

MERRY CHRISTMAS!

CHRISTMAS PRESENT—DISNEY IS WISING UP

[Bill Donohue](#)

We'll take a slow learner over one who never learns, which is why we are happy to report that Disney continues to move away from its offensive fare. Are they family-friendly again? Not quite. But they are moving in the right direction.

“Win or Lose” is a forthcoming Pixar animated miniseries set to premiere on Disney+ in February of next year. Disney has reworked a story arc featuring a “transgender” youth that plays on a co-ed softball team. Initially the miniseries was set to explore this character’s backstory and perspective, like it does with several other characters. However, Disney ultimately decided that this controversial topic should be omitted from the show.

A spokesperson for Disney said, “When it comes to animated content for a younger audience, we recognize that many parents would prefer to discuss certain subjects with their children on their own terms and timeline.” Considering that Disney became the epitome of woke corporate politics by leading the charge against Florida’s “Parental Bill of Rights” in 2022, this is a massive reversal of the entertainment giant’s position.

This pivot reflects the thinking coming from the top.

During a Q&A with Disney shareholders in April of 2024, Disney CEO Bob Iger stated he believed it was Disney's job to "entertain, first and foremost." He went on to say, "I've always believed that we have a responsibility to do good in the world, but we know our job is not to advance any kind of agenda." This builds on previous comments Iger made since retaking the helm of Disney in 2023.

The change in direction is evident in other Disney fare.

"Inside Out 2" premiered in theaters in June and quickly became the top-grossing animated film of all time, raking in a total of \$1.7 billion globally. A huge part of this success stemmed from efforts undertaken by Disney executives to ensure that the Pixar film had no LGBT content. Throughout its production, executives went to great lengths to portray the characters as normal. Many scenes were reworked to remove any suggestions that any characters were LGBT.

In August, Disney announced "The Acolyte" would be cancelled after streaming for a single season on Disney+. Even with the media loudly cheering on the series and bashing anyone complaining about its weak characters or poor writing, it was largely panned by fans for sacrificing quality storytelling in favor of promoting woke content. The series leaned heavily into LGBT themes and also saw the debut of Disney's first openly "transgender" actor Abigail Thorn (a man pretending to be a woman) in a supporting role.

"Moon Girl and Devil Dinosaur" is an animated series that airs on Disney+.

One episode revolved around Brooklyn, the captain of the girls volleyball team. He is a male who falsely claims to be a female. When a rival coach finds out that Brooklyn played on the boys soccer team, the coach moves to have Brooklyn disqualified. The showrunners present this coach as motivated by bigotry and partially interested in giving the opposing

team an unfair advantage.

As the title “Gatekeeper” suggests, it is strongly implied that anyone opposed to letting boys compete in girls sports is a bigot and concerns over fairness and safety are just a ruse by weaker teams trying to eliminate better athletes from competition.

Disney pulled the episode “Gatekeeper” featuring a transgender storyline. “Moon Girl and Devil Dinosaur” was cancelled in October; ten more episodes are slated to air in 2025.

This turn about would not have happened without considerable pressure being applied to Disney executives.

We take pride in helping to mount that pressure. In January of 2023, we released “Walt’s Disenchanted Kingdom,” a documentary with an all-star cast that detailed Disney’s departure from a family-friendly company. Our documentary won nine awards and has been seen by millions of people around the world. It is streaming on Amazon and the DVD is available from the Catholic League.

Christmas is a time for reflection, as well as joy. It is our hope that Disney continues to reflect on the damage it has done and moves with dispatch to bring about the joy that made it so famous in the first place.

THE POLITICS OF COMEDY

Bill Donohue

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They got to Jerry Seinfeld. He received enough blowback from

the Left that he caved: he no longer blames humorless left-wing pundits and activists for the war on comedy. Indeed, he now says he "[regrets](#)" saying that comedy on TV has basically disappeared as "the result of the extreme left and P.C. crap, and people worrying so much about offending other people."

Will Chris Rock and Jennifer Aniston be next? [Rock](#) complained in 2019 that he can't say anything "offensive and funny right now," and [Aniston](#) said last year that "it's a little tricky" telling jokes these days "because you have to be very careful."

The humorless ones, who are heavily concentrated in education, non-profit advocacy groups, and the media, have certainly had an effect. In 2008, comedy as a share of the U.S. box office was [21 percent](#). Now it is in the single digits.

Seinfeld got it right the first time, but he understated it even then.

Political correctness, or woke politics, is a form of mind control. What animates the Left is power, and nothing is more important than getting inside the heads of the masses. Once the people surrender their conscience, they can be mobilized to do whatever the ruling class wants. Make no mistake, controlling what we are allowed to laugh at is part and parcel of their agenda.

