

# HERE'S OUR THANKSGIVING TREAT

[Bill Donohue](#)

In this post-election season, when half the country is celebrating and the other half is crying, we all need to chill out a bit. So enjoy reading this post. It's our Thanksgiving treat.

In this postmodern world, where subjectivism rules, the line between art and junk has become increasingly blurred. The latest iteration was the conceptual artwork by Maurice Cattelan, "Comedian," that sold for \$6.2 million at an auction held at Sotheby's in New York City on November 20. It consists of a banana, duct-taped to a wall.

Bidding started at \$800,000 and quickly ballooned to \$5.2 million; the buyer had to pay another \$1 million in fees to Sotheby's. The buyer, Chinese-born Justin Sun, said, "I will personally eat the banana as part of this unique artistic experience, honoring its place in both art history and popular culture." The banana was bought at a fruit stand earlier in the day for 35 cents.

Got to give it to Cattelan—he knows how to attract attention.

In 2001, at a Christie's auction, Cattelan's "The Ninth Hour" was sold. The installation depicted Pope John Paul II being crushed by a meteorite while clutching his crozier. At the time, I said, it "strikes us as being bizarre, but not necessarily anti-Catholic." Cattelan was disappointed with the lack of reaction to his work, which he confessed was a "little" anti-Catholic.

Pope Francis likes Cattelan's work. Last March Cattelan was invited to create a large outdoor installation for the Vatican's Venice Biennale Pavilion; it was displayed at the Giudecca Women's Prison. The pope attended the exhibition.

There were no bananas in sight.

It's a good thing Cattelan taped the banana to the wall; otherwise, it might have been thrown in the garbage.

Last month two beer cans were displayed in a Dutch museum. This masterpiece, which was created in 1988 by Alexandre Lavet, was titled, "All the Good Times We Spent Together." What made it so special, the museum's director said, is that the beer cans were displayed on top of a glass elevator. The elevator mechanic on duty mistakenly threw them in the garbage.

This is not unusual in the art world.

British artist Damien Hirst had his magnum opus—candy wrappers, newspapers, coffee cups, ashtrays and beer bottles—tossed in the garbage in a London gallery in 2001. Three years later at the Tate museum in Britain, the brilliant work of German artist Gustav Metzger, which consisted of a bag of rubbish, was given the heave-ho by janitors. In 2015, empty champagne bottles, confetti and cigarette butts—the work of two genius women artists—wound up in the trash after being displayed in an Italian museum.

None of these artists are in the same league with the banana man. But even if the pope is one of his fans, Cattelan still has his critics.

In 2011, the *New York Times* said, "It may be time for him to quit." I courageously defended him, noting that "Last year he installed a solid-gold toilet in a Guggenheim restroom. If he has another one left over, maybe he'll gift it the Catholic League." But I felt obliged to note that "we have union labor in the building so unfortunately they won't allow him to install it."

"Yes, we have no bananas" at the Catholic League. However, reading about this junk clearly makes us go bananas.

Happy Thanksgiving!

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# ANTI-THANKSGIVING FERVOR SLOWS

[Bill Donohue](#)

Little kids think in terms of good guys and bad guys, and that is quite normal. But when adults think this way about history, it is sophomoric, if not dangerous.

Hardly a Thanksgiving goes by, especially in recent years, without some left-wing sage informing us how rotten the history of Thanksgiving is. They divide the world the way the kids do—good guys and bad guys—and, of course, the good guys are the Indians and the bad guys are the Europeans. Drunk with ideology, they are impervious to reason, so deep is their hatred of the West, and of the United States, in particular.

Here's a sample of the headlines taken from Thanksgiving bashers in the last few years:

"Thanksgiving: Why Some Push Back Against the Holiday"

"The Truth About Thanksgiving: The Indigenous Fight Against Erasure"

"The History of Thanksgiving from the Native American Perspective"

"Everything You Learned About Thanksgiving Is Wrong"

"Rethinking Thanksgiving Celebrations: Native Perspectives"

"Thanksgiving: Why Do Some Americans Not Celebrate It?"

“The Real History of Thanksgiving Can Be Painful For Many”

“What is the History of Thanksgiving? Why is it Controversial?”

“Why the Thanksgiving Myth Persists, According to Science”

“The History and Controversy of Thanksgiving”

“Should America Keep Celebrating Thanksgiving?”

“Why Is Thanksgiving Controversial?”

“The Horrible History of Thanksgiving”

“What is the Real History of Thanksgiving?”

