



## NEWSLETTER

October 2024 ISSUE#: HV008

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](mailto: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

The "American Dream" section is introduced in this month's newsletter.

### American Dream

A set of beliefs or ideals that guide US citizens as they exist on a daily basis.

By CFI Team

### What is the American Dream?

The "American Dream" is a sort of ethos or set of beliefs that drive many U.S. citizens as they work toward creating a life for themselves. This set of ideals – which includes notions of individual rights, freedom, democracy, and equality – is arguably centered around the belief that each individual has the right and freedom to seek prosperity and happiness, regardless of where or under what circumstances they were born.

A key element of the American dream is the belief that through hard work and perseverance, anyone can rise "from rags to riches," becoming financially successful and socially upwardly mobile.

American writer and historian James Truslow Adams best captured the definition of the American Dream: "Life should be better and richer and fuller for everyone, with opportunity for each according to ability or achievement," with neither social class nor the circumstances surrounding their birth being a barrier to success.

### The Origin of the American Dream

The American Dream is rooted in the U.S. Declaration of Independence. That document, created by America's founding fathers, says two key things that are largely responsible for shaping what the classic American Dream is. The declaration says that "all men are created equal" and that each man/woman has the right to "life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness."

It's important to note that the U.S. Constitution – the legal foundation that delineates how the government shall operate on a daily basis – reiterates this idea in its Preamble, noting that its purpose is to help "secure the Blessings of Liberty to ourselves and our Posterity."

## The Many Versions of the American Dream

Throughout the history of the U.S. – both before and after it became an independent nation – the American Dream has changed, going through a variety of forms and meanings while maintaining as its essence the core beliefs of freedom and happiness in place.

In its earliest years, the dream was centered around the lure of westward expansion and frontier life within the U.S. In 1774, Virginia's Governor, John Murray, said that most Americans were constantly imagining that "the Lands further off are still better than those upon which they are already settled." He also noted the constant dissatisfaction and desire for even more and even better when he said, "If they attained Paradise, they would move on if they heard of a better place farther west."

### 19th Century America

In the 19th century, the beginnings of mass emigration were affected by and affected the American Dream. A perfect example of this is the emigration of many highly-educated Germans who ran to the U.S. after the failure of the 1848 German revolution and the attempt to break down hierarchical standards. They were drawn by the political and economic freedoms embraced in the New World, and the fact that America did not operate on the same class system, nor did it subscribe to the notion that a person could only achieve as much as their class dictated.

The American Dream was also significantly shaped and perpetuated by the discovery of gold in the 19th century. The 1849 discovery in California drew in hundreds of thousands of men believing that they, too, could pan a fortune overnight. While most did not, and in fact, many men spent their families' entire savings to find nothing, several men did become rich in a matter of days. While it has changed through many years and different political and economic circumstances within the country, the belief that personal success is possible for anyone to attain is a dream that still motivates Americans today.

### The 20th Century American Dream

The term "American Dream" became even more popular in the 20th century, partly on the back of James Truslow Adams' 1931 book, "Epic of America." Adams noted how the American Dream had changed over time and how it was difficult for European aristocracy to understand its value or why it drew so many immigrants to the states.

Adams went on to say that the American Dream is, "not a dream of motor cars and high wages merely, but a dream of a social order in which each man and each woman shall be able to attain to the fullest stature of which they are innately capable, and be recognized by others for what they are, regardless of the fortuitous circumstances of their birth or position."

The American historian also stressed that, despite the growth of the country, the explosion of the rich and successful, and how such families established a sort of social order where those coming from a position of wealth tended to succeed and have greater opportunities, that the belief was that, regardless of this, anyone could find success and happiness. He noted that the American Dream is and has been "... much more than that. It has been a dream of being able to grow to fullest development as man and woman, unhampered by the barriers which had slowly been erected in the older civilizations, unrepressed by social orders which had developed for the benefit of classes rather than for the simple human being of any and every class."

Without getting into a lengthy discussion of politics, several political movements – such as the movement for the right of women to vote, as well as the civil rights movement that flourished in the 1960s – were all parts of what was shaped by and then further shaped, the American Dream.

### Conclusion

Ultimately, the American Dream maintains a core set of beliefs: the right to certain freedoms that enable every individual to pursue a life of success and happiness. What success and happiness mean to one person is not necessarily what they mean to another. In the end, it is up to each American to decide what the Dream looks like to them, with the knowledge that America affords them the opportunity to pursue it freely.

