



NEWSLETTER

September 2024 ISSUE#: HV007

Mercer We the People of Hopewell Valley is a steady source of news to heal the accelerating erosion of our fundamental freedoms nationally and locally.

Embrace our First Amendment

Congress shall make no law respecting an establishment of religion, or prohibiting the free exercise thereof; or abridging the freedom of speech, or of the press; or the right of the people peaceably to assemble, and to petition the government for a redress of grievances.

Source: <https://billofrightsinstitute.org/primary-sources/bill-of-rights>

Kind regards,
Publius Bonhomme Richard, Editor

HOW TO CONTACT US:

Email us at: info@mercervethepeople.com

Please email us to be included for future newsletters.

Printed copies of the newsletter will be made available at local libraries, select senior location(s). Any other suggested location(s) please let us know.

Editor's Note

This newsletter is now being provided using a new platform. The previous newsletter website links (March-August issues) may no longer work properly and have been replaced by links to pdf versions at the end of this newsletter.

The Declaration of Independence states the principles on which our government, and our identity as Americans, are based. Unlike the other founding documents, the Declaration of Independence is not legally binding, but it is powerful. Abraham Lincoln called it "a rebuke and a stumbling-block to tyranny and oppression." It continues to inspire people around the world to fight for freedom and equality. Thomas Jefferson captured "equality" simply and eloquently in "All men are created equal."

"Equality" is a term that gets thrown around a lot in our time, but to the Founders it meant something very specific: **Equal treatment under the law**. While the nation did permit slavery in many states at its founding, even several of those Founders who owned slaves did not see it as an ideal situation or even one which was sustainable. Manumission, the freeing of one's slaves, was, in many cases, a legal impossibility for the Founders.

Justice was seen as applying to all, but it was also considered highly important by the Founders to protect the minority under a democratic system. This is why the system of checks and balances was put in place – to prevent the government from being able to do very much, and to act very slowly when it did act. The Constitution takes great pains to both ensure justice for all, as well as protect the minority from the will of the majority. The Electoral College is one example of this that still exists today, protecting the rural states from being ruled over by three or four large cities.

On Justice: "In justice, wrong, injury excites the Feeling of Resentment, as naturally and necessarily as Frost and Ice excite the feeling of cold, as fire excites heat, and as both excite Pain. A Man may have the Faculty of concealing his Resentment, or suppressing it, but he must and ought to feel it. Nay he ought to indulge it, to cultivate it. It is a Duty. His Person, his Property, his Liberty, his Reputation are not safe without it. He ought, for his own Security and Honour, and for the public good to punish those who injure him, unless they repent, and then he should forgive, having Satisfaction and Compensation. Revenge is unlawfull. It is the same with Communities. They ought to resent and punish." John Adams, from his Diary, March 4, 1776

“Justice is indiscriminately due to all, without regard to numbers, wealth, or rank.” John Jay, in *Georgia v. Brailsford*, 1794”

<https://ammo.com/articles/founding-fathers-quotes-justice-equality-equal-treatment-under-the-law>

John Jay, one of our Founding Fathers, served as the first Chief Justice of the United States Supreme Court from 1789 to 1795.

“Justice” section is introduced in this month’s newsletter.

Call for Contributors!

MercerWe the People of Hopewell Valley is looking for contributors to write articles, especially informing the community about what is happening at local meetings. If you’re interested in writing for us about that or any other topic, whether it is monthly or as needed, please reach out to us at info@mercerwe.com

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PILOTs and School Referendum

Hopewell Township’s PILOTs are Staggering Financial Miscalculations

By Dufresne

All residents of Hopewell Valley should be aware that Hopewell Borough and Pennington Borough have jointly sued Hopewell Township over the PILOT agreements. This is an extreme action made necessary by Hopewell Township’s belligerent actions.

Read this amazing letter below and you will learn that the PILOTs are financially significant. They offer huge and unnecessary tax breaks to developers, and the amounts involved are staggering, as much as \$387 million dollars over the life of the 30-year PILOT agreements.

Had there been no PILOTs, the School District would have received approximately 56% of that total amount or \$216 million. With the PILOTs, all of that money flows only to the Hopewell Township municipal government. Quite likely, without the PILOTs, the School District would not have had to go to the voters for such a high School Referendum.

The Township has expressed a willingness to provide some funding for construction at Bear Tavern school, but that amount pales in comparison to the amount that the School District would have received in the absence of the PILOTs.

When asked repeatedly to confirm that the School District receives significantly less money under the PILOT than it would without the PILOT, Hopewell Township Mayor Courtney Peters Manning consistently changes the subject or sidesteps the question.

Here is the letter from Pennington Mayor Davies to his residents

Dear Taxpayers of Pennington Borough,

Some questions have been raised about school district funding. In an effort to keep you informed, I’m sharing some facts with you.

As you know by now, the Hopewell Valley Regional School District (District) has proposed an \$87-million referendum for capital improvements. What you may not know is that the District asked Hopewell Township to make a voluntary contribution related to the addition to the Bear Tavern Elementary School, because the need for the addition is precipitated by an increase in students from the new 1,077-unit housing development on Scotch Road.

You should also know that the Hopewell Township Committee granted this same development a tax abatement known as a Payment in Lieu of Taxes (PILOT) that over the next 30 years will generate \$387 million for the Township and shift an estimated \$25 million of tax burden to Pennington and Hopewell Borough taxpayers.

Unfortunately, the Township Committee refused the District's request, saying that because the Township was in litigation over the PILOT with the Boroughs, they could not even consider such a contribution.

Pennington Takes Legal Action to Stand Up for Taxpayers

PILOTs can be valuable tools for local governments to attract development where developers need added incentives, which does not appear to be the case for the 190-acre Scotch Road development. PILOTs in shared school districts are challenging because unless they are crafted thoughtfully, they can result in an imbalance in the financial responsibilities across a region. This is particularly troubling when the PILOT development itself generates additional burdens on a shared school district. This is exactly the situation we find ourselves in here in the Hopewell Valley.

This tax abatement agreement effectively removed approximately \$332 million of assessed valuation from the Township's taxable ratable base. So, instead of paying property taxes, which is the conventional vehicle for funding the Hopewell Valley School District, county government, municipal government, and the fire district, the agreement called for the developer to make an annual payment in lieu of taxes that goes almost entirely to Hopewell Township.

Pennington applauds the fact that this project will bring affordable housing units to the Valley. Twenty percent of the units have been designated for affordable housing. I want to emphasize that neither Pennington Borough nor Hopewell Borough challenges nor objects to the affordable housing component of this development.

Rather, our joint legal action challenges the tax abatement agreement itself, because it adversely affects Pennington and Hopewell Borough taxpayers, costing them millions.

PILOT Will Cost Pennington and Hopewell Borough Taxpayers \$25 Million

Since the formation of our Hopewell Valley Regional School District and in accordance with State law, the municipalities of Hopewell Township, Pennington Borough, and Hopewell Borough have shared in the cost of education based on the ratio of each of their assessed valuations to the total assessed valuation of the three together. So when, by virtue of its tax abatement agreement, Hopewell Township removed approximately \$332 million of assessed value from its tax rolls, it effectively shifted a greater portion of the school property tax burden to Pennington and Hopewell Borough taxpayers.

As alluded to earlier, based on a cost analysis by the Boroughs' financial expert and consultant, the property tax shift from Hopewell Township to Pennington and Hopewell Boroughs over the next 30 years will be approximately \$25 million. These are dollars that will need to be raised through your property tax bills

Hopewell Township to Get \$387 Million

To be clear, the developer's PILOT payments will solely benefit the Hopewell Township municipal government; not the School District or the Fire District. Under the State's redevelopment law, the County government will receive a mere 5 percent of the allocation. So, while a \$25 million burden will shift to Pennington and Hopewell Borough taxpayers, Hopewell Township will generate approximately \$387 million in funds from the developer, which is almost 6 times the amount it would otherwise receive from conventional property taxes. Further, the PILOT monies Hopewell Township will receive are "unrestricted." In other words, the Township Committee can use the money any way they want. Meanwhile, costs for the District will expand as the new development generates new students. This is what makes the Township's refusal of the District's request so disappointing.

Why the District Requested Funds from Hopewell Township

When the Township approved the Scotch Road housing development and entered into the tax abatement agreement, it represented, based on the Township's analysis, that the housing project would have no impact on the Hopewell Valley Schools and that there was plenty of unused classroom space in the schools to accommodate any children from the new housing development. The District has concluded otherwise and anticipates a significant impact

on the school system. As a result, the District included a major addition to the Bear Tavern Elementary School to accommodate new students as part of its upcoming \$87-million capital referendum.

Summing it Up

In conclusion, the purpose of the Pennington/Hopewell Borough lawsuit is to contest the basis for the tax abatement and PILOT agreement; not to challenge the Township's attempt to produce affordable housing. We contend, based on the facts, that the tax abatement was not necessary as an inducement to build the project. By the developer's own estimate, the projected return on investment will be approximately 68 percent. Even this estimate would appear to be low given the current listing of prices for homes in this development. We also believe that when a community partners in a regional school district with other municipalities, a PILOT agreement must consider the negative impacts it will have on the partnering towns and account for them. This has not happened here.

While the Boroughs lost their case against the Township in Superior Court, we have appealed to the State Appellate Court. We are currently moving through the process. Please know that the Borough Council and I will continue to advocate on your behalf and to protect the interests of Pennington's taxpayers.

Sincerely,
James M. Davy
Mayor – Pennington

Ex-mayors: HoVal \$87-million schools referendum in need of amendment

By John Hart and Vanessa Sandom, September 4, 2024

In last month's letter encouraging Valley residents to Vote No on the Hopewell Valley Regional School District's Sept. 17 \$87 million Referendum, we promised to provide additional details.

Our rationale in that letter was simple: We are Taxed Enough Already in Hopewell Valley (teahv.org). We showed that despite a steady decline in enrollment over the past 16 years, per pupil spending in Hopewell Valley schools continues to soar (currently \$26K per student), eclipsing every other municipality in Mercer County.

We reasoned that, much like families having to prioritize spending during tough economic times, the District should start over and send a referendum to the public that is streamlined to address both taxpayer and "necessary" educational needs.

As promised, we offer these concrete recommendations to address the perceived shortcomings of this referendum.

1. Remove from the referendum: nonessential projects that don't qualify for state aid. According to the HVRSD breakdown of the projects as submitted to the Department of Education, only about \$60 million of the projects qualify for a 40% state rebate; the rest we pay for entirely and should be considered "nice to have" and pushed off to another referendum.
2. Remove from the referendum: projects that have a separately committed funding source. The district maintains reserves expressly set aside for capital projects such as those named in the referendum. Further, HVRSD holds more in reserves as a proportion of its total budget than all other Mercer County districts. Rather than charge \$87 million to Valley taxpayers, reallocate some of the "reserve" millions for their intended purpose.