The two most protected demographics in the nation are LGBTQ people and blacks. But there is a big difference between the two: blacks are much less incensed about jokes that come at their expense than gays and transgender persons are. The latter, represented most conspicuously by GLAAD, are the biggest promoters of censorship in the nation. And they are very good about punishing the "offenders," squeezing apologies from them.

- [Tracy Morgan](#) has apologized to the gay and lesbian community for a joke he told in 2011.

- In 2019, [Eddie Murphy](#) apologized to the same people for a joke he told in 1996.
- [Kevin Hart](#) apologized in 2019 for a joke that “hurt members of the LGBTQ community.”
- In September this year, [Will Ferrell](#) said he regretted dressing as a woman some years earlier while telling a joke. “That’s something I wouldn’t choose to do now.”
- Comedy writer [Harper Steele](#) said he regrets penning a drag queen joke that he wrote years ago. He now says, “It’s absolutely not funny.”
- [Amy Schumer](#) apologized in 2015 for making a joke about Hispanics, saying, “I hope I haven’t hurt anyone.”
- [Jay Leno](#) often made fun of Asians but now he says he regrets it.
- [Trevor Noah](#) had lots of fun at the expense of Indians and Pakistanis, but now he is apologizing for the “hurt” he caused.
- [Jimmy Fallon](#) has apologized for wearing blackface in a 2000 SNL skit.
- [Jimmy Kimmel](#) apologized in 2020 for wearing blackface in the 1990s.
- [Tina Fey](#) has apologized for wearing blackface in her sitcom.
- [Sarah Silverman](#) now says she is “horrified” about wearing blackface in one of her 2007 episodes.
- [Nikki Glaser](#) has apologized for making fun of “skinny” women.
- In 2018, [“Weird Al” Yankovic](#) apologized for featuring the word “midget” in one of his songs from the 1980s.
- [Patton Oswalt](#) now regrets joking about “retards.”

No one ever apologizes for telling patently obscene jokes about Jesus, Our Blessed Mother, nuns, priests or the sacraments. This includes many of those who are now apologizing profusely about insulting others. Sarah Silverman and Trevor Noah, for instance, are two of the biggest anti-Catholic comedians in the nation, but they will never

apologize for slandering priests.

If proof is needed to show how political all of this is, consider that [Dave Chappelle](#) (who won't apologize for LGBTQ jokes) apologized for simply saying in 2016, "I'm wishing Donald Trump luck." Similarly, [John Mulaney](#) now says he "deserved backlash" for joking about Trump and Biden without making it clear that he very much favored Biden.

Best of all is [Stephen Colbert](#). In 2017, he made an obscene joke that offended Trump supporters and gays at the same time. He only apologized to gays.

Jay Leno called me years ago after I blasted him for telling anti-Catholic jokes. He said he tells 11,000 jokes a year and wanted my advice on which kinds of jokes about Catholics are okay and which are not (reporters and TV talk-show hosts have asked me the same thing).

I told him that jokes about Catholic school kids are fine. "Sister Act" type fare is also okay. But when you get to the heart of our religion—as Gretchen Whitmer did by mocking the Eucharist—that crosses the line.

The comedians of an earlier era—Bob Hope, Jerry Lewis, Sid Caesar, Rodney Dangerfield, Dean Martin, Don Rickles—made their audiences laugh without getting vulgar. Mel Brooks managed to lampoon everyone without getting nasty. So it can be done. All it takes is creativity, prudence and a sense of decency. When that happens, there is no need to protect or demonize anyone.

RELIGIOUS LIBERTY TRIUMPHS; SUPREME COURT NEXT UP

According to the *Washington Post*, Donald Trump won the Catholic vote 56 percent to 41 percent. That's a great triumph for religious liberty.

Exit polls showed that it wasn't abortion that hurt Kamala Harris the most with Catholics, it was other issues. Among them, surely, was her stand on religious liberty. Moreover, when a candidate loses the Catholic vote by 15 points, it is hard to win the White House.

In late October, Harris was asked by an NBC reporter if she would consider any concessions on abortion. The reporter, Hallie Jackson, specifically asked Harris if she would allow religious exemptions. No, she said—not even one. That's the voice of extremism.

Harris' extremism on religious liberty was also evident on the subject of transgenderism.

The issue of gender ideology is laden with religious overtones. Harris not only supports attempts by minors to change their sex behind the backs of their parents, she co-sponsored bills that would force Catholic doctors and hospitals to perform sex-reassignment surgery and abortions.

Then there is Harris' record of anti-Catholicism, something which we documented more than any other organization in the nation. It is extreme, and it is obviously a religious liberty issue.

The battle for religious liberty is not over. We need the support of the courts.

