Opinion
News



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From Working-Class Perspectives blog, Alice Thompson and Kenneth Thompson look at the mental health crisis that existed before the pandemic but has been made much worse since. They turn to the favelas in Fortaleza, Brazil, for a lesson in community-based health care, called "Solidarity Care." I am not sure about some of their premises, but I like the outcome a lot. One of the saddest things I have heard in recent years was from a bishop who told me of the increase in young people choosing "Dymphna" as their confirmation name. St. Dymphna is the patron saint of mental illness and nervous disorders, but she is hardly a household name, so you know the young people selecting her as their patron means they or someone in their family is struggling with mental health issues.

In The Washington Post, Perry Bacon points out that Republicans who are opposed to Donald Trump constitute about 9% of the electorate, that is, enough to throw an election to the Democrats in most districts and states. So, do they really care more about the health of our democracy than they do about partisan politics?

Relatedly, and also in The Post, Republicans in Arizona are at each other's throats because of the recount of presidential ballots the GOP-controlled state Senate

demanded, turning over the task to a conspiracy theorist who was looking for evidence of bamboo in the ballots because he had been told that the Chinese government had flown in thousands of ballots voting for Joe Biden. Finally, other Republicans are saying "Enough!" and calling out Trump's allegations for the unhinged lunacy they are.

Relatedly, and at Politico, a look at the decision by the New York attorney general to open a criminal probe into the Trump organization, not just a civil one. It appears that the central allegation, which is not difficult to believe, is that Trump was a tax cheat on an enormous scale. There are true believers who will never question him, but if the attorney general produces documentary evidence and, best of all, gets someone in the family to turn on papa, we might be spared future threats to democracy. The Trump organization has long looked like a criminal enterprise, but now we will get to see if the appearances reflect the reality.

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At Slate, Mark Joseph Stern on Justice Elena Kagan getting fed up with Justice Brett Kavanaugh. It is remarkable that these so-called "conservative justices" overturn precedent a little too easily. But even more egregious is when, as in this case of *Edwards* vs. *Vannoy*, the conservative majority overturns a precedent when the issue was not even briefed or argued before the court. Our highest court will not be healthy again until it is rid of ideologues and replaced by some justices with experience of the other branches and a healthy dose of common sense.

At Bloomberg, a look at emerging inflationary pressures due to commodity shortages that are dogging the economy at the moment. "It is anything but efficient or normal, but that is how you have to run it right now," Whirlpool CEO Marc Bitzer said. I worry about a different adjective: irrational. Treasury Secretary Janet Yellen is correct when she notes that the Federal Reserve has tools to deal with inflation, but, by definition, no one really has the tools to deal with inflation when it is driven by irrationality.

In Letters from an American, historian Heather Cox Richardson looks at the difficulty President Joe Biden has in getting the media to pay more attention to his work, such as his trip to test drive the new Ford F-150, because of all the in-fighting in Congress. There is something to this concern but as someone who watches rightwing media, as well as leftwing media every night, my impression is that the

right is flailing right now. Biden is popular. His programs are popular. And the GOP is talking about culture war foolishness.