In its July 18 statement, the Hopewell Township Committee publicly committed some of its PILOT dollars "to offset any costs of improvements at Bear Tavern Elementary School that may, at least in part, stem from any additional students that will come from our court-approved affordable housing plan." Bear Tavern projects submitted to NJDOE in this referendum represent a little under \$25 million. At least some portion of that should be subsidized by Hopewell Township. Let's not double dip by charging taxpayers as well.

3. Remove from the referendum: projects that don't provide a documented educational return on investment. Last year, the district spent \$887,000 to simply replace the turf at Central High School. This "routine maintenance" does not include the tremendous costs associated with the original design, engineering, ground prep, and installation of a new turf field. Their referendum seeks to install two additional turf fields! Given the CHS turf field lifespan (8-10 years), taxpayers will still be paying for the initial installation costs of the new fields when the "routine maintenance" of turf replacements come due. Some have suggested that "renting out the turf field to the public" should help offset the maintenance costs. When determining ROI, please consider that the existing CHS turf field is currently available for rent, and use it as a guide for how much of its rental income can offset the \$887,000 maintenance cost.

These are three concrete steps we offer to improve the HVRSD referendum proposal – but only if you vote "no" on this one first in order to give the district the opportunity to submit a more reasonable version that prioritizes student learning without exploiting the taxpayer.

Bonus suggestion: reduce the district's massive per pupil costs by cutting administrative expenses. Surprisingly, HVRSD spends among the least per pupil on its elementary students while having the highest per pupil cost in Mercer County. One explanation for this paradox is that HVRSD also spends the most per pupil on Central Administration, both absolutely and as a percentage of its total cost.

Excessive administrative overhead costs account for over \$7,000 per pupil. Recently, the district spent almost \$2 million on just window replacements and exterior paving on its Pennington Administration Building. This amount does not even include the facility's heating and water line replacements, HVAC and security upgrades.

It is high time to take a long hard look at what the district can do to reduce administrative overhead without reducing the quality of our students' educational outcomes.

To the public, we urge you to go to the Pennington Fire Company at 120 Broemel Place on September 17th and vote no. To the BOE and administration, we respectfully request that you consider our suggestions, cancel and resubmit a new referendum question.

John Hart and Vanessa Sandom are former Hopewell Township mayors and long-time Hopewell Valley residents.

Important Announcement for Residents of Hopewell Township, Hopewell Borough, and Pennington Borough

HVRSD Special School \$87 Million Bond Referendum Election Scheduled for September 17th

By John Galt

Mark your calendar for a special election to be held on Tuesday, September 17th from 6am to 8pm. All registered voters in Hopewell Township, Hopewell Borough, and Pennington Borough will be voting at the Pennington Fire House at 120 Broemel Place. All residents who have chosen to vote by mail in the past should have already received a ballot in the mail. Early voting is NOT an option for this special election.

If you are unable to vote in person on September 17th you should consider voting by mail. Vote by mail applications must be returned by mail by September 10th or in person to the County Clerk at 209 Broad St, Trenton by 3pm on September 16th.

The ballot may be returned the following ways:

- Mail it with a postmark by September 17th
- Place it in one of the three designated secure drop box locations:
 - Lawrence: Board of Elections- 930 Spruce St, Lawrence
 - Hopewell Twp: Admin Building- 201 Washington Crossing-Penn Rd, Hopewell
 - Trenton: County Clerk's Office- 209 S Broad St, Trenton

Mail in ballot application can be found here: <https://www.nj.gov/state/elections/assets/pdf/forms-vote-by-mail/vote-by-mail-english-mercer.pdf> and you can select all future elections or only the special election depending on your preference.

For more information on the \$87 Million bond referendum, please read our prior newsletters at <https://hvrageop.org/hvra-top-issues/> or the HVRSD Bond Referendum website at <https://sites.google.com/hvrtd/hvrtd-vote/home?authuser=0>

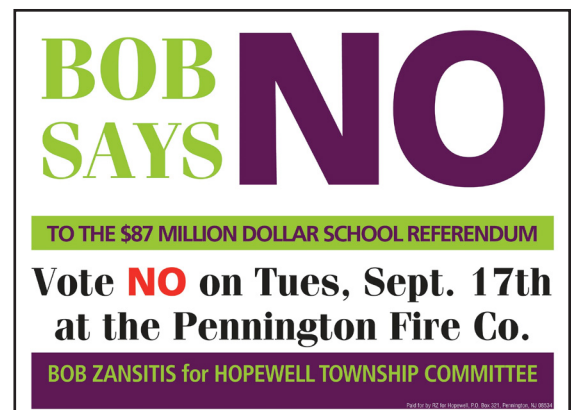
Bob says NO – Township Committee candidate Zansitis promotes voting NO on the \$87 million dollar school referendum

By TruthBTold

At a recent fundraiser Bob said NO, and he is encouraging all Hopewell residents to do the same. Bob Zansitis is running for Township Committee and believes that out of control spending in the township is an issue worth fighting against. The \$87 million dollar school referendum is just another example of the kind of reckless spending that hurts Hopewell taxpayers. During his remarks, Bob cited the township's use of PILOT programs that will put an even greater burden on existing Hopewell taxpayers. New housing will bring more students, but PILOT will deny the additional funding to our schools.

Bob Zansitis bought his first house in Hopewell over 25 years ago. Bob moved from Hillsborough because of overdevelopment. Bob has been the owner of a commercial and residential painting business for over 30 years. He has become familiar and involved with a number of surrounding towns, and was drawn to the beauty, history and rural nature of Hopewell. Bob became involved in the community, including becoming a trustee of the Woosamonsa School House. Presently, Bob is seeing the same overdevelopment occurring in Hopewell Township. Bob Zansitis is running for Township Committee to restore balance and make a difference for the future of Hopewell Township.

If you would like to help Bob in his effort to get the message out, you can reach out to him at rzforhopewell@gmail.com to get a sign for your lawn.



Petition to Ensure that Schools and Emergency Services Get Their Fair Share of Pilot Funds in Hopewell Township

By Public Interest

The PILOT (Payment In Lieu of Taxes) program used to incentivize the new housing developments does NOT require funding for schools or emergency services, in spite of the tax burden created by adding homes. With this petition, we would like to encourage the Hopewell Township Committee to address this inequity, before current residents have tax increases to cover the additional costs.



The number of new units being built will increase housing in the Township by 45%. Studies provided by the Township Committee claimed that the new housing will have no impact on our schools. Meanwhile, the school district is scheduled to hold a special election in September asking for the bonding of additional funds to be used for repairs and expansions of several schools in the Township in the amount of \$87 million. The cost of this additional tax will be paid through regular property taxes and not the annual service charge. That means that property tax payers will be covering this cost and not any of the residents of the new housing developments.

CLICK THE LINK BELOW TO SIGN THE PETITION:

https://www.ipetitions.com/petition/ensure-a-fair-share-for-hopewell-twp-schools?utm_source=email&utm_campaign=email_share&utm_medium=postmark

Please share the petition link with your family, friends, and neighbors. The more signatures we collect, the more impact the petition will have.

IMPORTANT ITEMS TO REMEMBER:

- The PILOT (Payment in Lieu of Taxes) program was designed to entice development in areas in need of redevelopment or rehabilitation, by offering a reduced tax burden for the developer.
- PILOT projects are usually industrial, office, or retail space, so they generally do not impact school budgets or resources, as there are no permanent residents attached.
- Hopewell Township is increasing housing by 45%, which will create the need for more capacity in our schools and an increased need for emergency services.
- All annual service charges collect from the properties constructed under a PILOT program are paid directly to the municipality, and do not have to be shared with local schools and emergency services.
- Current Hopewell Township residents will be forced to pay for the increased costs in the form of higher taxes.

Education

HVRSD Board of Education Meeting August 19, 2024

By The Wall of Ed

Recording: https://www.youtube.com/live/aRAjZx8ybM?si=XVV_SZyWpl72_Ynt

The next BOE meeting will be on September 16, 2024, at 6:30pm at the board office 425 South Main St. Pennington.

The Board of Education welcomed Sarah Tracy to fill the remaining term for Ou "Lydia" Liu. <https://newspapermediagroup.com/news-hv/hopewell-valley-regional-school-board-appoints-former-board-member-to-vacancy/>

Dr. Treece's Superintendents' Report; HVRSD will be hosting a Town Hall meeting on September 9th that will be recorded and provided to folks who can't make it at a later date. She went on to present a slide detailing more information explaining the bond referendum, what it is, why they are doing it at this time, and what it entails. She mentioned this is something they have been planning since the middle of last school year.

Dr. Treece asked Bob Colavita to address monies in their reserves and how it's used within their fund balance. Bob went over 15 million dollars in reserves and how it is broken down, allocated, and used. (presentation at the 38 minute mark)

Dr. Vicky Pilitsis gave a presentation outlining the NJGPA assessment. (presentation at the 52 minute mark) This assessment measures the overall readiness for graduation for students in Math and in English - Language Arts and is broken down by gender, race, and economic status demographics. The slide deck can be accessed on the Boards doc website.

[https://go.boarddocs.com/nj/hvrsd/Board.nsf/files/D8AVH3806CFB/\\$file/NJGPA_%202024.pdf](https://go.boarddocs.com/nj/hvrsd/Board.nsf/files/D8AVH3806CFB/$file/NJGPA_%202024.pdf)

Public Comment:

Board Member Replacement Turnover: Christine raised concerns about the recent board member appointments, questioning the process by which interviews were conducted. She asked how many applicants were interviewed and noted that for the second consecutive year, three board members had been replaced by board decision rather than through an election.

Referendum/Special Election Concerns: Christine: Regarding the Referendum and PILOT (Payment in Lieu of Taxes), she suggested that Hopewell Township should cover a substantial portion of the referendum's costs. She proposed splitting the work into essential and optional tasks, questioning whether the timing of the special election was justified. She expressed concern that the board seemed unresponsive to public input

Jenn: At a recent Board of Commissioners meeting, Jenn recalled the Superintendent of Elections and the County Clerk estimating the special election cost at over \$150,000. She questioned why the school board only gave 30 days' notice for the election, despite knowing about the referendum since last year. She also raised concerns about the strain on resources so close to a general election, wondering if the cost savings from an early bid would justify the expense.

Beth: Beth emphasized that state aid is funded by taxpayer dollars and that a referendum is unaffordable at this time. With rising per-student costs and falling school ratings, she urged the board to cancel the special election and postpone it until economic conditions improve.

Anthony: A neighbor of Timberlane Schools, Anthony inquired whether the school's footprint would change due to the referendum plans and also stated the overall cost seemed excessive.

Allison: Allison criticized the expense of a special election as fiscally irresponsible and inconvenient for taxpayers to make time to vote in September. She suggested that a public forum be held in person to discuss the matter.

Karen: Karen questioned the necessity of additional turf fields at Timberlane and noted the referendum doesn't address academic improvements. She urged the board to plan more carefully for the future and avoid calling a referendum whenever funds are needed.