Trump appointed Amy Coney Barrett, Brett Kavanaugh and Neil

Gorsuch; the first two are Catholic and Gorsuch, who was raised Catholic, is Protestant. All are good on religious liberty. Chief Justice John Roberts, another Catholic, is mostly reliable on this issue. Clarence Thomas and Samuel Alito, both staunch Catholics, are rock solid on this First Amendment right.

Thomas is 76. Alito is 74. Both have served with distinction. They are bright and courageous and have been subjected to incredible vitriol. Indeed, they have survived attempts to destroy them by the masters of personal destruction: those who work in the media, left-wing advocacy organizations, the entertainment industry, and education have worked overtime to smear them.

The Left failed to bring them down. Halleluiah. But early next year it will be time for them to step down. If Trump can appoint two more just like them—he can't do any better—he will secure a religious-friendly court for decades.

The most important right in a democracy is the free exercise of religion, which is encoded in the First Amendment. That right, and another First Amendment right—free speech—were targeted by Biden-Harris more than any administration in American history. But their days are numbered.

Our work is never done. But if we get more Supreme Court Justices that support religious liberty, that will be a big step forward.

CHRISTMAS BILLBOARD

Every year the Freedom From Religion Foundation (FFRF), a group of militant atheists—whose love for abortion is on a par

with their love for Christian bashing—like to erect a silly Winter Solstice exhibit at the Capitol in Madison, Wisconsin. This year they are in for a surprise.

We have decided to send these activists a lesson, reminding them that the Christmas season is our season. We rule. They lose.

We will have a billboard displayed in the vicinity of Madison, Wisconsin from December 16 to December 29. It will be on the beltway, south of Mineral Point Road. The panel size is 12 x 50.

(We will feature a picture, or a facsimile of the billboard, in the next edition of *Catalyst*, but the wording can now be revealed.)

It is headlined, "ATHEISTS STRIKE OUT AT CHRISTMAS," we opine, "Celebrating Winter Solstice is a Child's Game." We remind them that "*This Is Our Season—Not Theirs*," and that it is meant to "Celebrate the Birth of Christ." We end by saying, "*Merry Christmas*."

We chose Madison because it is home to FFRF and we wanted them to see it. Call it our Christmas gift to them.

They put up their Winter Solstice display to compete with the manger scene; it is only apropos that we compete with them.

They filed a bogus complaint with the IRS against us in the fall, so this is our way of saying, "we're not going away."

REFLECTIONS ON THE ELECTION

William A. Donohue

Not surprisingly, the mainstream media were in disbelief over the results of the presidential election. That's because they live in an intellectual ghetto. Instead of just talking to each other, it would be so nice if they actually spent time talking to those who work in housekeeping, the cafeteria, maintenance and security.

Will they change now that they have been proven wrong? Not at all. They are hopelessly incapable of changing, though they love to say that the public has a hard time accepting change. Not so. They do.

Does money count in elections? Not as much as many think. Harris raised over \$1 billion and wound up \$20 million in debt in the final week. Trump spent half as much, over \$400 million. In the few weeks before the election, Bill Gates gave Harris \$50 million, and Michael Bloomberg followed with another \$50 million. George Soros topped them both.

Do celebrities matter? They may if they occasionally show up for a rally or fundraiser. But Harris went overboard, bringing in Oprah, Bruce Springsteen, Beyonce, Taylor Swift, Katy Perry, Jennifer Lopez et al. She also went on "Saturday Night Live" before the election. This actually hurt her. Why? She was already seen as a lightweight, the word-salad queen, so being surrounded by celebrities only fed the perception that she was not a serious person.

Why were so many of the polls wrong? Because most of them never corrected for the Trump supporters who simply won't speak to them. They don't trust them, and, importantly, they know it is not popular in many circles to admit being for Trump.

The pollster that was the most accurate was J.L. Partners. Based in the U.S., it was founded by pollsters for the British Prime Minister; it published its results with the Daily Mail, a conservative U.K. publication. It was one of the few that got it right: it said in the run-up to the election that Trump had a 54 percent chance of winning. McLaughlin & Associates also did a good job.

Pollsters often ask the wrong questions, or they don't dig deep enough. For example, the media kept reporting that Trump's unfavorability rating was significantly higher than Harris'. On election day, Nate Silver, who runs an influential survey site, reported that Trump's unfavorability score was 8.6 points higher than his favorability score. For Harris, her unfavorable rating was 2.0 points higher than her favorable rating.

A more important question is how the public views the candidates on their leadership abilities and their ability to get things done. A month before the election, Gallup found that when it comes to who is a strong and decisive leader, Trump outscored Harris 59 percent to 48 percent. On their ability to get things done, Trump won 61-49. Exit polls on election day found that his numbers increased significantly on related measures.