Read the article: <https://corporatefinanceinstitute.com/resources/economics/american-dream>

### 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](mailto:info@mercerwe.com)

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## Election 2024

### What About Bob? Candidate Bob Zansitis answers questions from local media groups

By TruthBTold

With election day just a month away, multiple local media groups have reached out to candidates for information on their qualifications and positions. The following Q&As have been provided to us by the Zansitis campaign.

#### What part of the township or borough do you live in?

I live in the western part of the Township.

#### How long have you lived in Hopewell Valley?

I've lived here for 15 years

#### Tell us about your family — domestic partner with name, children with names, where they go to school if applicable. (optional)

Kim and I share a beautiful home that I proudly built 7 years ago. It's our sanctuary, where we live with our cherished Chihuahua, Paco, who brings us endless joy. We're also fortunate to care for two beloved horses, Holly and Brandy, who are part of our family and add a special sense of peace and connection to our environment.

#### Tell us about the moment you decided to run, or run again, for office. Why have you made this decision?

I decided to run because our township deserves more than one voice guiding its future. Our community thrives on diversity of thought, and I believe real change is needed to ensure every resident is heard and represented. It's time to bring fresh perspectives and stand up for the values that make Hopewell strong.

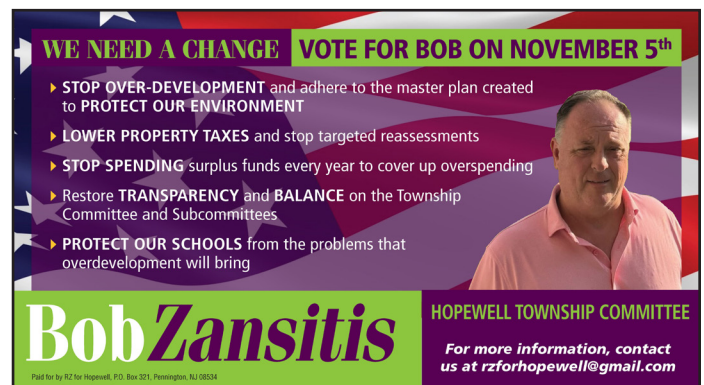
#### Whether you are running in the township or the boroughs, the Hopewell Parc PILOT payment plan has been a hot button issue for many voters. From the point of view of your hometown, how do you feel the issue has been handled? What do you think would be the best and fairest way to resolve it going forward?

The PILOT program was meant for urban redevelopment, not residential projects, and its misuse is unfairly burdening Hopewell Township taxpayers. I believe reforming the PILOT program is a necessary step if removal isn't an option. By tightening eligibility, increasing transparency, and limiting the duration of abatements, we can ensure the program truly serves the community.

Focusing on more accountable, community-driven solutions will help us address the shortcomings of the current program while still fostering growth. Most importantly, we must work closely with our neighboring boroughs, ensuring that all benefit from these resources and move forward together.

#### That issue aside, what do you think are two of the most important issues facing your town right now, and how will you as a member of the committee/council address those concerns in your next term?

Balance - We need balance on the township committee. Having all five members from one party creates an echo chamber. Hopewell deserves diverse perspectives and someone to represent a different voice in decision-making.



Unification - Restoring and repairing relationships with our neighboring boroughs is key. It is an essential component for creating a more cohesive future for our community, our children, and our environment. We need to focus more on working together to create a more unified Hopewell.

Additionally, In my upcoming term, I aim to address key issues: halt overdevelopment and adhere to our master plan to protect the environment, lower property taxes while stopping targeted reassessments, and end the use of surplus funds that mask overspending.

**Why are you the right person to serve on the committee/council for the next three years?**

I am running for this committee because I deeply care about the future of Hopewell, and I believe we are heading down the wrong path. With a steadfast commitment to doing what's right for all of Hopewell's residents, I will work tirelessly to ensure our community thrives—guided by integrity, fairness, and a love for the town we call home.

**What is your position on the amount of development going on in the southern tier of Hopewell?**

There are many issues in how the Township Committee has handled affordable housing, including lack of sewers, failure to account for additional school capacity, and a poor ratio of affordable to market rate units. The fact that all of the housing is concentrated in the lower tier of the township is more poor planning. The Committee has been ignoring or modifying the master plan that was developed years ago with the express purpose of protecting our environment, including the well water that the majority of Hopewell residents rely on. I believe that we have already over-developed the southern tier and that future phases, which are on the way, need to be spread around the township.