Kate: Kate asked if the proposed turf fields would generate revenue.

Education Concerns: Kate: She asked for Dr. Pilitsis' presentation to be made available online and expressed concern over the increasing graduation rates of students not meeting academic readiness standards.

Allison: Allison raised concerns about declining academic performance, particularly in English, citing low testing and placement scores, and asked what could be done to improve.

Facilities: Addison (representing the robotics team): Introduced the robotics team and emphasized the importance of access to facilities and communication channels, noting he would follow up with an email to further discuss their needs.

Board Responses:

Board Member Replacement Turnover: Mr. Colavita: Stated that two candidates were interviewed, and Mrs. Tracy was selected by a 5-1 vote, with one abstention.

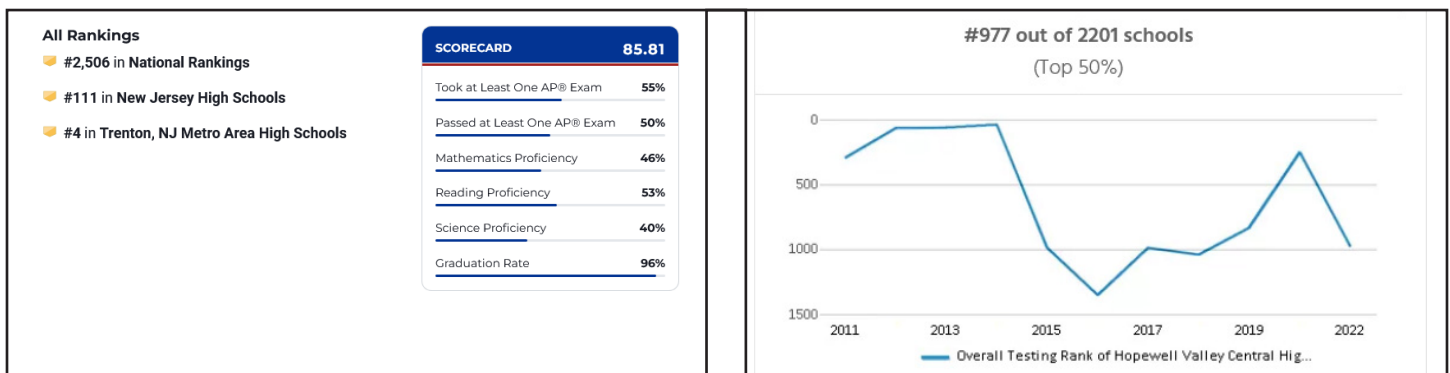
Referendum/Special Election Concerns: Dr. Treece: Mentioned that the township has offered financial support for the schools, but there's no binding agreement. Anita noted that 61% of the referendum is allocated for infrastructure improvements.

Mr. Colavita: Explained that he notified the superintendent of elections in February about a "potential" September referendum. He estimated the election would cost \$70,000, but it is uncertain if the savings from early bids will offset the election costs. He noted that rental revenue from the new turf field could be significant, and assured that Timberlane's footprint would not change.

Education Concerns: Dr. Pilitsis: Responded by stating that this is only one assessment among many, with various internal benchmarks used to gauge performance. Dr. Treece added that the district remains a top performer, ranking in the top 30, with Princeton being number two. She mentioned the district's new writing program, aimed at improving students' skills.

Facilities: Dr. Treece: Promised to follow up with the robotics team regarding their needs.

Editor's Note: While the HVRSD BOE spends significant time and monies on a proposed multi-million dollar referendum and ideology, are they neglecting their primary mission "to foster excellence in education" of our students? Look at the data and trend...



<https://www.usnews.com/education/best-high-schools/new-jersey/districts/hopewell-valley-regional-school-district/hopewell-valley-central-high-school-12587>

<https://www.publicschoolreview.com/hopewell-valley-central-high-school-profile>

School has Started, Protect your Children from the Sexual Exploitation of NJ Government Schools

PUBLIC EDUCATION IS NOT NEUTRAL

By Gregory Quinlan, The Center for Garden State Families, September 4, 2024

That's right, public education is not neutral. It has become a center of political and ideological indoctrination. No longer are we teaching core subjects like reading, math, science, english, etc. Your tax-payer-funded schools are teaching gender ideology and behaviors and sexual activity that aligns with these ideologies to children as young as kindergarten.

Anything goes in the Wild West territory of New Jersey government schools. Education is the best way to impose these ideologies and values because it's the only system in the United States of America where 98 to 99% of its populace goes through. Virtually every American attends government public schools from kindergarten through 12 grade sometime in their life. There is no system in the country where that happens but public education. This is the only place where, from 6 to 8 hours a day, five days a week, your children are under the complete and total control of the new Marxist system in the United States of America known as government a.k.a. public school.

The "2020, New Jersey Student Learning Standards - Comprehensive Health and Physical Education" which are still very active in 2024 as they were not fully implemented until 2022. These standards mandate sexual expression and identity being taught in fifth grade along with "climate change." Oral, anal, and vaginal sex being taught in eighth grade. These standards instruct children about drugs known as PEP and Prep which are alleged to prevent HIV transmission and infection. Science affirms that there are only two genders, male and female, as determined by our chromosomal makeup. The emphasis is not on math, reading, english, grammar, or true replicated, scientifically verified facts. All this and more is available in your taxpayer-funded government schools.

What can you do about it? The Center for Garden State Families works closely with public interest law firms across the country Our friends at Liberty Counsel have made available to us a downloadable non-consent form which is at the bottom of this notice.

Steps to setting boundaries:

1. Make copies of the distributed parental Opt-out form and share it with other parents from the link below.
2. For each child, you will sign multiple copies of the form: one for the principal, each teacher, the local Board of Education, and yourself.
3. Send the parental opt-out form to the school principal and individual teachers by certified mail, email, fax, or any other method whereby delivery can be confirmed. You do not need nor are you asking for "agreement" or "authorization." The school must comply. You need proof that you delivered the parental opt-out form to each educator.
4. Keep one copy (with the proof of receipt) for your family and ask that the school keep a copy for your child's school records (the cumulative files). Keep a signed copy for yourself.
5. Educate your children to report to you attempts to compel them to participate in classes or activities for which you have requested them to be opted out. Schools break New Jersey law if they do not respect your decision.
6. Resubmit a form of the parental opt-out form for each child when you enroll them for the next school year, change schools, or a new semester or new curriculum has started.
7. Send a copy of the letter to each school board member by email. Board member's names and emails are usually posted on district websites. It is the role of the board to set policy. Make your position known.

Should any school authority object to the Parental Opt-Out Form, Inform Them of the New Jersey Statute 18A:

35 – 4.7 revised in 2013: "Any child whose parent or guardian presents to the school principal a signed statement that any part of the instructions in health, family life education, or sex education is in conflict with his/her conscience, or sincerely held moral or religious beliefs shall be excused from that portion of the course where such instruction is being given and no penalties as to credit or graduation shall result therefrom."

Further steps to take depend on the knowledge of your legal rights. Be informed and exercise your authority over your child.

1. Pursuant to 20 U.S. Code § 1232h - Protection of pupil rights. You can review all school curricula and supplemental material (written or digital) at all times.
2. Pursuant to 20 U.S. Code § 1232h - Protection of pupil rights. You can opt-out your child from all surveys or evaluations related to personal information, including, but not limited to: politics, religion, family life, sexual behavior, psychological problems, etc.
3. Pursuant to 20 U.S. Code § 1232h - Protection of pupil rights and the New Jersey Statute 18A: 35 – 4.7, your child may not receive medical or physical examinations without your approval.
4. Pursuant to New Jersey statute 18a: 35 – 4.20 and New Jersey statute 18A: 35 – 4.21, you may demand that any sex education class stress the importance of abstinence.

5. Pursuant to the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA a federal education law), you may observe your child throughout the school day and scrutinize the instruction being given.

Below Is the Link to the Parental Nonconsent Form on Human Sexuality

Parents, your voice is important

We have information to help you learn what your rights are in protecting your children.

PARENTAL NON-CONSENT FORM ON HUMAN SEXUALITY LINK: <https://www.voterve.net/BroadcastLinks/kEiO20Clb1a37AnTb23G8w>

To access the article: <https://gardenstatefamilies.org/public-education-is-not-neutral/>

Election Integrity

Mercer County Citizens Win Against Motion to Dismiss Federal and Civil Rights Election Case

By Citizens for NJ Election Integrity

Trenton, August 29th, 2024 - **The Superior Court of NJ ruled in favor of ten Mercer County residents who are suing the Board of Elections for failing to follow the Constitution and Title 19 (New Jersey's election laws)**

Judge Anklowitz's ruling is summarized as follows:

Count 1, a state civil rights violation, and Count 2, a federal civil rights violation claimed against the Board of Elections and the individual defendants in their official capacities will continue to allow the Plaintiffs to seek prospective relief.

The Plaintiffs are seeking relief that will bring Mercer County Board of Elections' practices in line with Title 19 and the Constitution, such as ending the practice of making qualified voters vote by provisional ballot when a machine malfunctions and then rejecting the ballot due to having "voted by machine." 749 voters had their votes improperly rejected in 2022 due to this practice, and Mercer County Board of Elections has continued the practice into 2024 as recently as the June primary elections.

Counts 1 and 2 against the six individual defendants in their individual capacities will continue.

Count 3, the declaratory judgment against all parties continues. The declaratory judgment count seeks a legal determination regarding the parties' rights and responsibilities.

"Contrary to what you hear in the mainstream media, election integrity cases like this one are proceeding through the courts," commented Mark Demo, Director of Citizens for New Jersey Election Integrity, a supporter of the suit. **"This is a big deal for Mercer County residents and potentially for all New Jersey residents."**

The complete order can be found at <https://drive.proton.me/urls/NOVFE12104#aQvic5ZQrb2U>

About Citizens for NJ Election Integrity

Citizens for NJ Election Integrity (C4NJEI) and its members believe that the electoral process is the cornerstone of self-governance and our Constitutional Republic. C4NJEI is concerned with the soundness and security of the systems used as part of the electoral process. These systems include voter registration, voter qualification, voter access to polls, systems concerning chain of custody, the programming and use of poll books (electronic or otherwise), the systems used to tabulate ballots, and all other electoral processes, procedures, and systems to ensure that every lawfully registered voter's cast ballot is accurately counted and not diluted by any unlawfully cast ballot. As a non-partisan organization, C4NJEI does not participate in any political campaign, nor does it endorse any candidate for public office. For more information, please visit <https://www.citizens4njei.org/>, follow at <https://x.com/Citizens4NJEI>, or contact info@citizens4njei.org.

Election 2024

What YOU can do NOW: Gearing up for the Presidential Election

By John Galt

Many people are understandably concerned about the upcoming November 5th election. Not only do we have a new President to vote in, but we also have a US Senate candidate, a US House of Representatives candidate, County Commissioners, Municipal Committee/Council Seats, and School Board Candidates to choose. This could be the most important elections in our lifetime.