In other words, an election is not a popularity contest. It is about issues and who is the most likely to govern effectively.

Billy Martin, who coached the New York Yankees, was hard to deal with. Bobby Knight, who coached the Indiana University basketball team, could be obnoxious. Bill Belichick, who coached the New England Patriots, was surly. Unlikeable though they were, they were also great leaders who knew how to win.

Ergo, while Trump's persona may strike many as offensive, few question his ability to get things done, and that is what counts in the end.

Democratic strategist James Carville warned Democrats in October that Harris was not getting her message out. This misses the point. She had no message. That was her problem. Being against Trump is not a message—it's a feeling: it doesn't tell voters what policies you want to implement.

Admittedly, she was put in a delicate position. Joe Biden dropped out after the debate in June because the media could no longer pretend that he wasn't mentally challenged. They covered up for him for years, but could do so no longer. Harris never faced a challenger—she was anointed—and proved incapable of separating herself from his policies.

More than anything else, it was the politics of extremism that did her in.

- Flooding the economy with funny money drove prices sky high
- Allowing millions of migrants to crash our borders and then be rewarded with better services from the government than are afforded homeless veterans angered millions
- Playing catch and release with violent criminals was indefensible
- Forgiving student loans for the middle and upper classes while making the working class pay for them was infuriating
- Promoting policies that allow children to change their sex behind their parents' back was mindboggling
- Allowing boys to compete against girls in sports and shower with them was morally bankrupt
- Allowing the FBI to spy on Catholics was malicious
- Inviting foreign aggression was irresponsible

These policies did Harris in. For the most part, the American people do not want extremists on the right or the left in office. Thank God for that.

THE STATE OF CATHOLIC HIGHER EDUCATION

Anne Hendershott

Anne Hendershott, *A Lamp in the Darkness: How Faithful Catholic Colleges Are Helping to Save the Church* (Sophia Institute Press)

For faithful Catholics, the loss of a strong Catholic identity at most of the 230 Catholic colleges and universities has been a great disappointment. Earlier generations of Catholic immigrants built the majority of those schools during the late 1800s and early 1900s at great personal sacrifice because they wanted to nurture the faith of their children and protect them from the anti-immigrant nature of the existing colleges.

Unfortunately, there are few faithful Catholic colleges left today which share the vision of helping young Catholics maintain their faith. From internships at Planned Parenthood, and “reproductive choice” clubs at schools like Georgetown, to Catholic campus GLBTQ celebrations and Drag Shows presented annually at campuses like the once-faithful University of San Diego, and several of the Jesuit schools, parents can no longer assume that their children will receive a faithful Catholic education on a Catholic campus. Even the once-venerable University of Notre Dame appears to have given up much of its commitment to supporting Catholic teachings on life and traditional families by giving awards and speaking platforms to notorious pro-abortion politicians and GLBTQ activists. In 2016, Notre Dame awarded its most prestigious award, the Laetare Medal, to then Vice-President Joseph Biden in recognition of his “outstanding service to the Catholic

Church,” even though he had long promoted both abortion and same-sex marriage. The Laetare Medal is an award that was originally created by Notre Dame to honor an American Catholic “whose genius has ennobled the arts and sciences, illustrated the ideals of the church, and enriched the heritage of humanity.”

And although the award to Biden created scandal among the faithful, nothing could have prepared them for Ash Williams, the transgendered pro-abortion speaker who was given a platform at Notre Dame to present her position that “abortion is a type of birth.” Williams, a self-described “transgender man” who calls herself an “abortion doula,” told students during her Notre Dame presentation on March 20, 2023, that she draws upon the experiences in her own “Black, trans, abortion-having life” to question and demean what she called oppressive norms against abortion. As a self-described “abortion doula” Williams claims to provide physical, emotional, or financial help to people seeking to end a pregnancy, suggesting that the reason we don’t understand an abortion as a type of birth “is because it has become so disenfranchised.” Williams, who shared with Notre Dame students that she had undergone two abortions, has a tattoo on her left forearm of a surgical instrument used for manual vacuum aspiration abortion. Glib about her own abortions and celebrating the abortion success stories of those she helps, she told the Notre Dame students that she tells her abortion stories “as often as a broken record.”

This latest abortion doula scandal was not just a fringe event sponsored by a renegade Notre Dame Gender Studies department on campus. Rather, Ash Williams, the transgendered abortion advocate was sponsored by the Dean’s Office in the College of Arts and Letters, as well as by seven other major departments in the university including the Center for Social Concerns, a Notre Dame institute that was created to apply Catholic social teaching to societal problems. It is clear that the loss of

the Catholic identity is a systemic or structural problem at Notre Dame—like that at most Catholic colleges.