**Were PILOT programs warranted, or necessary, to attract builders to Hopewell? Are any portion of PILOT funds required to be spent on schools?**

The PILOT program was meant for urban redevelopment, not residential projects, and its misuse is unfairly burdening Hopewell Township taxpayers. Further, the PILOT funds are not required to be paid to schools in the way that regular property taxes are.

I believe reforming the PILOT program is a necessary step if removal isn't an option. By tightening eligibility, increasing transparency, and limiting the duration of abatements, we can ensure the program truly serves the community. Focusing on more accountable, community-driven solutions will help us address the shortcomings of the current program while still fostering growth. Most importantly, we must work closely with our neighboring boroughs, ensuring that all benefit from these resources and move forward together.

**Do you believe that our current Township Committee is responsive to Hopewell residents?**

I do not believe that the Township Committee has any interest in hearing from the public. If you ever attend a Committee meeting, you will see that the meetings are designed to avoid dealing with taxpayers. Time to speak is severely limited, and responses to questions are delayed so the Committee rarely actually answers a question. At times, residents are ridiculed, and the Committee occasionally has police officers present to intimidate the public. Time and time again, I have witnessed concerned citizens being ignored, or told that issues will be looked into at a later meeting.

**The recent \$87 million school referendum was overwhelmingly voted down. What message does that NO vote say about voters attitudes toward government spending?**

I believe that taxpayers are fed up with excessive spending at all levels in the township, and they came out for this election to express their opinion. I supported and campaigned for a NO vote, because I feel that the dollar figure was too high, and included too many items that were not necessities. The schools need to re-work the referendum and create a more reasonable figure that is not such a large burden on taxpayers. Hopefully, the Township Committee got the message as well.

**On a Township Committee made up of 5 Democrats, what effect will will electing a Republican have for Hopewell taxpayers?**

As the lone Republican on the Committee, I will be a voice for the Hopewell taxpayer. Many of the issues that we have been having in Hopewell are due to the lack of opposing opinions on the Committee. The Democrats almost always vote unanimously with very little difference of opinion. As a result, we have over-development, a hotel being built on a historical site, a large storage facility being built, and a reduction in services in the township. The main thing I will bring is some balance to the Committee to stop the echo chamber.

**As a local business owner, how do you feel that your experience will help you as a Township Committee member?**

I believe that I can bring real-world experience to a Committee that seems out of touch with Hopewell residents. As the owner of a local painting business, I know the challenges that small businesses face in this economy. I also work with Hopewell resident and I know the issues that they are concerned with. From what I have seen in Township Committee meetings, I believe that the Committee is out of touch with the taxpayers that they represent.

**Why, in spite of lowering the tax rate last year, did taxes go up for most Hopewell taxpayers?**

Last year, the Township Committee claimed that they lowered the tax rates for all Hopewell home rates. What they failed to mention was that they had a significant portion of homes in the township re-assessed higher. The result was that most homeowners paid more in taxes than the year before. It was a typical political stunt to win an election. The fact is that taxes have gone up every year since the Democrats took over the majority on the Township Committee.

# Too Big To Rig!

By John Galt

## Remember – your vote matters!

The 2024 General Election will perhaps be the most important election of our lifetime. At stake on the national level is runaway inflation, an out of control border crisis and drug and human trafficking among other issues. In Hopewell Township citizens are focused on the repercussions of over development, rising taxes, unfair PILOT programs and the lack of transparency by a one party led Twp Committee. For all these reasons it's imperative that every registered voter exercise their right to vote and have their voices heard.

If you're not registered to vote, it's not too late to register online. If you have trouble getting to the poll on election day there are several options available to you for casting your ballot. Don't be discouraged, your vote does matter. The voter turnout rate in the Township for the last general election was about 35%. This is why it is so important to get out and vote this year. It worked for the special election, as voters definitively rejected the \$87 School Bond Referendum, and it will work again in November!

If you are already on the vote by mail list you will receive a mail in ballot. It is too late to remove your name for the November 5th general election so you must Vote by mail. If you don't, when you go to the poll you will be given a provisional ballot. This can be time consuming and frustrating as well as risking your ballot be rejected during adjudication. To remove your name from the Vote By Mail list for future elections, fill out the form found at this link:

<https://www.mercercounty.org/home/showpublisheddocument/2448>

Never before has it been this easy to cast your ballot. There are three ways you can vote in Mercer County.