Over the next 60 days, we will keep you informed of various ways you can get involved, but for now, **the most important thing is that you make sure you are registered to vote and have a plan for how you are going to vote: mail in, early, or on election day.**

Early voting is a very underutilized method of voting in person at a polling location. In New Jersey we have seen machine breakdowns on election day, as well as many people who forgot they are signed up to vote by mail and tried to vote on election day and were asked to fill out a provisional ballot. Then there are unforeseen obstacles, such as a personal emergency or power outage that may prevent you from voting on November 5th. Voting early is easy and you can go to any of Mercer County's early voting sites, not just the one in your municipality. It spans 9 days and begins on Saturday, October 26, 2024 and ends on Sunday November 3, 2024. Click here for more information: <https://nj.gov/state/elections/vote-early-voting.shtml>

Working Together for NJ has put together a quick checklist for learning more about how to register to vote, how to check your registration status, and what other things you can do during to gear up for the general election. Please click this link for more information: <https://mادميمي.com/p/a5890a1>

Dear Fellow American



We are excited to serve as your elected GOP committee people for our voting district.

We would like to share with you that, in July, Mercer County GOP elected a new chairperson, Patricia Johnson. This is the first new chairperson in over 10 years. This brings with it lots of opportunity for change and involvement!

Please take advantage of any of the three methods of voting this November - vote by mail, early in person voting or at your polling place on election day. Did you know you can also track your ballot and check your voting history? Go to www.nj.gov/state/elections/vote-track-my-ballot.shtml to do so.

We are firm believers in grass roots playing a significant role in our community and government. Each of us can make a difference - even with just a little participation - and of course, with our vote.

Please feel free to reach out to us!

Christine Cerullo, Director of Get Out the Vote
ccerullo@hotmail.com - 609.934.2242



Your vote makes a difference and the future of our country depends on it! Be the difference this November!

Be the Difference

Get Out the Vote Campaign

ENGAGE COMMUNITY - Establish relationships and build grass roots excitement to enhance participation.

INFORM REPUBLICAN VOTERS

- **YOUR VOTE MATTERS** - Races have been decided by a few votes. Every vote matters.
 - **3 METHODS TO VOTE** - To get people to vote using any of three methods available. There are pros and cons to each method. We know we like to vote on election day, but until we can change things, we have to take advantage of all three methods, especially vote by mail.
 - **TRACK YOUR BALLOT/VOTING HISTORY** - Encourage voters to track their ballot and review their vote history.
- ENLIST VOLUNTEERS** - Sign-up election challengers and poll workers; participate in calling republicans to remind them to vote.

FOLLOW-UP WITH COMMUNITY - Keep lines of communication open with Republicans in your district after the election to keep grassroots efforts alive.

VOTE 2024

Be the difference!

Important NJ Information Links

Register to Vote

If you want to register to vote, scan here:



www.nj.gov/state/elections/voter-registration.shtml
Voter registration deadline for general election is October 15, 2024.

Change Party Affiliation

Do you know someone who wants to switch their party affiliation to Republican? Have them scan here:



nj.gov/state/elections/voter-party-affiliation-declaration.shtml

3 Ways to Vote

Learn more about the 3 ways to vote in NJ. Scan here:



www.nj.gov/state/elections/vote-3-ways-to-vote.shtml

Vote-By-Mail Application

If you want to apply for a mail-in ballot, scan here and click on your county:



www.nj.gov/state/elections/vote-by-mail.shtml#applications
Deadline to request a mail-in ballot for the general election is October 29, 2024.

IMPORTANT

★★★★★
YOUR VOTE MATTERS

Scan here →



CHECK YOUR VOTER HISTORY AND TRACK YOUR BALLOT

Election Day: November 5, 2024

www.nj.gov/state/elections/vote-track-my-ballot.shtml

Justice

The Court and Constitutional Interpretation

“The republic endures and this is the symbol of its faith.” - CHIEF JUSTICE CHARLES EVANS HUGHES
Cornerstone Address - Supreme Court Building

“EQUAL JUSTICE UNDER LAW”-These words, written above the main entrance to the Supreme Court Building, express the ultimate responsibility of the Supreme Court of the United States. The Court is the highest tribunal in the Nation for all cases and controversies arising under the Constitution or the laws of the United States. As the final arbiter of the law, the Court is charged with ensuring the American people the promise of equal justice under law and, thereby, also functions as guardian and interpreter of the Constitution.

The Supreme Court is “distinctly American in concept and function,” as Chief Justice Charles Evans Hughes observed. Few other courts in the world have the same authority of constitutional interpretation and none have exercised it for as long or with as much influence. In 1835, the French political observer Alexis de Tocqueville noted the unique position of the Supreme Court in the history of nations and of jurisprudence. “The representative system of government has been adopted in several states of Europe,” he remarked, “but I am unaware that any nation of the globe has hitherto organized a judicial power in the same manner as the Americans. . . . A more imposing judicial power was never constituted by any people.”

The unique position of the Supreme Court stems, in large part, from the deep commitment of the American people to the Rule of Law and to constitutional government. **The United States has demonstrated an unprecedented determination to preserve and protect its written Constitution, thereby providing the American “experiment in democracy” with the oldest written Constitution still in force.**

The Constitution of the United States is a carefully balanced document. It is designed to provide for a national government sufficiently strong and flexible to meet the needs of the republic, yet sufficiently limited and just to protect the guaranteed rights of citizens; it permits a balance between society’s need for order and the individual’s right to freedom. To assure these ends, the Framers of the Constitution created three independent and coequal branches of government. That this Constitution has provided continuous democratic government through the periodic stresses of more than two centuries illustrates the genius of the American system of government.

The complex role of the Supreme Court in this system derives from its authority to invalidate legislation or executive actions which, in the Court’s considered judgment, conflict with the Constitution. This power of “judicial review” has given the Court a crucial responsibility in assuring individual rights, as well as in maintaining a “living Constitution” whose broad provisions are continually applied to complicated new situations.

While the function of judicial review is not explicitly provided in the Constitution, it had been anticipated before the adoption of that document. Prior to 1789, state courts had already overturned legislative acts which conflicted with state constitutions. Moreover, many of the Founding Fathers expected the Supreme Court to assume this role in regard to the Constitution; Alexander Hamilton and James Madison, for example, had underlined the importance of judicial review in the Federalist Papers, which urged adoption of the Constitution.

Hamilton had written that through the practice of judicial review the Court ensured that the will of the whole people, as expressed in their Constitution, would be supreme over the will of a legislature, whose statutes might express only the temporary will of part of the people. And Madison had written that constitutional interpretation must be left to the reasoned judgment of independent judges, rather than to the tumult and conflict of the political process. If every constitutional question were to be decided by public political bargaining, Madison argued, the Constitution would be reduced to a battleground of competing factions, political passion and partisan spirit.

Despite this background the Court’s power of judicial review was not confirmed until 1803, when it was invoked by Chief Justice John Marshall in *Marbury v. Madison*. In this decision, the Chief Justice asserted that the Supreme Court’s responsibility to overturn unconstitutional legislation was a necessary consequence of its sworn duty to uphold the Constitution. That oath could not be fulfilled any other way. “It is emphatically the province of the judicial department to say what the law is,” he declared.

In retrospect, it is evident that constitutional interpretation and application were made necessary by the very nature of the Constitution. The Founding Fathers had wisely worded that document in rather general terms leaving it open to future elaboration to meet changing conditions. As Chief Justice Marshall noted in *McCulloch v. Maryland* in 1819, a constitution that attempted to detail every aspect of its own application “would partake of the prolixity of a legal code, and could scarcely be embraced by the human mind. . . . Its nature, therefore, requires that only its great outlines should be marked, its important objects designated, and the minor ingredients which compose those objects be deduced from the nature of the objects themselves.”

The Constitution limits the Court to dealing with “Cases” and “Controversies.” John Jay, the first Chief Justice, clarified this restraint early in the Court’s history by declining to advise President George Washington on the constitutional implications of

a proposed foreign policy decision. The Court does not give advisory opinions; rather, its function is limited only to deciding specific cases.

The Justices must exercise considerable discretion in deciding which cases to hear, since approximately 5,000-7,000 civil and criminal cases are filed in the Supreme Court each year from the various state and federal courts. The Supreme Court also has “original jurisdiction” in a very small number of cases arising out of disputes between States or between a State and the Federal Government.

When the Supreme Court rules on a constitutional issue, that judgment is virtually final; its decisions can be altered only by the rarely used procedure of constitutional amendment or by a new ruling of the Court. However, when the Court interprets a statute, new legislative action can be taken.

Chief Justice Marshall expressed the challenge which the Supreme Court faces in maintaining free government by noting: “We must never forget that it is a constitution we are expounding . . . intended to endure for ages to come, and consequently, to be adapted to the various crises of human affairs.”

[The foregoing was taken from a booklet prepared by the Supreme Court of the United States, and published with funding from the Supreme Court Historical Society.]

To access this article: <https://www.supremecourt.gov/about/constitutional.aspx>

The Politicization of the Department of Justice

By Harmeet K. Dhillon

The following is adapted from a speech delivered on September 16, 2022, in Washington, D.C., at Hillsdale College's Constitution Day Celebration.

The seal of the U.S. Department of Justice reads, “Qui Pro Domina Justitia Sequitur”—“Who prosecutes for Lady Justice.” Depictions of Lady Justice are as familiar as they are instructive: she stands blindfolded while holding the scales of justice, representing her unyielding devotion to equal justice under the law. Contrary to this ideal, the DOJ today appears to be increasingly motivated by partisanship. Compounding the problem, it has access to the powers of the modern surveillance state. As someone passionate about the Constitution and the Bill of Rights, I believe there is no higher priority than addressing this danger.

The tragic events of 9/11 marked a turning point in our nation's recent civil rights history. First the terrorists attacked us—and then, in the name of national security, we began to attack ourselves. It has become almost cliché to say that we live in a surveillance state, but we do. Ever since Congress, on a fully bipartisan basis, enacted the Patriot Act six weeks after the attacks on 9/11, the ever-present eye of the government has been searching for new and creative ways to spy on American citizens. The government has the technology to monitor all of our electronic devices, listen to our phone calls, and read our emails and text messages—all under the auspices of national security.

This special law designed for an emergency has become a permanent addition to the government's investigatory toolbox. The unfortunate reality is that the bulk of the actions taken by law enforcement under the Patriot Act have almost nothing to do with combating terrorism. Once-rare applications for surveillance warrants to the Foreign Intelligence Surveillance Court have multiplied many times in relative peacetime. Most of the spying conducted under the Patriot Act is for run-of-the-mill crimes that we've long expected law enforcement to address without special surveillance authority.

