Opinion
News



by Michael Sean Winters

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From FiveThirtyEight, a reminder that more is on the ballot than the presidency. The most consequential result may have to do with control of state legislatures in advance of next year's redistricting. After the 2010 GOP victory, they were able to draw 55% of all congressional district lines, while the Democrats were only able to draw 10%. The result? Even though Democrats won the popular vote in House races by 1.3% in 2012, the GOP captured 33 more seats. All states should shift to vesting nonpartisan commissions with the task of drawing district lines, but until they do, maybe it is time the Dems have the advantage.

At Politico, a look at the Latino vote in Pennsylvania. There has been a significant Puerto Rican presence in the Lancaster area for decades, and now many Latinos are flocking to the Lehigh Valley. The more recent arrivals in the commonwealth fled Puerto Rico after Hurricane Maria, the response to which President Donald Trump not only botched, he did so in an insulting way. I do not think they will be lining up to support the president's reelection.

Also at Politico, a good profile of the Rev. Raphael Warnock, who is running for the U.S. Senate in Georgia against Sen. Kelly Loeffler, who was appointed to the seat

when Sen. Johnny Isakson resigned for health reasons in 2019, or Rep. Doug Collins, one of Trump's key defenders during the impeachment hearings in the House. Warnock is benefiting from the work registering voters undertaken by Stacey Abrams, the Georgia Democrat who narrowly lost the gubernatorial contest in 2018. Not sure if Warnock can prevail in a runoff, which seems likely, but if he even comes close, he strikes me as a rising star in the party. And Abrams should be the next chair of the Democratic National Committee.

In the Omaha World-Herald, Richard Miller and Todd Salzman of Creighton University make the case for supporting the Biden-Harris ticket as well as the Senate candidacy of Nebraska Democrat Kara Eastman, rooting their argument in Catholic values. Unlike most conservative Catholic commentators, they do not elide and manipulate Catholic teaching that does not comport with their political agenda, but face it head-on.

At Working-Class Perspectives, the blog of the Kalmanovitz Center on Labor at Georgetown, John Russo predicts that Trump will lose Ohio. He bases this prediction on a lot of on-the-ground observations, and his credibility is strengthened by the fact that he predicted Trump would win the Buckeye state four years ago. His detail of ongoing woes in Ohio also reads like a "to-do" list for the next administration: If you can find ways to bring jobs back to Youngstown, Toledo and the more rural parts of the state, Ohio could join a revised "blue wall" of Midwestern states.

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Every once in a while, you come across an article that makes you smile for days. Here is one: Reuters reports that the lawyers at Jones Day law firm, the conservative firm that serves as outside counsel to the Trump reelection campaign, have contributed nearly $90,000 to the Biden campaign, while sending Trump a grand total of $50. I hope the president saw the report. He will blow a gasket.

From the file marked "Whom the gods would make bigots, they first deprive of humor," some activists and academics on social media are criticizing a skit on "Saturday Night Live" that made fun of sex trafficking tourists in Africa. The skit featured Adele, Heidi Gardner and Kate McKinnon, and it was hilarious, edgy but hilarious. Just so, it probably did more to call attention to the very real problem than a thousand tweets from some obscure protester or professor who took offense at it.

Archbishop Paul Etienne of Seattle had some fine words about the controversy surrounding Pope Francis' comments on civil unions. The key observation: "The Holy Father is calling us as Church, as he has on numerous other occasions, to begin with the human person. Catechesis is important, but not the starting point. Building relationships comes first, then instruction, conversion, and integrating the faith ever more deeply into one's life. In a real way he is challenging the Church to expand the tent."

From the file marked "Wow, just wow," a Christian singer-songwriter is set to release a new single, "American Heaven." The press release states: "Inspired by the current political and moral crisis, Simple Sam has set out to forever enshrine Donald J Trump, not only as a great American folk hero, but as a new saviour, whose conservative, patriotic values better align with American Christian society." Seriously, mending the country's wounds will require reaching out to those who have embraced Trump in ways they have not embraced any other politician. Good luck.

[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.*