more than a century. Public charter schools worry me more. But the bottom line is that lots of poor families want access to religious schools and these tuition tax credit programs help them get it.

From the Working-Class Perspectives blog, Jessi Streib shares stories of downward mobility, which is sadly now much more common than upward mobility in American society. These are the kinds of issues that the Democratic Party needs to focus on to win in November and to govern in January.

From the Indy Star, a Catholic priest in Carmel, Indiana, Fr. Theodore Rothrock, attacked Black Lives Matter protesters in his weekly bulletin. His outburst was not only offensive, it was incendiary and vicious. Bishop Timothy Doherty needs to do

more than answer a reporter's question: He really needs to bring down the hammer on this priest, and hard.

[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.*