Now, it is bad enough to have a politically-neutral surveillance state controlled by the national security crowd and their DOJ cousins. But take that panopticon and put it in the hands of an executive branch willing to weaponize its reams of information against its perceived political enemies, and we've got a frightening problem on our hands.

Let me discuss three recent examples that illustrate the threats we face from a politicized DOJ: the DOJ raid on Project Veritas journalists, the DOJ raid on Mar-a-Lago, and the DOJ's efforts to undermine election integrity and chill free speech.

It is time to wake up to the danger.

On November 11, 1762, King George's men had a warrant when they stormed and raided the home of pamphleteer John Entick. They broke open locked doors, boxes, chests, and drawers and seized his private papers and books—all because the Crown suspected Entick of fomenting political opposition against the King. If the FBI's raid on Project Veritas journalists' homes or President Trump's home at Mar-a-Lago teaches us anything, it's that the political oppression of the eighteenth century remains a threat today. But today, in addition to brute force, our government has the power of the modern surveillance state.

As a graduate of the University of Virginia Law School, I would be remiss in speaking about the Constitution and the Bill of Rights without quoting **Thomas Jefferson, who wrote: “the most sacred of the duties of a government [is] to do equal and impartial justice to all its citizens.” We must find a way to return our Department of Justice to that central principle of American constitutionalism, as it carries out its duties in the name of Lady Liberty.**

Read the full article: <https://imprimis.hillsdale.edu/the-politicization-of-the-department-of-justice/>

Who Is 'Destroying Democracy in Darkness?'

A reader's comment: If you listen or read, MSNBC, CNN, ABC, CBS, PBS, NPR, The New York Times, Washington Post, LA Times, Google, Facebook (Meta), you are "unaware of the Essential Basics" VDH has arranged very orderly in his column today.

By Victor Davis Hanson, August 22 2024

The 2023-2024 campaign season is not just the strangest on record, it's also arguably the most anti-democratic.

Ostensibly, the Democratic Party has claimed over the last decade that Donald Trump posed a continued and existential threat to the republic.

That allegation subsequently justified a variety of anti-democratic means to neuter his first two presidential candidacies, his presidency, and now his third and final run for the White House.

A near decade ago, we witnessed the 2015-2016 Hillary Clinton/Democratic National Committee/FBI-assisted effort to plant the false accusation of Trump-Russian collusion to warp the 2016 election.

That gambit centered around the fraudulent Steele dossier and nearly fatally crippled the Trump 2016 campaign. That hoax would later sidetrack 22 months of his presidency before being proven a fantasy.

On the eve of the 2020 election, the left next birthed the Russian laptop disinformation campaign.

That hoax also warped a presidential debate with false charges that Hunter Biden's own incriminating laptop was once again the work of Russians seeking to conspire with Trump.

Those unusual efforts continued during the Biden administration.

For the first time in election history, the allies of one campaign sought to persuade some 16 states to try to remove a major party's likely nominee from their primary and general election ballots.

The plan was to smother a Trump third presidential bid in its infancy, and thus once again not allow the people to accept or reject his candidacy.

Nearly simultaneously, four federal, state, and local prosecutors filed dozens of felony charges against Trump.

They all shared some strange similarities.

These indictments would likely not have been filed, had Trump not run for office. Nor would any of them have proceeded had Trump not been a controversial conservative Republican seeking reelection.

Almost all the charges had not been filed against any other prior candidate and rarely a private citizen.

Some of them could just as easily have been lodged against Joe Biden and his son.

Some indictments and convictions may still achieve their objectives of bankrupting, jailing, or keeping Trump inert during the final weeks of the campaign.

One of the Georgia prosecutors had undisclosed meetings with the Biden White House counsel.

President Biden himself, on the eve of the federal prosecutor Jack Smith's indictment, all but declared his campaign rival Trump guilty.

Biden's own chief of the White House had also met privately and secretly with Smith.

In an unprecedented fashion, Smith rushed his prosecution to ensure it synchronized with the 2024 campaign.

Similar federal charges could just as easily have led to the indictment of President Joe Biden—if the special counsel in that case had not claimed that he could not convince a jury to convict a culpable but cognitively challenged Biden.

Another Biden prosecutor mysteriously left his top position at the Justice Department to join the Alvin Bragg Manhattan prosecutorial staff.

Nonetheless, Trump had survived collusion, disinformation, de-balloting, lawfare, and a subsequent assassination attempt to surge far ahead of Biden in the June presidential polls.

Biden's poll collapse prompted Democratic donors and high-ranking politicians to force a stress-test presidential debate before either candidate was even nominated at their respective conventions.

When Biden imploded in the debate, a supposedly once-fit president was suddenly declared impaired. And a previously uninspiring Vice President Kamala Harris was abruptly transmogrified into a superb replacement candidate.

Biden was forced to resign his candidacy to save his last five months in office from a Democrat threatened removal via the 25th Amendment.

The primary votes of nearly 15 million voters were abruptly nullified.

Harris who had neither won a primary nor a single delegate through an election was suddenly coronated as the new Biden-replacement candidate—and without an open convention contest or vote.

The donor-politico class further decided that, like a challenged Biden in 2024, Harris could not be allowed to hold press conferences. She would do few if any live interviews, unscripted town halls or any other venue given fears her visible liabilities might endanger her candidacy.

So, the Party that had proclaimed democracy dies in darkness now favors the shadows as the preferable means to obtain and retain power—whether by ignoring primary voters, open conventions, or transparent venues with the voters.

Add up the last decade's purchased collusion caper, unprecedented two impeachments, orchestrated disinformation hoax, efforts to de-ballot Trump, warping of the legal system to jail him and destroy his candidacy, forced removal of an unpopular but unwilling President Biden from the Democrat ticket, virtual anointing of Harris by fiat in his place, and the current collusion with a compliant media to avoid public scrutiny and cross-examination of Harris.

And the conclusion?

Have those who lectured us about democracy in danger now decided to save it by destroying it?

To access the article: <https://victorhanson.com/who-is-destroying-democracy-in-darkness/>

James Comer to Newsmax: Biden 'Most Corrupt President

By Charlie McCarthy, Newsmax, August 20, 2024

President Joe Biden will be held accountable for influence peddling, especially if former President Donald Trump returns to the White House, House Oversight Committee Chair James Comer, R-Ky., told Newsmax on Tuesday.

The House's three-committee impeachment inquiry released a report Monday morning finding Biden has "engaged in impeachable conduct," including an "abuse of power" when he was vice president and "obstruction of justice" as president to cover his family's "global influence peddling racket" to defraud the U.S.

The chair said Biden family members received more than \$35 million through payments and loans via the scheme.

Appearing on "Wake Up America," Comer was asked whether the 81-year-old Biden ever will be held accountable for his alleged illegal actions.

"I think you're going to see if Donald Trump wins the presidency and puts in a real attorney general who is fair. I think you're going to see lots of charges, not just against Biden family members, but also people in the government who were involved in the cover up," he told co-hosts Sharla McBride and Jon Glasgow.

Comer said he expects Biden and his family members to face charges for alleged lying, setting up shell companies and money laundering even without a second Trump presidency.

"I think [special counsel] David Weiss is going to issue more of the things that we found just two weeks ago," Comer said. "He included in his tax evasion charge an unregistered foreign agents charge from the money that Hunter Biden took from Romania while Joe Biden was vice president.

"This investigation will be like the Hunter Biden laptop story. In time, the truth will come out, and the American people will see just how corrupt the Biden family was and how corrupt our federal government was with all these deep state agencies trying to cover and protect the Bidens."

Comer implored Americans to read the House report.

"I hope they read the report. There are footnotes all throughout this report," he said. "We have the receipts. We have bank records. Bank records don't lie. We have emails. We have sworn deposition testimony from the people that were involved in laundering this money. This was a scheme, a scheme to take money from bad people and bad countries, to try to help them get out of trouble.

"Look, this family has been selling access to Joe Biden for over a decade. I don't think any American should be OK with the leader of our country's family peddling access to him in turn, for massive profits to the tune of tens of millions dollars.

"Joe Biden's legacy should be he's the most corrupt president in the history of our nation."

Read the full article: <https://www.newsmax.com/newsmax-tv/house-oversight-james-comer/2024/08/20/id/1177174/>

Supreme Court rebuffs Biden administration plea to restore multibillion-dollar student debt plan

By Associated Press, August 28, 2024

WASHINGTON (AP) — The Supreme Court on Wednesday kept on hold the latest multibillion-dollar plan from the Biden administration that would have lowered payments for millions of borrowers, while lawsuits make their way through lower courts.

The justices rejected an administration request to put most of it back into effect. It was blocked by the 8th U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals.

In an unsigned order, the court said it expects the appeals court to issue a fuller decision on the plan “with appropriate dispatch.”

The Education Department is seeking to provide a faster path to loan cancellation, and reduce monthly income-based repayments from 10% to 5% of a borrower’s discretionary income. The plan also wouldn’t require borrowers to make payments if they earn less than 225% of the federal poverty line — \$32,800 a year for a single person.

Last year, the Supreme Court’s conservative majority rejected an earlier plan that would have wiped away more than \$400 billion in student loan debt.

Read the full article: https://www.aol.com/news/supreme-court-rebuffs-biden-administration-181726350.html?soc_src=aolapp

DOJ dropping most Jan. 6 obstruction charges in pending cases

By Kaelan Deese, Washington Examiner, August 16 2024

Multiple defendants from the Jan. 6 riot at the Capitol who faced charges for obstructing Congress are seeing those charges dropped, according to a Washington Examiner review of court records, after the Supreme Court ruled that the Justice Department had applied the charge too broadly.

In the case known as Fischer v. United States, the Supreme Court ruled 6-3 that President Joe Biden’s Justice Department wrongfully levied a felony charge of obstruction of an official proceeding against Jan. 6 defendants, finding the statute only applies to conduct such as manipulation or destruction of documents. Ever since then, defendants who have yet to be tried or sentenced are seeing a consistent windfall from that decision.

Prominent Jan. 6 attorney speaks out

Bill Shipley, a prominent defense attorney who has represented dozens of Capitol riot defendants, told the Washington Examiner that prosecutors have been dropping the obstruction charge, known as 1512(c)(2), “and offering pleas to other charges.”

The Washington Examiner first reported on this emerging pattern in mid-July, just weeks after the Fischer ruling, but since then, the rate of cases affected by the high court’s decision “has become more than just a trickle,” Shipley said. On Wednesday, the attorney posted to X that the government is now “doing it in every case that is about to go to trial.”

Read the full article: <https://www.washingtonexaminer.com/news/justice/3122632/doj-dropping-most-jan-6-obstruction-charges/>

Trump: Dems Give Illegals Luxury Hotels, Leave Veterans on Streets

By Eric Mack, Newsmax, August 31, 2024

The flood of illegal migrants into America’s Democrat-run cities is overwhelming us and forcing Americans to suffer, causing kids’ education quality to decline and leaving homeless veterans in the streets while illegals get put up in luxury hotels, Republican presidential nominee Donald Trump lamented Friday night.