In fact, rather than embracing the good, the true, and the beautiful, most Catholic universities have adopted the same curricular fads as their secular peers, trading their commitment to the Catholic faith and the liberal arts for trendy departments of gender studies, black studies, ethnic studies, and gay and lesbian studies. Most of these schools host GLBTQ social clubs and celebrations of Pride Month using student affairs funds so that all enrolled students contribute to the festivities. Campus leaders on these now-faithless campuses claim that their Catholic campus commitment to social justice differentiates them from non-Catholic colleges, but they neglect to mention that their definition of social justice is so broad as to include “reproductive justice,” transgender rights, and equal access to marriage for same sex couples as among the social justice issues they promote.

The situation is dire but not hopeless. There are still some Catholic colleges that are true to the original mission of Catholic higher education. *A Lamp in the Darkness* introduces readers to 14 faithful Catholic colleges and universities that have resisted the cultural pressure to conform to the world and have instead, stayed true in their mission, their commitment to the liberal arts and academic excellence, their liturgies, and to the magisterial teachings of the Church. These schools have made significant sacrifices to continue providing students with a faithful Catholic education that not only prepares them for careers but also prepares them to live lives of integrity, goodness, holiness, and authenticity. When any of these “faithful few” schools have fallen short—as some of them have—they have quickly recovered because they have never lost sight of the salvific mission of authentic Catholic higher education.

Many of these faithful Catholic colleges like Christendom, Thomas More and Thomas Aquinas College were born from the

ashes of the secular revolution that gripped the Church following Vatican II and have become some of the most faithful Catholic colleges in the country. Others, like Belmont Abbey, Franciscan University of Steubenville, Catholic University, the University of Mary, and the University of Dallas were founded in the late nineteenth or early to mid-twentieth centuries, but have each, in their own way, sought continuous renewal in faithfulness and mission orientation.

The most recent wave of faithful Catholic universities emerged after 1990, apparently in response to the release of *Ex Corde Ecclesiae*, the apostolic constitution on faithful Catholic higher education promulgated by Pope St. John Paul II in 1990. These schools, including Ave Maria University and John Paul the Great Catholic University, both founded in 2003, and Wyoming Catholic College in 2005, all had the ability to form their mission and identity while drawing directly upon the evangelical spirit of *Ex Corde Ecclesiae*. In fact, the influence of the 1990 papal constitution is seen most explicitly in the mission statement of Ave Maria University which describes itself as “Founded in fidelity to Christ and His Church...dedicated to the advancement of human culture, the promotion of dialogue between faith and reason, and the formation of men and women in the intellectual and moral virtues of the Catholic faith.”

Although *A Lamp in the Darkness* is not a book specifically about Franciscan University, the renewal of orthodoxy on Catholic college campuses cannot be properly understood without acknowledging the important role played by that university so an entire chapter is devoted to understanding the 1974 revitalization and renewal of Franciscan that transformed a struggling school into the center of evangelization that it is today. In a 2021 interview with Dr. Scott Hahn, a theology professor at Franciscan, Monsignor James P. Shea, the president of the University of Mary in North Dakota—one of the faithful colleges profiled in this

book-spoke of the “ripple effect” of Franciscan on his own campus: “What does St. Thomas say? *Bonum diffusivum sui*—the good is diffusive of itself. The ripples of the renewal of Catholic higher education, of which Steubenville is an exemplar, are felt all around. The students that we get to serve here are recipients of that as well, and so I am grateful. May we be worthy of that legacy.”

Franciscan University was not always the vibrantly Catholic place that it is today and certainly not the center of a dynamic orthodoxy that is “diffusive of itself.” In fact, during the late 1960s and early 1970s, when it was still called the College of Steubenville, the struggling school was known as one of the premier party schools in the country, featuring a hook-up culture that involved heavy alcohol and drug use. Established in 1946 by Franciscans of the Third Order Regular (T.O.R.), the school had lost its way and was on the verge of collapse in the early 1970s. But in 1974, with the arrival of the university’s dynamic new president, Father Michael Scanlan, the newly renamed Franciscan University of Steubenville became the vibrant center of Catholic orthodoxy it is today.

That ripple effect continues. One person who was inspired by Father Scanlan was Tom Monaghan, who, in 1986, while still at the helm as founder and president of Domino’s Pizza, Inc., provided the following endorsement for the back cover of Father Scanlan’s book *Let the Fire Fall*: “This book has given me inspiration and a road map for my life. Never in one book have I learned so much about my religion and how to live it.” Monaghan actually used the book as a “road map,” creating Ave Maria Law School, and later Ave Maria University, as a way to honor God. Both vibrantly Catholic and faithful to the Magisterium, these schools continue to flourish as Tom Monaghan often says, “to help as many people as possible get into heaven.”