“The Real History of Thanksgiving in America”

Most of these articles bash Thanksgiving, offering a parade of alleged horrors committed by the white man against the red man. The former are demonic; the latter are angelic.

The authors set themselves up as the ultimate fact checkers, dispelling what they contend are myths. In reality, they are frauds—boilerplate ideologues who delight in thinking they are smarter than the rest of us. They see us as “garbage” or “deplorables,” the terms used by Biden and Hillary to describe their foes.

The good news is that most of these articles were published in left-wing media outlets, which means few read them, and only the last one was released this year. That’s a sign that the woke crowd knows they are on the defensive these days. The bad news is that the last one on the list, which was published this year, appeared in the pages of Reader’s Digest.

While “The Real History of Thanksgiving in America” does not condemn America, it has a lordly tone to it. Readers are told by the author, Charlotte Hilton Andersen, that what they learned in school about Thanksgiving was wrong, contending

that “this rosy picture of modern celebrations leaves out the most of the **real history of Thanksgiving** (bold in the original).”

She informs us that “Yes, you can still settle down with family to give thanks.” That was so sweet of her. She hastens to add—you just knew it was coming—“But it’s important to know what you are celebrating and unlearn some long-held myths.” Her arrogance is stunning.

So who is this sage? Is Andersen an historian? No. Is she a social scientist? No. She is a journalist who writes mostly about etiquette. Oh, yes, she is also a fitness instructor.

We don’t need to get a tutorial by some discontented, and badly educated, savant to enjoy Thanksgiving. Nor do we need their permission to do so.

So have a family toast this Thanksgiving, being thankful to God that we live in such a free and prosperous country.

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## **BIDEN-HARRIS’ LATEST ATTACK ON RELIGIOUS LIBERTY**

**Bill Donohue**

As we have previously pointed out, the Biden-Harris administration is the most anti-Catholic in American history. Although their days are numbered, they are still trying to stick it to Catholics.

The Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) issued a proposed regulation last month that, if it is approved, would discriminate against Catholic entities across the nation. In

order to receive a HHS contract, every entity would have to agree not to discriminate on the basis of gender identity, among other demographic categories. There are no religious exemptions afforded.

The Catholic Church stands firm on this issue: gender ideology, the idea that sex is not rooted in nature and is fluid, is anti-science, as well as against Church teachings on sexuality. Therefore, it is unconscionable to force Catholic agencies to violate their tenets as a condition of receiving a HHS contract. This would mean, among other things, that Catholic hospitals would be forced to perform sex-reassignment surgery.

The public has until December 2 to weigh in on this issue. The bishops already have. We need to do so now.

We realize that leaving a comment is cumbersome—we can do nothing about it—but we have done our best to make it as easy as possible. Please take the time to sound off. Thanks.

**To Leave a Comment on the HHS Rule Change:**

(For a PDF version of instructions, click [here](#).)

1. To leave a public comment go to:  
<https://www.federalregister.gov/documents/2024/10/03/2024-17095/hhs-acquisition-regulation-regulatory-review>
2. This will take you to the page for the proposed rule “HHS Acquisition Regulation: Regulatory Review.”
3. On the top right, just under the rule name, click the green box with “SUBMIT A PUBLIC COMMENT” written in white.
4. This will open a small panel where you can type your comment.
5. In the large white box next to “Comment” with the gold asterisk, you may type your comment.
  - a. *Click inside the white box and begin typing*

*b. This section is mandatory*

6. Optionally, if you would prefer to upload a file, click the small green box with "+Add a file" written in white just below the large white box.

7. You may leave the email blank.

8. Next, you will have to complete the "Tell us about yourself! I am..." section.

*a. You will have an option of selecting "An Individual," "An Organization," or "Anonymous"*

*I. To select your category, just click the circle below your choice*

*b. If you chose to submit as "An Individual," you will have to leave your first name and last name (the other fields are optional)*

*c. If you choose to submit as "Anonymous," you can jump to the end*

9. Finally, click the box next to "I read and understand the statement above," and click submit comment.

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# OPEN LETTER TO UNIV. OF VIRGINIA

**Bill Donohue**

*This letter is in response to an anti-Christian incident that took place last month at the University of Virginia.*

November 20, 2024

Ms. Nicole Thompson

Senior Compliance Director for Equal Opportunity and Civil Rights  
University of Virginia  
Office for Equal Opportunity and Civil Rights  
O'Neil Hall  
P.O. Box 400219  
445 Rugby Road  
Charlottesville, VA 22903

Dear Compliance Director Thompson:

I recently learned that you were taken aback when you fielded a complaint from a student who reacted with disdain to a hat worn by UVA student Simon Goldstein. The hat was adorned with the inscription, "Make America Christian Again." But your concern was not directed at the complaining student—it was directed at Goldstein. This is astonishing.