“We have the dumbest people in history running our country,” Trump told Moms for Liberty co-founder Tiffany Justice at the 2024 Moms for Liberty National Summit in Washington D.C., on Friday night, which aired live and in its entirety on the free Newsmax2 streaming platform.

“We have our veterans sleeping on the streets and we have illegal immigrants coming into our country living in luxury hotels about where the veterans are. It’s so reverse of what it should be.”

The migrant crisis is impacting American public schools, too, as they are forced to take in migrant children en masse, downgrading the educational opportunities of our American children, Trump warned.

“What’s happening to you our country. Our country is being poisoned. And your schools and your children are suffering greatly because they’re going into the classrooms and taking disease, and they don’t even speak English.

“It’s crazy.”

Trump spoke about the reports of American school students displaced from their schools because of a migrant student rush, a story that has been told in some Democrat-controlled states like Massachusetts.

“We have our people that aren’t going into a classroom. We have students that were there last year, they’re not allowed into the school this year,” Trump said. “They’re not allowed. It’s crazy.”

Trump has updated his estimated number of illegal migrants that have flooded into the U.S. under President Joe Biden and Vice President Kamala Harris' open borders policies. Day 1 executive orders restored "catch and release" and allowed illegal migrants entering the country to promise to return to a court hearing they often never show up for, border experts have told Newsmax.

"No city can take in" migrants on the level the Biden-Harris administration has forced America to do, Trump said. "When you think 21 million people came into our country — that's bigger than New York — 21 million people came into our country.

"No country can take that. Nobody can withstand that. It's going to bring us down."

It all comes down to the danger of giving Harris another four years of foisting this on the American people, but hopefully the 2024 presidential cycle can expose her as being ill-equipped and wrong for America, Trump concluded.

"Now everyone's watching and now we see she's defective," Trump said after her sit-down interview with CNN.

"We don't need another defective person as president of the United States."

The fireside chat lasted approximately an hour, delving deeply into the downgrade of American education in Democrat-run cities and states.

Trump said Democrat-run school boards have become "like dictatorships" hostile to the desires of parents, echoing conservative frustration that bubbled over in public meetings during the COVID-19 pandemic.

"I'm for parental rights all the way," Trump said. "I don't even understand the concept of not being."

Read the full article: <https://www.newsmax.com/newsmax-tv/democrat-cities-illegals/2024/08/31/id/1178594/>

Rep. Norman to Newsmax: Harris to Blame for Lost Migrant Kids

By Nicole Wells, Newsmax, August 22, 2024

As much as Democrat presidential nominee and Vice President Kamala Harris wants to portray herself as a "joyful warrior," Rep. Ralph Norman, R-S.C., told Newsmax, "it sure isn't joyful" for the migrant children the Department of Homeland Security lost track of under her watch as "border czar."

"First of all, it's demonic. It's evil what's happening," Norman said during an appearance on Newsmax's "The Chris Salcedo Show." "Think about innocent children coming across the border.

"And to put it into context, a college football stadium: 85,000 people. You talk about four stadiums nearly of innocent children without an adult crossing our border to the tune of 390,000 or more?"

"They don't know and they don't care. They're doing this willfully," he said.

"We've gotten reports of this, of buses leaving hotels early in the morning with children in not just South Carolina but other states. It's demonic.

"And it's on the Democrats, because as much as the border czar wants to smile and be joyful, it sure isn't joyful for these children."

According to a new report from the DHS Office of the Inspector General, the Biden-Harris administration has lost track of more than 320,000 migrant children who crossed into the United States illegally without parents.

The report, which was released on Monday, said that untold numbers of these children were at risk of being trafficked for sex or forced labor.

When asked if the American people should be able to cut off taxpayer funding for the sophisticated child trafficking network that, according to a congressional whistleblower, runs right through DHS, Norman said, "It shouldn't be funded."

"We ought to vote against any funding for it," he said. "The Inflation Reduction Act was anything but that; the omnibus that we're probably going to vote on should not be passed.

"We're trying to get the SAVE [Safeguard American Voter Eligibility] Act so we just make sure Americans are voting and not illegals, and that's going to be a tough sell in this Congress. But if we can't watch after our children and take action to do what we can now to cut the funding, I don't know what we can do.

"It's sad we even have to have this conversation."

To access the article: <https://www.newsmax.com/newsmax-tv/ralph-norman-dhs-kamala-harris/2024/08/22/id/1177574/>

Public Corner

Public Local Meetings

Interested in attending public meetings? Here are a few in your area for this month.

SPECIAL COMMUNITY TOWN HALL

Monday September 9th at 7:00PM in the Hopewell Valley Performing Arts Center at 259 Pennington-Titusville Road, Pennington

Alternatively you can tune into the live event online:

To participate online, a webinar will be shared through the website: <https://hvrtd.org/vote>

Can't make it? The webinar will be recorded and available for later viewing on the HVRSD website.

HVRSD School Board Meeting

Monday - September 16, 2024 (Regular and Business Organization), at 6:30PM
425 S Main St. | Pennington, NJ 08534 or Livestream on YouTube

Municipal Township Meetings

<https://www.hopewelltpw.org/calendar.aspx?CID=32>

Monday, September 3 6:30PM

Monday, September 16 6:30PM

Meetings are in hybrid format- Township Municipal Building & Zoom

Township meetings will be held at HOPEWELL TOWNSHIP MUNICIPAL SERVICES BUILDING 201 Washington Crossing - Pennington Road, Titusville, NJ 08560

Board of Elections Meeting

Tuesday - September 10, 2024 12:00PM Regular

Board of Elections Meetings will be at 930 Spruce St., Lawrence, NJ 08648

Mercer County Board of County Commissioners

Meeting Schedule -- September 2024

Tuesday - September 10, 2024 6:00PM Agenda Meeting

Thursday - September 12, 2024 6:00PM Formal Meeting

Monday - September 23, 2024 6:00PM Agenda Meeting; Formal Meeting following

Agenda and Formal Meetings will take place at the Mercer County Administration Building, Room 211, 640 South Broad St., Trenton, NJ unless otherwise stated.

In order to encourage full participation of these meetings, please submit any requests for accommodations of people with disabilities to the Clerk to the Board, Mercer County Administration Building, PO Box 8068, Trenton, NJ 08650

(609) 989-6584 {V/TTY}

{Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 101-336}

TruthBTold



At the Movies, Bookstores

"The Detransition Diaries" By Jennifer Lahl and Kallie Fell

Book Review by Sylvia Kocses – 2024, Ignatius Press, 246 pages

First: Do No Harm

There is a crucial need today for resources to help children, parents, educators and the general public understand the complex issues surrounding the substantial increase in the number of adolescents who are self-identifying as transgender - a clinical phenomenon called rapid-onset gender dysphoria. These resources should be fact-based, supported by the most recent research and compassionate towards and inclusive of the experiences of all gender-questioning children and young adults. Because the issues involve the medical treatment of legitimate mental health concerns of minors they also need to be free from an ideological or political agenda and culture-led science. Extraordinary evidence should be required before justifying invasive medical procedures that remove healthy body parts from children and young adults through surgeries that alter outward appearance. Proof that the benefits to the person outweigh the harms in any medical treatment such as puberty blockers and cross-sex hormones is the fundamental obligation of doctors, therapists and clinics as stated in the Hippocratic oath

The Detransition Diaries by Jennifer Lahl and Kallie Fell is one of these resources. Their book is both historical and personal. It is historical as Chapter One traces the rise of "gender-identity theory" and the resultant experimental medicalization of gender - which is called "gender-affirming care". It is personal as Chapters 3-9 tell the stories of five women and two men who when they were young questioned their "gender identity" and were affirmed and encouraged by therapists, peers and social media to seek medical treatment including puberty blockers, cross-sex hormones or "top and bottom surgery". All seven hoped that making their appearance match more closely to that of the opposite sex, a process called "transition", would bring emotional and psychological relief and happiness. As they matured into adulthood, they now regret the decisions they made but must live with the irreversible consequences. The authors believe the "power of these first-account personal testimonies should not be underestimated and they should never be discounted". A study in the UK in 2022 found the rate of detransition among those who fit the rapid-onset gender dysphoria profile was 9.8%.

All seven stories examine the difficult question of whether minor children and young adults can give meaningful informed consent to transgender medicalization? Puberty blockers and cross-sex hormones are still experimental in nature and there is a lack of information on potential short -and long-term effects. The pre-frontal cortex part of the brain is involved in many higher-level cognitive processes including emotional processing, planning actions, responding to change. This cortex is not fully developed until around age 25. It is one of the reasons the law says children aren't mature enough to make serious decisions that could have long lasting consequences like getting a tattoo, drinking alcohol, getting married, smoking cigarettes or even voting. Strangely, this common sense and practical principle is not applied to transgender medical issues for children and young adults. Detransitioner Helena Kerschner, in **The Detransition Diaries**, shares that it is:

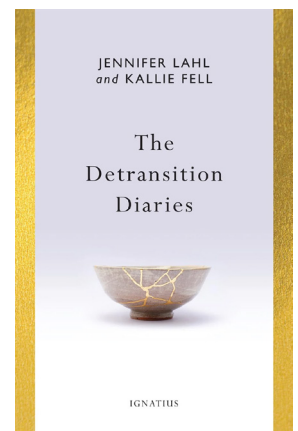
"difficult for her to understand how anyone who has experienced what it's like to be a teenager can fail to understand how unprepared adolescents are to make such life-changing decisions. A responsible, ethical person who thinks critically and rationally would surely know that we must not allow adolescents, who are in a state of emotional and intellectual immaturity, to make permanent life-changing decisions based on incomplete knowledge."

The issues are difficult. Podcaster Meghan Daum states that "there is perhaps no subject today that is more complicated, fraught, and confusing than the sudden rise in gender dysphoria among young people" and that "we need to make the effort to bring sense and rationality into the conversation".

What is gender-dysphoria? It can be described as the distress related to being uncomfortable with one's body and/or the stereotypical roles associated with one's sex. It may result from a complex interplay of biological, psychological and social factors. Traditionally, therapists use conventional psychotherapy to explore the causes for the distress and then assist the person in gaining increased self-awareness, insight and well-being **over a significant period of time in counseling.**

In the relatively new "gender-affirmation" approach the therapist agrees with and affirms the person's self-diagnosis as a trans identified male or female and supports their decision to socially or medically transition **often without taking the time** to assess if there are other factors that are influencing the person's development. Medical professionals call this "diagnostic overshadowing". The therapist expects parents, teachers, family and friends to validate and celebrate the child or teen's belief that their gender identity is not the same as their biological sex and support and encourage them in their transition.

In their interviews with detransitioners **Helena, Grace, Nick, Cat, Chloe, Torren and Rachel** the authors hoped to answer the question why so many adolescents, particularly girls, are questioning their internal sense of self as male or female. There appeared to be several interwoven yet distinct themes in their stories.