Today, Ave Maria University and the faithful few continue to

attract students who desire an authentically Catholic education. They come to these schools because they want to be part of a faith-filled community that enriches their lives. Faithful Catholic parents who want their children to be nurtured by the faith while receiving an academic challenging environment are drawn to these schools. The stories of the founding and constant renewal of these faithful schools can inspire other Catholic colleges which have lost their way. The 1974 transformation of Franciscan University into today's passionately Catholic college occurred because one charismatic priest—Father Michael Scanlan, with the guidance of the Holy Spirit—devoted himself to that renewal.

It is easy to feel bleak, looking at the state of modern culture and particularly at the decomposing state of higher education. It is tempting to think that all the battles have been lost, and that the secularization of society and of our Catholic schools is a *fait accompli*. Indeed, it may appear that from a sociological point of view, the battle has been lost. The faithful colleges and universities are too few and too small to make much of a difference. However, God does not see as humans see. God chose one-hundred-year-old Abraham to father a nation. He chose David, the smallest child of Jesse, to be a king. And He chose the teenage virgin Mary to bear His Son. That same God chose a lawyer-priest to redeem Franciscan University, a pizza mogul to start Ave Maria University, and a penniless historian to found Christendom College. The pattern that unites all these figures is not their strength, wealth, or wisdom, but rather their willingness to say yes to His plan. The hope that inspired this book and that caused Pope John Paul to prophesy of a new flowering of Christian culture is not borne from particular signs of worldly success, but rather is founded on the person of Jesus Christ and on His promise that we would not remain in darkness. "The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness has not overcome it" (John 1:5). The same light burns in the lamp of each faithful school today, and, by God's grace, the darkness has not

overcome it.

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2024 ELECTION TRACKER

The 2024 election cycle revealed a seismic shift in the political landscape of this country. While most of the focus has been rightfully on the presidential election, there were also significant developments downballot that are indicative of the culture shifting in the direction of commonsense and traditional values.

Abortion

In the 2024 election, the pro-life side began to show some signs that it can win elections in the Post-Roe era. In Florida, Nebraska, and South Dakota, voters defeated efforts to repeal pro-life laws. Considering that pro-life initiatives lost every vote since 2022, these three wins prove there is a path forward on this critical issue.

Although there were positive signs, unfortunately abortion access was enshrined into the state constitutions of Arizona, Colorado, Maryland, Missouri, Montana, Nevada, and New York.

Drug Legalization

Drug legalization met serious setbacks this cycle. In Florida, North Dakota, and South Dakota, voters rejected efforts to legalize marijuana. Meanwhile, Massachusetts voters rejected an initiative to legalize natural psychedelics (i.e. mushrooms). However, voters in Nebraska legalized medical marijuana.

School Choice

Voters in Colorado, Kentucky, and Nebraska rejected school choice initiatives. There were marking similarities between all three states.

First, the supporters of school choice were vastly outspent in all three campaigns. For instance in Kentucky, the “no” campaign outspent the “yes” side by nearly three-to-one, with local school boards using official funds to oppose school choice. In Nebraska, the “no” campaign raised over \$7 million while the supporters of school choice only had a war chest of \$1 million.

Further, in all three states the initiatives were very limited in their scope and the wording of the initiatives was vague. This directly led to tempered support, even the Christian Home Educators of Colorado came out against the amendment over fears that the language of “quality education” could lead to intrusive regulations. Meanwhile, Kentucky voters were asked to amend the constitution to thwart efforts by the state’s supreme court to derail school choice proposals, but voters were never given a positive vision of what a school choice program might look like. In all three instances, there was an enthusiasm gap that allowed the opponents of school choice to defeat the initiatives.

However, there was some positive signs on school choice. Many candidates that supported school choice won their elections. For instance, Texas elected a school choice majority in the state legislature. Likewise in Indiana, the gubernatorial challenger, who ran on an anti school choice platform, lost resoundingly. In an election postmortem, NBC’s Chuck Todd linked the strong performance of Republicans with Hispanic voters in Florida and Texas to the aggressive school choice programs advanced by officials in both states.

Other Education Issues

Earlier this election cycle, San Francisco voters supported a

ballot measure that bolstered the school district's math curriculum. Moving in the opposite direction, voters in Massachusetts passed Question 2, which does away with the requirement for high school students to pass a standardized test in order to graduate.

Parental Rights

Voters in Washington State approved Initiative 2081, which establishes a "parents' bill of rights." This allows parents to review books in school libraries and remove books deemed sexually explicit. Further, parents can now opt their children out of sex education courses or class sessions or assignments related to gender ideology, politics, or religion. Most importantly, it pledges that students' and their families' religious beliefs will be respected.

Crime

California residents voted overwhelmingly to pass Proposition 36, a tough-on-crime ballot initiative that will enact harsher penalties for retail theft, property crimes and drug offenses.

