Opinion

News



Girl Scouts in Atlanta hold signs urging residents to vote in the runoff election for both of Georgia's U.S. Senate seats Jan. 3, 2021. (CNS/Reuters/Brian Snyder)



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In The Washington Post, Greg Sargent looks at the voter suppression laws being debated in Georgia and warns against treating them as in any way normal. There are two core problems: First, this is bringing back Jim Crow and, second, "Anti-majoritarian tactics could help insulate Republicans from accountability for opposing broadly popular policies, even if the Biden agenda succeeds." U.S. Rep. John Lewis is turning over in his grave.

In the New Republic, Katherine Stewart does a good job describing the divisions within the Catholic Church and the influence of conservative money on that divide. She also gives a shout-out to NCR's Tom Roberts, Heidi Schlumpf and yours truly for our coverage of Tim Busch and other rich conservative Catholics over the years.

Politicians and preachers have a lot in common, but it is rare and dangerous when politicians mount a pulpit, and it is even more rare when they do so and pull it off. On Twitter. But New Jersey Gov. Phil Murphy posted a thread about visiting the vaccine distribution center at the Cathedral of St. John the Baptist in Paterson, and it is remarkably fluent in Scripture without being preachy.

Speaking of Twitter, isn't it nice to have a president who does not embarrass himself on it first thing in the morning? Here is President Joe Biden tweeting about the right to organize and posting a short video about the importance of unions in creating the middle class. The Washington Post has a good update on the effort by Amazon workers in Alabama to form a union.

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Remember that you heard it here first. In The New York Times, Thomas Edsall writes about the realization by many Democratic strategists that their working presumption about demographics redounding to their benefit, specifically because more and more Latino voters would mean more and more Democratic wins, is fatally flawed. He writes:

> The increased level of support for the Republican Party among minority voters has raised the possibility that the cultural agenda pressed by another expanding and influential Democratic constituency — well-educated, young activists with strongly progressive views — is at loggerheads with the socially conservative beliefs of many older minority voters — although liberal economic policies remain popular with both cohorts.

Read that last bit again slowly: "although liberal economic policies remain popular with both cohorts." If there is one central political theme I have been defending for years now, it is that the Democrats need to focus on economic issues more and on hot button culture war issues less. More on the Latino vote next week when I shall drill down into how and why Trump did so much better among Latinos in 2020 than he did in 2016.

From the BBC, a report on the Afghan commemoration of the destruction of the Bamiyan Buddhas by the Taliban 20 years ago. A 3-D show recreated the image of one of the sculpted figures, which were, until their destruction, the tallest carved Buddhas in the world, having been carved in the 6th and 7th centuries. Their destruction struck a chord of cultural disgust around the world. Our religious tradition, rightly, privileges persons above things, but as in the case of the pope's comments about pilgrimages last week, we humans need things to keep us human.

Finally, from CNN, a man adopted a German shepherd rescue dog, Sadie, who had been turned away from three shelters when she came to a no-kill shelter in New Jersey. Sadie had emotional issues and was uneasy around men, but when Brian Myers walked in, something told them both that they were meant to be together. One night in January, Myers suffered a stroke and his legs would not move. Sadie knew something was wrong and dragged him across the room to his cellphone so he could call for help. When he got out of the hospital a few days later, you can guess who was there to greet him. Dogs are the best.