1. the rise of “gender theory” which denies that biological sex is a true binary in mammals (XX, XY) and replaces the term sex with gender which is a person’s status as masculine, feminine or something else. This theory is taught in what are called “comprehensive sex-education classes” and a concerted effort is made to teach and reinforce these concepts throughout **other areas of the K-12 curriculum.**
2. chronic untreated mental health concerns such as autism, ADHD, eating disorders, depression, anxiety and self-harm.
3. discomfort and fear of the puberty-related sexual changes to their bodies.
4. adverse childhood events or traumas including sexual abuse.
5. peer or social contagion reinforced by on-line communities.
6. a desire to be accepted, craving to fit in, hoping to be seen as less privileged among their peers who view trans ideology as a social justice cause.
7. easily accessible and addictive on-line viewing of “kink” pornography at a young age (non-normative sexual behavior or non-conventional sexual practices, concepts or fantasies).

When the authors interviewed **Cat** she described herself as “a weird kid who loved to dress up in different costumes- an introverted, indoorsey, bookworm, artistic type.” At age 13 she latched on to a website specifically for females who wanted to transition to males. She struggled with an eating disorder, alcoholism and drug use. She wore breast binders, started testosterone at age 28 and contemplated double mastectomy surgery. A series of events led her to question “gender ideology” and all the beliefs that led her to deny her biological sex. She states:

“Gender ideology claims that being a woman or a man is a feeling in a person’s head rather than a biological reality. Gender activists demand that we define a man or a woman on the basis of each person’s thoughts and feelings, which are intimately connected to sex-role stereotyping. I began to question whether thoughts and feelings can trump biological reality.”

Chloe was diagnosed with ADHD and autism at age seven. Went through puberty at age nine and at age eleven began absorbing what being a woman might mean from internet sites like Tumblr that focused on transgender issues. At 13 she began taking Lupron to block her pubertal development and testosterone injections to further the masculinization process. At age fifteen she had a double mastectomy. At age 16, one year after her double mastectomy, she decided to detransition. Her advice to young people is to be wise about social media usage and get outside of your bubble of friends and listen to people with different opinions even the ones you disagree with.

Grace experienced gender issues at age 19 and transitioned at age 22 including testosterone injections and a double mastectomy at age 23. During college she attended classes supportive of the idea to dismantle the “binary of male and female” through involvement in “queer” feminist analysis and activism. Grace recalls how “young people can struggle with coming to terms with their body and the changes they undergo during puberty. Becoming an adult can be difficult and painful and I have a special understanding of the anguish girls can experience”.

All seven of these personal stories confirmed that transgender identification was a way to overcome the struggle to find friends, to feel acceptance and to fit-in. As Dr. Erica Anderson PhD, gender therapist for over 40 years, states she is “worried that gender minority identities have become a bit trendy”. If it has become fashionable in a school or community to go trans a teenager may not want to miss out.

“Youth struggling with self-acceptance might see transgender identification as a way to do an end-run around this painful time in their life. On account of its high social status in Western culture today, a number of adolescents may perceive transgender identification as an attractive option, especially those with autism or low self-esteem. Adopting this new identity as a member of a high-status, highly celebrated “oppressed” minority is likely to boost peer standing and garner attention from peers and adults alike. Presenting themselves as transgender makes them more welcome at school and by their peers.”

Helena’s story is an illustration of this effect. Until she decided to “transition” she felt ignored by school officials and other adults. Adolescents in her online community seemed to favor the oppressed. Those who were marginalized -in this case because they presented themselves as transgender- were given more attention and more power in these circles. Those who were perceived as more privileged were denied the right to an opinion, the simple chance to be heard, especially anybody designated a cis-white straight girl.”

The final chapter explains the medical complications, risks and irreversible damage that can result from the transition process that involves puberty blockers, cross-sex hormones, bilateral mastectomies, phalloplasty, vaginoplasty and other surgeries. Pausing puberty denies children normal physiological and social processes. Opposite sex hormones may impair fertility. Sex-reassignment surgery that removes ovaries or testicles guarantees infertility and possible sexual dysfunction. Lahl and Fell state that “in country after country, medical authorities are saying the data behind medical transitioning for children are of poor quality”. In the United States in 2022 the Protecting Minors from Medical Malpractice Act was introduced to safeguard children from politicized medicine and to recover monetary damages for the harm done to them.

This compassionate yet fact-based book concludes with a sobering thought “There is no other area of medicine where doctors will surgically remove a perfectly healthy body part and intentionally induce a diseased state of the pituitary gland function based simply on the young adolescent patient’s wishes.”

What can adolescents, parents, grandparents, educators, and other concerned community members do to seek common sense approaches to helping trans-identifying youth and young adults that are fact-based and scientific, caring and respectful, and non-harming for all individuals?

1. Love more widely, think and listen more deeply and remember people and concepts are both important. Teach and model compassion, kindness and acceptance for those who struggle with what it means to be a sexed and embodied human being.
2. Educate yourself, your children and your community about this issue. Remind teens of the reality and truth that biological sex is binary, their sex is permanent and that sex is not assigned at birth but established at conception. **Read *The Detransition Diaries*. Read *On Sex and Gender: A Common Sense Approach* by Doriane Lambelet Coleman. Read *When Kids Say They're Trans: A Guide for Parents* by Ayad, Marchiano and O'Malley.**
3. Examine school district policies, curriculum and instruction to discover if and how "gender identity theory" is presented to K-12 students. Is teaching about human sexuality fact-based, rigorously scientific, balanced and unbiased or is it ideological, political or culture-led?
4. **Watch the documentary video *TransMission: What's the Rush to Reassign Gender?* (<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=rUeqEoARKOA>) by Lahl and Fell for a deeper look at the medical and surgical transitioning of children and young adults.**

City of Dreams

NOW PLAYING NATIONWIDE – Rated R – 1h 46m

Released Date: August 30, 2024 Directed by: Mohit Ramchandani

Film Synopsis

"City of Dreams" is an inspiring story about a boy's courageous battle to free himself and others from the brutal grasp of slavery.

Inspired by true events, "City of Dreams" chronicles the journey of Jesús, a young Mexican boy whose dreams of becoming a soccer star are shattered when he's kidnapped, trafficked across the border, and sold into slavery to a sweatshop in downtown Los Angeles.

Jesús is thrown into the underworld of captivity, where survival hinges on enduring grueling work schedules and navigating the brutality of his captors. Living in servitude to ruthless traffickers, under the threat of the powerful El Jefe (Alfredo Castro), alongside fellow victims including the resilient Elena (Renata Vaca) and Carlitos (Golden Globe Nominee Diego Calva), Jesús navigates a world of exploitation and despair with the determination to escape the brutal grasp of slavery. Realizing that his only hope for freedom is to make a daring escape, this is the story of one boy who fought back.

The theme song, penned by hall-of-fame songwriter Linda Perry and performed by world-renowned Super Star Artist Luis Fonsi, adds a layer of emotive depth. Fonsi, the artist behind "Despacito," the most streamed song in history, lends his vocal prowess to the film, resonating with audiences globally.

The feature directorial debut of veteran producer Mohit Ramchandani, the film features a stellar ensemble cast led by newcomer Ari Lopez, whose mesmerizing performance is enhanced by the soul-stirring score of Academy Award Nominee Lisa Gerrard (*Gladiator*, *Ali*, *Inside Man*).

Produced By: Sean Wolfington, Jon Graham, Matt Diezel, Rufus Parker. Executive Produced By: Tony Robbins, Luis Fonsi, Linda Perry, Michael Phillips, Luis Mandoki, Enrique Santos, Vivek Ramaswamy, Mira Sorvino, Prince Royce, John Devaney

For more movie information: <https://www.cityofdreamsmovie.com/>

Watch the movie trailer: <https://www.cityofdreamsmovie.com/about-the-film>



Masters of Corruption by Mark Moyer

How the Federal Bureaucracy Sabotaged the Trump Presidency

Encounter Books, May 2024, 248 pages

"In the United States you can elect any president you want, but a small group of people you've never heard of still run everything -- year after year, administration after administration. That's not democracy. It's oligarchy, and Mark Moyer explains exactly how it works." —Tucker Carlson

This book tells a remarkable true story of bureaucratic assassination during the Trump presidency, revealing in vivid detail how career federal employees thwarted President Trump's efforts to drain the swamp.

Mark Moyer, a senior political appointee at the US Agency for International Development, discovered evidence of corruption involving five career bureaucrats and reported it to agency officials in 2018. Senior bureaucrats orchestrated a sophisticated retaliatory plot, which began when a Special Operations general fraudulently accused Moyer of divulging classified information, and ended with the termination of Moyer's employment.

The bureau that Moyer had been on track to lead, with an annual budget exceeding \$300 million, fell into the hands of one of his bureaucratic assassins. The leading perpetrator of the corruption exposed by Moyer subsequently escaped punishment by transferring to another federal agency.

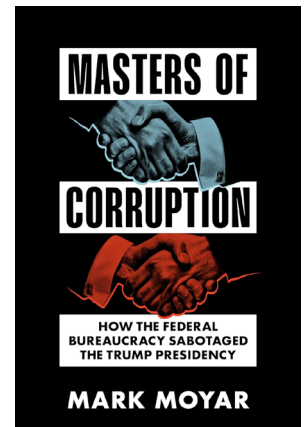
A multi-agency cover-up followed. Moyer sought help from three Offices of the Inspector General--the government's main bulwarks against whistleblower retaliation--but all three conducted flimsy investigations that absolved the bureaucracy. When Senator Charles Grassley demanded that agency officials fill the gaps in the government's story, he was met with lies and evasions.

This suspense-filled drama provides an insider's view of the federal bureaucracy's corruption, its weaponization of bureaucratic procedures, and its failures to protect employees from retaliation. In telling his story, Moyer reveals how future administrations can drain the swamp and draws a roadmap for the restoration of integrity to the United States government.

Biographical Notes: Mark Moyer holds the William P. Harris Chair in Military History at Hillsdale College. During the Trump administration, he received a political appointment at the US Agency for International Development, serving as the director of the Office of Civilian-Military Cooperation. After he reported several career bureaucrats for corruption, he was fraudulently accused of divulging classified information, setting in motion the events described in this book. His previous academic appointments include the Kim T. Adamson Chair of Insurgency and Terrorism at the US Marine Corps University and fellowships at the Joint Special Operations University and Texas A&M University. The author of seven previous books on history, leadership, and international development, he has also written articles for the New York Times, the Washington Post, the Wall Street Journal, and many other publications. He received a BA summa cum laude from Harvard and a PhD from Cambridge.

"Mark Moyer's account of his years in the public arena is vital for every citizen to read and understand. It is the unelected that largely govern us--and subvert the will of the people. This is the best insider account on this subject I have read. Moyer's Masters of Corruption is a must read."—Peter Schweizer, author of #1 NYT bestseller Red Handed

<https://markmoyar.com/>



We the People of Interest

What is Justice?