Earlier in the election cycle, a slew of anti-crime measures were approved by voters across the country. Voters in San Francisco approved Ballot Measure E, which strengthens the city's police force, minimizes the amount of paperwork cops have to do freeing them up to patrol the streets, and utilizes new technology to deter crime. Meanwhile up in Washington State, voters passed Initiative 2113, which reverses restrictions on police pursuits.

District Attorneys

The 2024 election also saw the culling of several radical District Attorneys, many of whom were supported by progressive billionaire George Soros. In Los Angeles, District Attorney George Gascón was blown out by law-and-order candidate Nathan Hochman. Further up the California coast, Alameda District Attorney Pamela Price was ousted by voters in a successful recall election. Price, who received significant support from

Soros during her career and made “criminal justice reform” a hallmark of her tenure was deemed too lenient and ultimately failed to keep residents safe. Meanwhile in Georgia, District Attorney Deborah Gonzales lost her reelection bid after pursuing an “unapologetically” progressive agenda that contributed to spiking crime rates and the murder of Laken Riley, a college student murdered by an illegal immigrant while out jogging.

Election Integrity

Voters in Idaho, Iowa, Kentucky, Missouri, North Carolina, Oklahoma, South Carolina, and Wisconsin all voted to enact measures to ensure that only citizens can vote.

Meanwhile, voters in Alaska, Colorado, Idaho, Missouri, Nevada, and Oregon all rejected efforts to install ranked choice voting. However, DC voters passed an initiative to allow for this voting system.

BELIEVING BALD-FACE LIES

We just finished another presidential election year. Never have there been more lies told by so many candidates at the federal, state, and local levels. Not the usual lies—the ones that candidates tell about themselves and their opponent. There is nothing new about that. The bald-face lies, the kinds of falsehoods that every sentient person knows is an obvious lie.

The most disturbing aspect of this phenomenon is that it works; importantly, it is not confined to the political world. How is it possible to believe something that is manifestly false? Similarly, what motivates inveterate liars?

Recently, the Drudge Report, a once popular news aggregate website, ran a headline on the front page saying, "Tucker Carlson Claims Abortion Causes Hurricanes?"

After checking the story, which was published by Mediaite, a left-wing outlet that seeks to discredit conservative voices, and reading what Carlson actually said, it was clear as a bell that he was mocking those who say hurricanes are caused by global warming. He said, sarcastically, "No, it's probably abortion." Any fair-minded person would conclude that what Carlson said was in jest, but that's not what was reported.

Throughout this past year, reporters, media commentators and politicians said over and over again that late-term abortions were not legal under *Roe v. Wade*, and that it was simply not true that in some states there is no legal requirement mandating that medical personnel attend to babies who survive a botched abortion. As we, and others, pointed out, this was utterly false. The pro-abortion side simply lied.

In October, we had a chance to fact check a "fact checker" at the *New York Times* and found that the reporter left out the second part of a sentence from a Minnesota bill that she quoted. She did so purposely so as to make her point. Had she included the entire sentence, her position would have been proven wrong.

After we took Michigan Gov. Gretchen Whitmer to the cleaners for mocking the Eucharist, her press secretary said that the woman who feigned taking Communion (a Dorito was placed on her tongue by Whitmer) was not kneeling. That was a lie. She was not sitting on a couch, as they contended—she was kneeling. The picture proves it.

After President Biden called Trump supporters "garbage," White House staff tried to alter his words. When the truth came out, the White House press secretary still said he never said such a thing, even though he was captured on tape saying exactly

that.

Why do these people lie when it is 100 percent certain that they have? Because they can get away with it.

To be sure, when presented with the evidence, most people are instantly persuaded. But not all. There are those who, upon hearing prominent persons deny that what they said is a lie, are puzzled. They are no longer sure. That plays to the advantage of the liar because doubt has been instilled in their mind. In short, liars count on uncertainty—it mitigates the damage done.

Why do people not trust their senses? Why are they unsure even when the facts are stacked against the liars?

There have been plenty of psychological studies done on groupthink. Solomon Asch learned in the 1950s that group size has a significant impact on our tendency to conform. His experiments showed that approximately a third of the people are inclined to doubt their own conclusions if surrounded mostly by people who have reached a different conclusion. Conformity triumphs over truth.

Daniel Kahneman found that groupthink occurs when people are presented with a perspective that is contrary to theirs and they buckle. Why don't they standfast? They want to avoid conflict. Their desire for harmony overrides their willingness to express an independent thought.

This is the psychological variant of the political reality found in Washington D.C. "If you want to get along, go along."