From reports I have read, you took the opportunity to ask Goldstein why he bought the hat and why he chose to wear it. More disturbing, you asked him if he could understand why some might "perceive that message negatively, and whether he had plans to make any changes." While no disciplinary action was taken, you clearly created a chilling effect on this student's freedom of expression and freedom of religion.

If a student objected to someone wearing a t-shirt with a picture of Martin Luther King on it, would it not be obvious that the person in need of counseling is the complainant? And would not the appropriate response be to ask that the student exhibit more tolerance to messages that he finds disagreeable? After all, in neither instance are we talking about patently obscene messages.

In First Amendment law this is called the "heckler's veto." If those who heckle speakers succeed in silencing those they disagree with, they have effectively vetoed that person's



right to free speech.

Christian students on our nation's campuses are increasingly reluctant to express their beliefs, so intolerant are those who find their convictions offensive. This has to end. They are not second-class citizens.

One final comment. Did you ever ask the complaining student to practice greater tolerance for speech he finds disagreeable?

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

William A. Donohue, Ph.D.  
President

cc: Emily Springston, Associate Vice President EOCR  
Jenn Kabbany, College Fix

Contact Nicole Thompson: [nm5j@virginia.edu](mailto:nm5j@virginia.edu)

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## THE PROBLEM WITH ROBERT F. KENNEDY Jr.

**Bill Donohue**

Robert F. Kennedy Jr. has been chosen by president-elect Donald Trump to be Secretary of Health and Human Services (HHS). From a Catholic perspective, there are serious problems with that choice.

First and foremost is Kennedy's position on abortion. It might be more accurate to say his *positions* on abortion. For most of his career he has been a staunch supporter of abortion-on-

demand, but now he says he favors some restrictions.

Kennedy didn't evolve over the years on this issue. He did so recently when it became apparent that if Trump were to win the election he may land some post in the administration. Being pro-abortion, he obviously reasoned, could be a real problem, especially if he were up for the HHS job.

When Kennedy was asked by former ESPN commentator, Sage Steele, whether there should be *any* limits on abortion, he said [no](#). "Even if it is full term...I don't think it's ever OK...I think we have to leave it with the woman rather than the state." He didn't say that ten years ago. He said it in May of this year.

It gets worse. Literally *three days* after the Steele interview, Kennedy [said](#) abortion should be permitted only before viability.

There are other issues that should give Catholics pause. In December 2023 he [told](#) political commentator Patrick Bet-David that he did not support a ban on "gender affirming" care for minors. Why? Because he did not "know enough about it to say that it should be completely illegal," and he needed "to look at the data" before making a decision.

But guess what? In May he decided he supported a ban on minors receiving "gender affirming" care.

Kennedy not only wants to make [marijuana](#) legal nationwide, he wants to legalize some psychedelics. That would presumably include psilocybin (magic mushrooms), the most popular psychedelic in the nation. He believes that there are significant benefits to psychedelics that have not been uncovered because the medical establishment has gone out of its way to prevent that research.

Here's what we know about magic mushrooms. They can cause frightening hallucinations, distorted thinking, impaired

concentration, unusual body sensations, nausea and vomiting, paranoia, confusion and emotions ranging from bliss to terror.

The fundamental problem with Kennedy is that he lacks a coherent understanding of these issues. He has no overriding philosophical vision.

He spent his entire life defending abortion-without-limits, and had no problem justifying puberty blockers, chemical castration and mutilating the genitals of disturbed minors—until he experienced his grand epiphany in May. That must have been quite a month for him. And now he thinks we need to make it easier for Americans to hallucinate.

This is Robert F. Kennedy's vision of health and human services. It's not ours.

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## **FORD FOUNDATION FUNDING BEDLAM IN NYC**

**Bill Donohue**

The Ford Foundation, located in New York City, is funding left-wing groups that are protesting attempts to clean up a non-white neighborhood in Queens that has been overrun by violent thugs, drug dealers, prostitutes and sex traffickers.

Which raises the question: Are those who run the Ford Foundation racists? They certainly appear to be. Without doubt, they have taken the side of those who are determined to punish hard-working minority men and women; they are also endangering children. Why would the members of the ruling class want to do that?