By Werner Graf

"Truth, Justice and the American Way!"

As noted in my last post on the subject, this tagline originated in the 1940 Superman radio program. We considered "Truth" last month, now let's reflect on the concept of "Justice".

Just as with "truth", our culture has long valued "Justice" as a steadfast virtue and we look to the American judiciary to administer "blind" justice in the context of our laws and the social contract between all citizens. Throughout our history, justice has been a fundamental aspiration for individuals to thrive. Society depends on it.

So, just what is Justice actually? Let's start with a simple definition to level-set the conversation: Justice is to be fair. Nothing more, nothing less.

Unfortunately, the real world isn't that simple. Fairness is subjective. One man's justice is another's excessive application of revenge. And, if justice is essentially an individual moral decision, what is the difference between justice and vengeance? Can Justice indeed be revenge and vice versa?

The world of Superhero fiction, many darker "antihero" characters dealt with this issue. The Punisher, conceived by Gerry Conway and John Romita, doled out brutal, unending "justice" to the underworld after his family had been killed in front of him. Bob Kane's Batman largely did the same thing after his parents were murdered.



But perhaps the most iconic symbol of “blind justice” was Stan Lee and Bill Everett’s Daredevil who was literally blind. As NYC lawyer Matt Murdock, a devout Catholic who saw his father killed by the mob, he uses his intellect to fight for ordinary people by day. At night, however, he takes justice into his own hands, often in a very unsaintly way.

As with many early Marvel characters, Daredevil (the “Man Without Fear”) is not a one-dimensional paper cut-out. At the heart of the character, Marvel had Daredevil always contemplating the deeper meaning in his actions. Unlike Batman and the Punisher, Daredevil struggles with the line between vengeance and justice (classic Catholic guilt). Each night he ponders what drives him, conflicted by the pleasure he sometimes feels in meting out his brand of “justice”.

What Daredevil struggles with is what we all struggle with---What is appropriate “justice” when we witness great pain or even death inflicted on those we love or other innocents? Daredevil’s doubt is often put to rest by the belief that he is balancing the scales and doing what is necessary as prevention so that others are not similarly victimized.

Yet over and over again, Matt Murdock returns to his church to check his judgment and morality. He repeatedly takes counsel from a trusted priest in confession, and battles his inner-evil of taking pleasure in punishing evildoers (ie the difference between self-satisfying revenge, and a justice which is blind and righteous). In the excellent Daredevil Netflix series for example, the priest warns him to avoid the trap of thinking that correcting “Another man’s evil does not make you good”.

Therein lies the danger and the difference. The nature of Revenge is that it is essentially a self-gratifying emotional reaction. It emerges from our indignation of being wronged and our desire to make the perpetrator suffer in return. This sentiment, though perhaps rooted in an innate sense of fairness, is also selfishly pleasing, in the same way that self-pity might be. Revenge, no matter how satisfying it might feel in the moment, is a fleeting emotion that often leads to escalating cycles of disproportionate harm.

Conversely, Justice is a principled pursuit of fairness, and only seeks to make things right. Proper Justice restores balance, upholds fairness and is rooted in only righteousness, without the clouding influence of self-gratification. Only when it is institutionalized in the form of laws, societal norms and due process, is government respected and legitimized.

The Judeo-Christian origins of America would perhaps bring the Founders to Leviticus 19:15: “Do not pervert justice; do not show partiality to the poor nor favoritism to the great, but judge your neighbor fairly.” Note, it doesn’t say “don’t judge”, on the contrary, it commands that justice should be dispensed equally, without personal bias i.e. blind (like Daredevil).

What if a sense of fairness and the administration of justice diverge? Martin Luther King once stated: “One has not only a legal but a moral responsibility to obey just laws. Conversely, one has a moral responsibility to disobey unjust laws. I would agree with St. Augustine that ‘an unjust law is no law at all.’” Justice is not analogous to legality.

Justice then ultimately requires judgment, morality and restraint. It is the hard stuff of heroes. John Adams again comes to mind in citing that our US Constitution was made only for a moral and religious people, but not for any other. In other words, our republic and all its institutions, are dependent on a moral and religious citizenship reverent to the fundamental principles of justice under which we’ve agreed to be governed.

One final observation on the subject: The gravitas inherent in a bedrock concept like “Justice” is naturally attractive to those who wish to leverage it’s importance for their own political ends. For example, the term is now routinely bastardized by the usual suspects who commandeer weighty words with universal support to further more trivial, debatable policy.

Since everyone is for “Justice”, it is not surprising that it has been co-opted and watered-down through conscious over-application. It is a clever tactic to put detractors on the defense and vilify opposition. Today, terms like “social justice”, “environmental justice”, “economic justice” and a host of other word-salad applications often promote frivolous policy designed to promote it’s polar-opposite!

In addition, justice inherently applies to INDIVIDUALS, not groups. There is no blanket group justice, just as we don’t acknowledge guilt or victims by association.

Here’s a trick—don’t allow them to trivialize it! Reflecting now on the difference between “justice” and “vengeance”, upon hearing “Justice” used to balkanize us, or justify advantages for various grievance groups, simply reverse the tactic and call it what it is by substituting the word “vengeance” in reply.

For example, when your neighbor, church or HR department claims that the latest “Diversity, Equity and Inclusion” (DEI) initiative is simply “social justice”, simply reply, “no, it’s social vengeance. Discrimination on any basis is absolutely wrong as it is contrary to fairness.” More often than not, those co-opting a bedrock concept like “Justice” will not be prepared for such clarity in response.

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What Can the Righteous Do?

The Political and Moral Supports of Society are Falling Into Ruins

By Jonathan Brentner, August 19 2024

Long ago, David asked a question that's on the minds of many believers today. "If the foundations are destroyed, what can the righteous do?" (Psalm 11:3). In other words, what do we do as the political and moral supports of society fall to ruins around us?

Does this not sum up what we see today?

The manipulation of politics in the U.S. has recently become front and center for all to see. Despite receiving no votes in the primaries, the delegates to the Democratic convention had no choice but to select Kamala Harris as their nominee for president during a binding pre-convention tally.

The subsequent selection of Tim Walz as her running mate highlights the deplorable moral depravity of America. As Minnesota's governor, he not only signed legislation permitting abortion up to the time of birth but also approved a law that permits the killing of babies that survive it; he legalized a form of infanticide. Walz also made his state a safe haven for children seeking horrific and wicked transgenderism procedures, which are destroying the lives of so many kids today. He stood by as Minneapolis burned delaying the implementation of the National Guard to stop the destruction of the city.

How is it possible that such a morally depraved and vile man is on the ticket for the highest office in America? What does this tell us about the values of the woman who would be the President?

The woeful state of society today is the result of Satan's prolonged attacks, which the Psalmist described in the preceding verse, "For behold, the wicked bend the bow; they have fitted their arrow to the string to shoot in the dark at the upright in heart" (Psalm 11:2). The image is that of the wicked lurking in dark shadows waiting for an opportunity to ambush the righteous.

Today, the devil's minions no longer hide in the dark; they fire their deadly arrows in broad daylight. How are we to respond to the perilous times in which we live?

Resist the Temptation to Hide from Reality

If you are like me, there are times when you just want to run away from it all and pretend that the horrors of our day simply don't exist. David expressed that same impulse in Psalm 11:1.

"In the Lord I take refuge, how can you say to my soul, Flee like a bird to your mountain."

As David considered the turmoil of his day with King Saul in charge and the constant threat to his life, he considered the option of completely running far away from the danger. Most commentators believe that this counsel came from his advisors, although some regard this as an inward discussion.

Does this option not seem appealing today? We feel the lure of allowing entertainment, sports, travel, smartphones, and other pleasures to distract us from the real world and the dangers that threaten our livelihood. There's nothing inherently wrong with these things as long as we do not let them dull our senses to dangers afoot in our world and the lateness of the hour in which we live.

Run to the Lord

Rather than ignore the evil of his day, David ran to the Lord. He filled his mind with truths regarding His sovereignty, His all-knowing and all-seeing characteristics. He could face the perils of life because his hope rested in the One who controls all things.

"The Lord is in his holy temple; the Lord's throne is in heaven; his eyes see, his eyelids test the children of man" (Psalm 11:4).

The One who loves justice (see Psalm 37:28) sees all the wickedness, deception, and violence that we do and so much more! David could face the threats to his life because he remained confident that the Lord "hates the wicked and the one who loves violence" (v. 5). Of course, David took steps to protect himself from Saul, but he resisted the temptation to flee far away. Instead, he ran to the Lord.

A realistic look at our world generates fears within us. Those seeking to enslave the people under a tyrannical world government talk openly of drastically reducing the world's population. I understand the desire to flee to the distractions around us rather than believe the elite of our world actually desire to kill most of us and are actively working toward that goal.

But is it not better to run to the Lord and rest in His promises? For us, that signifies eagerly awaiting Jesus' appearing as Paul described in Philippians 3:20-21:

But our citizenship is in heaven, and from it we await a Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ, who will transform our lowly body to be like his glorious body, by the power that enables him even to subject all things to himself.

More than ever before, these words provide a safe refuge from the perils of this world.

Trust the Lord to Deal with the Wicked

Not only does the Lord provide a safe haven to which we can run, but we also have the assurance that He most certainly will judge the wicked. In verse 6, David prayed:

"Let him rain coals on the wicked; fire and sulfur and a scorching wind shall be the portion of their cup."

Although David's request sounds harsh to modern ears, it rightly portrays the fate of the wicked who persist in rejecting the Lord. Yes, there will be a day of reckoning before God for all the unsaved of all the ages (Revelation 20:11-15). However, David asks God to judge the wicked in real-time, such as what happened to Sodom and Gomorrah.

Someday, perhaps quite soon, the Lord will exact a horrible price on the wicked for the evil and deception that they impose upon the world (read Psalm 75:6-8). Those killing and destroying children will forever regret their actions. They will watch as Jesus destroys their kingdom in real-time (Revelation chapters 6-18), and later, He will sentence them to the lake of fire.

Do we not, at times, feel helpless as we watch evil and deception grow in our world? In Psalm 37:1-20, David tells us not to let these things fill us with anger but rather to trust our Lord, the righteous judge, to deal with the wicked of our day.

Psalm 11 speaks to the day in which we live. We do face the temptation to flee to the distractions of our day rather than face the perils that loom on the horizon. When we do gaze upon the perils of our day, do we not feel anger rising within us? This Psalm reminds us that God is surely in control, and He will do all that He promises us in His word. Someday, we will "behold his face" (Psalm 11:7); we will surely meet Him in the air.

Maranatha!!!!

To access the article: <https://www.jonathanbrentner.com/https/jonathan-brentner-g8fgsquarespacecom/config/2024/8/19/what-can-the-righteous-do>

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