Opinion

News



Visitors are photographed at the base of American Falls in Niagara Falls, New York, Feb. 21. (CNS/Reuters/Lindsay DeDario)



by Michael Sean Winters

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From the Independent Record, some good news for the workers of Montana: The House of Representatives there decisively voted down a right-to-work bill by the lopsided margin of 62-38. The Republican majority in the chamber is almost the reverse: 67 Republicans to 33 Democrats. Congratulations to those Republican House members who saw this right-to-work legislation for what it is, an insult to workers' right to organize.

It is not every day that I find myself agreeing with neoconservative Bill Kristol. But in this article at The Bulwark, Kristol is quite blunt about the situation facing conservatives:

> And one of those facts of life is that a dangerous, anti-democratic faction — which pretty clearly constitutes a majority — of the nation's conservative party is not committed in any serious way to the truth, the rule of law, or the basic foundations of our liberal democracy.
>
> At bottom, I think we need to spend more time thinking through the challenges facing our democratic order today, and less time gazing into the navel of American conservatism.

Kristol hopes that responsible conservatives will work with the Biden administration and try to bring it to the center. On economic issues, I hope such a project finds no outlet, but on cultural issues, bring it on.

At Politico, Alex Eisenstadt writes about the former Trump campaign and administration officials who are forming political action committees and nonprofits, all aimed at expanding the reach of MAGA-nation and consolidating Donald Trump's control over the Republican Party. You can bet some prominent Catholics will be involved in this effort. Normally, former officials go to work for other candidates, but as discussed yesterday, Trumpism is turning the GOP into a personality cult and these efforts will only accelerate that process.

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In The Washington Post's "The Fix," Emily Guskin looks at a recent experiment by the Pew Center: Given the fact that pollsters underestimated the support for Trump in 2020, having done the same in 2016, Pew asked about the reliability of polling on specific issues. Pew weighted its samples to reflect the actual vote and ran a different weighting according to the highest (12 point) prediction of Joe Biden's margin. It turns out there was very little difference between the two scenarios, confirming the fact that the 2020 election was primarily about Trump the person, not any particular policy preferences.

At Smithsonian magazine, Colin Woodward offers an elegant essay examining America's national myth(s), George Bancroft's articulation of a providentialist narrative of America, the ugliness of the alternatives then and now, and voices the hope that we might renew Bancroft's vision in its aspirational quality even while we jettison the messianic hubris that Bancroft's Puritan roots demanded. Woodward calls it a "civic nationalism," and we find it in figures as different from one another as Frederick Douglass and Eleanor Roosevelt. The lack of an organic sense of nationhood makes such efforts at creating a national mythology necessary for us in ways that are genuinely unique among nations, but that does not entitle us to delude ourselves with fantasies about American exceptionalism.

At Working-Class Perspectives, James Catano helps explode some stereotypes about the views of working-class folks regarding climate change. Many workers actually can point to tasks like capping leaking oil wells that require skilled labor and will help the environment. Pitting workers against environmental protection is a lie perpetrated by fossil fuel corporate interests and their political buddies.

Here is an item that has nothing to do with politics, religion or culture: Travel & Leisure looks at Niagara Falls, which are frozen over, and the result is beautiful. The photos are from Reuters. Just so stunning.