The community being ransacked is Jackson Heights, especially along Roosevelt Avenue, the main road.

A local writer put it this way. "For years, sex trafficking and solicitation, illegal vending, sanitation and other issues on Roosevelt—a road known for its cultural significance and diversity as well as its problems—has been top of mind for locals and selected officials." Crime is exploding.

Hiram Monserrate, a former New York City Councilman, sums it up nicely. "There are more brothels than there are bodegas in this community. We have an active 24-hour brothel across the street from two elementary schools. Our kids are seeing this."

An Hispanic woman, whose grandson and her teenaged kids go to school in the neighborhood, recently complained to the media that they have to walk by prostitutes soliciting outside of stores. "You literally have to shield their eyes because the open urination is just impossible. And to explain to my little grandson why there's women here shaking and, you know, doing all that stuff."

In response, New York City Mayor Eric Adams announced "Operation Restore Roosevelt." It is focused on quality-of-life concerns. The NYPD interim commissioner said the police "will be working to reduce retail theft and the sale of stolen goods. Additionally, removing illegal, unlicensed vendors and illegal vehicles in the surrounding area, which is important to all of you, and also eliminating prostitution."

Over 90 percent of the people who live in Jackson Heights are non-white; it is disproportionately Hispanic. They are happy to note that finally there is an attempt to bring normalcy to their neighborhood. It was their protests that ignited officials to act. But now they are being opposed by counterdemonstrators who object to cleaning up the area!

The two major groups who want to continue trashing Jackson Heights are Gays and Lesbians Living in a Transgender Society

(GLITS) and Make the Road New York. Both are funded by the Ford Foundation.

The founder and director of GLITS is Ceyenne Doroshow. “For decades,” he says, “sex workers have been surviving, demanding respect and good healthcare, and still yet we are still being criminalized. We urge investment in our communities, not more criminalization in our communities.”

In other words, the minorities who live there be damned—he wants prostitution to reign supreme, free from law enforcement. It’s all about what these sexually deranged activists want.

Doroshow is also an anti-Catholic bigot. Earlier this year, he arranged for his sick followers to show up at St. Patrick’s Cathedral during a funeral service to honor one of their ilk, Cecilia Gentili. Gentili was a man who falsely claimed to be a woman. He was an illegal alien, a drug addict, a prostitute, a trans activist and an atheist.

At the service, many of Doroshow’s fans dressed as hookers, danced in the aisles, and sang “Ave Cecilia” when “Ave Maria” was sung. They shouted, “St. Cecilia, Mother of All Whores.”

Maxima Rodas is an activist who works for Make the Road Again. She objects to Mayor Adams’ policies aimed at driving out the derelicts and criminals. “This so-called quality of life operation targets sex workers, street vendors and migrant communities who live in this neighborhood. This is a racist and anti-immigrant attack from our communities.”

Mayor Adams has said that “Roosevelt Avenue is one of the most diverse avenues in our city.” Ironically, the Ford Foundation—which is funding this bedlam—brags that “Diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI) are core to our mission and to who we are as a foundation.” Perversely, their idea of diversity includes destroying the diversity that Adams noted.

The Ford Foundation has long been corrupt. It advertises on its website that Henry Ford II assumed the foundation's leadership after his father and grandfather passed away. What it doesn't say is that he quit in 1976 because it had been turned into a radical anti-capitalist, left-wing beast.

Darren Walker is the black homosexual president of the Ford Foundation. He has obviously turned on minorities in favor of greasing LGBTQ racists who want to destroy Jackson Heights. We will be contacting him, as well as all the other officials associated with the organization. The elites really do hate the masses.

Contact: [d.walker@fordfoundation.org](mailto:d.walker@fordfoundation.org)

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## CHRISTIAN BASHERS RIP HEGSETH AND HUCKABEE

**Bill Donohue**

They've started already. One week after the election and the Christian bashers are foaming at the mouth over president-elect Donald Trump's selection of Pete Hegseth to be Secretary of Defense and Mike Huckabee to be U.S. Ambassador to Israel.

Hegseth is a strong Christian who literally wears his religion on his body (he has more than a dozen tattoos emblazoned on his right arm and chest). To be sure, that is bizarre, but that is not what his critics are upset about. They don't like what the tattoos represent—Christianity.