The price that people pay for suppressing their conscience is evidently worth it. They reason that when in doubt, go with the flow. Unfortunately, this plays into the hands of those who intentionally seek to distort the truth—their goal is to escape the consequences of their lies. Regrettably, having succeeded in blunting the worst outcome, they are inspired to

continue lying. They can always count on the doubters.

The Communists in the last century liked to hold elections—even though they meant nothing—because they wanted to forge a sense of unity. They believed that if the people went through the motions and voted, it would convince them that they have a say in government. For some, it worked.

Elite decision-makers in the democracies also want to get the masses onboard, so when their lies are challenged, they double-down with more lies. By planting the seeds of doubt, they can't be held accountable.

To lie is not to make a mistake. We mistakenly say something when we don't have all the facts. To lie presumes we know the truth and choose not to acknowledge it. It's even more diabolical when it is done to manipulate the public for self-serving purposes.

MEDIA COVER-UP FOR HARRIS

Our normally curious media are noticeably incurious regarding several serious matters involving Kamala Harris. Why the silence on issues that the voters have every right to know about?

Harris is rarely asked when she became aware of President Biden's mental decline. When she is, she pretends not to have noticed.

For example, when asked by the *New York Times* if she has any regrets about defending his mental state, she said he has the "intelligence, the commitment and the judgment and disposition" to lead. Right after his disastrous debate

performance in June—when everyone conceded he was mentally struggling—she said he is “so smart” and is “extraordinarily strong.”

Why, then, have so many of those who have been with Biden over the past few years found him to be mentally challenged?

In his new book, *War*, Bob Woodward recounts many stories about Biden’s apparent mental collapse. He can’t complete sentences, he repeats himself constantly, he rambles, he can’t focus when speaking (even when given notecards), he is unable to remember basic facts, he wanders aimlessly around the room, etc.

So if others knew he was mentally shot, why didn’t she? Didn’t her staffers notice his declining cognitive abilities, and didn’t they discuss this with her? Did she ever go to the president and ask him about it? Did she ever talk to his wife about it? Why are the media giving her a pass on this? After all, this is a matter of national security, among other things.

Harris’ mother came from Tamil Brahmin stock—the most privileged caste in India. The Brahmin reputation for looking down at those below them is legendary. Here’s why this matters.

The *New York Times* reported on October 30 that when her mother married a black man in the United States, her family was against it. But the news story doesn’t say why. Her husband, Donald, was not some low-life: he was studying for his doctorate in 1962 when they met (he teaches economics today at Stanford University).

So if she didn’t marry “down” economically, why would her Indian family oppose the marriage? Was it because they perceived her marrying “down” racially? In short, was it because he was black that they objected? If so, she would certainly want to keep this out of the media. She is the champion of racial equality, isn’t she? How would it look if

the public learned that her Indian family wanted nothing to do with marrying a black man?

Harris' husband, Doug Emhoff, no longer denies knocking up his nanny while married to his first wife. The nanny, Najen Naylor, also taught his children at a rich private school. When Emhoff's wife found out about the affair, she filed for divorce.

The unanswered question is: Whatever happened to the baby? There are two stories about this that are worth probing. One story has it that she miscarried after a disturbing encounter she had with him (the LAPD were called to intervene), causing her to miscarry. The other story, which is based on multiple friends of the nanny, says she never miscarried—she “kept” the baby.

If the nanny “kept” the baby, whatever happened to it? Did she have an abortion? We know that when she left her job as a teacher, she allegedly received a settlement from Emhoff. What was the settlement for? We also know she bought a house in the Hamptons in 2021 for \$885,000. Not many nannies can afford that. Some say there was a non-disclosure agreement (NDA). Was there?

Both Kamala and her husband are big fans of abortion rights, so if the baby that he fathered with the nanny were aborted, that wouldn't have mattered to them. But it matters to the public. Why haven't the media probed this story? Is this another cover-up?

Also, Emhoff likes to say how “toxic” masculinity is. What is really “toxic” is beating your date for flirting with a parking valet. Three women have accused him of doing just that after the Cannes Film Festival in 2012 (he denies it). He allegedly smacked his girlfriend so hard that he spun her around, simply because she put her hand on the shoulder of the valet, leaving her in tears. He never apologized.

Emhoff is also accused by former female employees of being a “misogynist” who flirted with staff members, hired a “trophy secretary” on the basis of her youth and good looks, and held male-only cocktail parties on Friday evenings. Sounds like pretty toxic masculinity.

Why don't we know whether Emhoff had his child aborted? Why don't we know for sure whether he is a violent sexist? Why don't we know if Kamala's Indian family objected to her marrying Donald Harris because he is black? When did Kamala first know that Biden was mentally unfit to be president, and to whom did she speak, if anyone?

It is scandalous that the media are refusing to do their job. This is journalistic malfeasance.