If he had metal spikes hanging from his nose, or had tattoos honoring Lucifer on his neck, that would be fine. But once

Jesus is brought into the mix, that's a call to arms. Indeed, the Christian bashers are explicitly calling him out for wanting a call to arms—they are saying he wants to bring back the Crusades.

The Jerusalem Cross on Hegseth's chest is driving them mad. The left-wing folks at the Daily Beast informed their fans that it is "a 13th century Crusades symbol, over his right bicep." They are twice wrong. They are off by 200 hundred years (it dates back to the 11th century, 1099 to be exact) and it is located on his chest, not his right arm.

After the overthrow of the Crusader state in 1291, the Jerusalem Cross remained a symbol of Jerusalem for Christians, and is still popular today among Catholic organizations, none of which are extremist.

Another reminder of the Crusades is the Latin phrase, "Deus Vult," which means "God wills it": it is on Hegseth's right bicep. It is true that it was a rallying cry during the First Crusade. So what?

A human rights left-wing activist group from the U.K., Action on Armed Violence, is also exercised about all the Crusader symbols. It says "Deus Vult" was invoked to "justify acts of religious violence." The Bulwark, a publication by the angry never-Trumper Bill Kristol, says these Crusader images are "disturbing."

What is really disturbing is their ignorance. The Crusades were a defensive reaction to Muslim aggression. Princeton's Bernard Lewis, one of the world's most noted historians, says, "The Crusade was a delayed response to the jihad, the holy war for Islam, and its purpose was to recover by war what had been lost by war—to free the holy places of Christendom and open them once again, without impediment, to Christian pilgrimage."

Also, the Crusaders were volunteers, not papal conscripts. Just as important, according to St. Louis University professor

Thomas F. Madden, who has written extensively on this subject, "All the Crusades met the criteria for just wars."

Action on Armed Violence and the Bulwark slam Hegseth for his ties to Christian nationalism. As [I recently pointed out](#), this is one of the greatest anti-Christian smear jobs of our day. Digging deep, any researcher worth his salt knows how vacuous these charges are.

Examples of "Christian nationalism" include saying in public, "Blessed is the nation whose God is Lord." That happens to be Psalm 33:12. Those who say that Trump "loves the United States of America. He loves God," are cited as examples of this bogeyman. Singing "God Bless America" is another indicator of Christian fanaticism.

Mike Huckabee is an Evangelical Christian who is a rock-solid supporter of Israel. But according to John Hudson at the *Washington Post* that is a problem. He is worried that people like Huckabee, who believe that in the covenant that God made to Abraham about Israel, "have turned that belief into a right-wing brand of Zionism."

Similarly, the militants at J Street have lashed out at Huckabee for his "extremist views." Louis Moreno, a former U.S. Ambassador who knows Huckabee, calls him an "utter nut case." Why? Because the former Arkansas governor believes in the biblical account of the end of times. If he believed the fiction that the sexes are interchangeable, that would be considered reasonable.

*Vanity Fair* wins the prize for the most irresponsible accusation against Huckabee. After it posts a short critical account of Trump's nominee, it offers what it calls a Fun Fact. "Huckabee is a Christian Zionist; Christian Zionists believe 'Muslims, Jews, and non-Christians are ultimately damned.'"

Where did that incendiary comment come from? Apparently from



the website of Political Research Associates, a left-wing outlet. It has a post, "101 Christian Zionists," with lots of statements and links to its sources. On p. 2 it lists five beliefs that it attributes to Christian Zionists, including the one mentioned by *Vanity Fair*. But unlike most of the other beliefs it cites, this one is not linked to any source, nor is it in quotes. In other words, it was made up by Political Research Associates and *Vanity Fair* cited it as if it were authoritative.

Radicals hate Pete Hegseth because he is a committed Christian and a patriotic American. They hate Mike Huckabee because he is a committed Christian who defends Israel. It's really not all that complicated.

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## BAR FOR SCREENING NOMINEES DIPS LOWER

[Bill Donohue](#)

Now that Donald Trump is announcing his choices for various posts, some of the nominees are bound to have their personal lives held under a microscope. Assuming something tawdry turns up, the question is whether it will matter. Probably not, even if it should.

This may anger Democrats, many of whom have already complained that Christians are phonies for supporting someone with such a checkered moral record as Trump, but their anger needs to be directed inward. After all, since the 1960s, liberals have been lecturing the public on the need to be non-judgmental, promoting the novelty of situation ethics, the result of which was to effectively lower the bar. They can't now demand that

the bar be instantly raised.

Think of all the politicians who have been accused of one sexual impropriety after another. We have the Kennedys: John, Robert and Ted—all of whom learned a thing or two from their philandering father, Joe. More recently we learned about the alleged sexual escapades of Dennis Hastert, Al Franken, Elliot Spitzer and Andrew Cuomo. Homosexual congressmen such as Gerry Studds and Barney Frank were accused of sexual misconduct.

Bill Clinton, of Monica fame, was accused of rape, as was Joe Biden and Donald Trump. Biden's daughter, in fact, wrote that her sexual troubles began early on. To wit: She wrote in her diary about "having sex with friends @ a young age; showering w/my dad (probably not appropriate)...."

When did it become acceptable to live a life of sexual recklessness?

In the 1970s, the libertine ideas that took root in the 1960s began to manifest themselves behaviorally (Plato's Retreat for straights and the bathhouses for gays). The sexual revolution gave us a spike in out-of-wedlock birth, babies being killed in the womb, broken lives, AIDS and premature deaths. It continues today though it is not as dramatic as it was then.

From the 1970s to today, TV talk shows, Hollywood, the media, women's magazines (e.g., *Cosmopolitan*), psychologists and sociologists have been bombarding us with the need to be tolerant of what previously was considered intolerant speech and behavior. When vulgar singers and dancers strut their stuff at presidential events, and drag queens get their jollies by sexualizing little kids at public libraries, is it any wonder why so many men and women have become inured to moral degradation?

Our Judeo-Christian heritage was based on a sexual ethics of reticence. Restraint was seen as a virtue. Today it is seen as outdated, if not a problem.

Having polluted our culture with obscene toxins, it is a little late in the game to invoke Christian standards for government posts. So if there is a Trump appointee who has a record of moral turpitude, who among the Democrats is going to throw the first stone?

Our choice would be Dr. Richard Levine. He is the Assistant Secretary for Health who goes by the name Rachel and falsely claims to be a woman.

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## **POLLSTERS      MISS      “SLEEPER ISSUES”**

**Bill Donohue**

Pollsters seeking to tap what is on the mind of voters are right to focus on the big issues: the economy, illegal immigration, crime, abortion, education, healthcare, foreign policy, and the like. But there are other matters that affect voters, though they are not front and center in most people's minds. They are more like “sleeper issues.”

Lots of Americans these days, especially those in their middle years and older, are voicing a sense of uneasiness, even bewilderment, about the state of our society in general. Their apprehension is not necessarily rooted in something that Washington has done. It's more a realization that things have gotten out of whack. Extremes dominate.

In large part, the extremes are rooted in culture, not politics. We can tell from public opinion research that Americans are very concerned about the moral direction of the country.

Selfishness, self-absorption, rudeness, and a complete disregard for the rights and sensibilities of others is evident in school and the workplace. Inappropriate use of cell phones—on trains and buses and in bars and restaurants—is commonplace. Those who sport vulgar lyrics and videos take no responsibility for how they corrupt young people. Car drivers are increasingly distracted and unwilling to yield. Those on bicycles and scooters—the motorized ones are the worst—show no regard for public safety.

All of these things feed the perception that America is becoming unhinged. The fact that few are held accountable for their transgressions makes things worse.

There are also policy issues that matter in this regard. When school officials and politicians aid and abet mentally challenged young people who want to transition to the opposite sex—absent parental consent—they are contributing to our culture of opportunism. Ditto for hospitals that exploit these disturbed minors by fast-tracking the changes. It's all about ideological extremism and greed.

It could be argued that it would be illogical for voters to blame politicians for the cultural issues that are making people uneasy. Technically, that is true. But in the real world, we are all a blend of reason and emotion. In other words, those upset with extremism in the culture are likely to blame officials who harbor an extremist political agenda for cultural depravities.

For example, politicians who believe that tampons should be put in boys' bathrooms are clearly not responsible for those who talk loudly on their cell phones in public places, but because they promote extremist policies, voters may see them as emblematic of our overall condition. This is the kind of "sleeping issue" that is in the back of people's minds. Such issues are capable of exploding at election time—it's like a frustration time bomb—yet they are not likely to be discerned

by pollsters.

In short, cultural issues are often treated as insignificant by pollsters during election season. This explains, in part, why they are so often wrong in their prognostications. What's in the back of people's minds has a way of leaping to the front, or at least becoming more important, when they cast their ballot. The price for extremism is costly in a democracy.

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## BELIEVING BALD-FACE LIES

[Bill Donohue](#)

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.