**Vote By Mail:** Any voter may apply for a VBM by completing the Application for Vote-By-Mail and returning the application to the Mercer County Clerk. Here is a short video that explains how to fill out your application (<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=XUdTJN1yMU8>). You can download a VBM application here [nj.gov/state/elections/vote-by-mail.shtml](https://nj.gov/state/elections/vote-by-mail.shtml) Remember, VBM ballots can be mailed or deposited in Vote By Mail drop boxes located at the Mercer County Board of Elections office at 930 Spruce St, Lawrence NJ 08648, in Hopewell at the Township Administration building at 201 Washington Crossing-Pennington Rd, Titusville NJ 08560 or any other drop box location within Mercer County.

**In-Person Early Voting:** This option enables registered voters to vote in person, using a voting machine for 9 days prior to election day. This enables you to vote at a time and place that is most convenient for you. There are 8 early voting locations available for all voters registered in Mercer County. You can find the list of locations and Dates & Times here (<https://www.mercercounty.org/departments/superintendent-of-elections/early-voting-information>). Early votes cast are not counted until election day, so this is a very safe and secure method of voting.

**Day of Voting:** You can always choose to vote on the day of at your polling location from 6am to 8pm on Election Day, November 5th 2024. We now have 14 election districts in Hopewell Twp. In case yours has been moved, you can find your election district here (<https://voter.svrs.nj.gov/registration-check>). Also Be sure to check your sample ballot for your polling location as some locations have been moved. Here is a list of the locations for 2024:

For those of you who are not registered to vote, the Voter Registration deadline is October 15, 2024. If you are a US citizen 18 years of age or older and have been a resident of the County for 30 days prior to the election, you can register to vote online by following this link <https://voter.svrs.nj.gov/register>

**MERCER COUNTY, NEW JERSEY  
GENERAL ELECTION - NOVEMBER 5, 2024**

**Early Voting Locations**

<b>EAST WINDSOR</b> Mercer County Library 138 Hickory Corner Road	<b>HAMILTON</b> Colonial Fire Company 801 Kuser Road	<b>PRINCETON</b> Princeton Municipal Building Community Room 400 Witherspoon St Princeton, NJ 08540
<b>EWING</b> Mercer County Office Park 1440 Parkside Avenue	<b>LAWRENCE</b> Mercer County Library 2751 Brunswick Pike (at Darrah Lane)	<b>TRENTON</b> Trenton Fire Headquarters 244 Perry Street
<b>PENNINGTON</b> Pennington Fire Department 120 Broemel Place		

**Early Voting Schedule**  
October 26, 2024 – November 3, 2024  
Wednesday - Saturday: 10am to 8pm, Sunday 10am to 6pm

Hopewell Township	
Locations	Districts
Hopewell Twp Mun Building, 201 Wash Cross-Pen Rd, Auditorium	1, 7, 9
Union Fire Company, 1396 River Rd, Rt 29, Auditorium	2, 3
Pennington Borough Hall, 30 North Mail Street	4
Pennington Senoir Center, 393 Reading Ave	5, 8
Hopewell Presbyterian Church, 80 West Broad St	6, 12
Project Freedom Community Center, 700 Heritage Ct	10, 11
Hopdewell Twp Mun Building, 201 Wash Cross-Pen Rd, Municipa; Court	13, 14
Hopewell Borough	
Locations	Districts
Hopewell Borough Hall, 88 East Broad St	1, 2
Pennington Borough	
Pennington Borough Hall, 30 North Mail Street	1
Pennington Borough Senior center, 393 Reading st	2, 3

## Other Election Dates to Remember:

- October 29, 2024: Vote By Mail (VBM) Application Deadline (By Mail)
- November 4, 2024, by 3pm: Vote By Mail (VBM) Application Deadline (In-Person)
- October 26, 2024 – November 3, 2024: Early Voting Period
- November 5, 2024: General Election Day
- November 5, 2024: Vote By Mail (VBM) Return Deadline (by 8pm return by dropbox or in US mail)

Voting is not only your God given right it is also a privilege and as such you need to be an informed voter. In 2021 The American Family Association (AFA) Action created an iVoterGuide to educate registered voters about the candidates in their area. On their website you can enter your address to find out information about the candidates in your area. You can find the iVoterGuide on their website <https://ivoterguide.com/>

**Remember – your vote matters!**

## You can help us clean up the voter roles

You can help us clean up the voter roles! Did you receive a vote-by-mail ballot (VBM) or a VBM application for someone who does not live at your address?

Follow these easy steps if you receive a vote-by-mail ballot for someone who does not live at your address:

1. Write “does not live at this address” or “deceased” on the envelope.
2. Place it back in your mailbox.
3. The ballot will be returned to Board of Elections so that they can take further action.
4. Please take a picture of the envelope with the name and reason and email it to [info@mercerwethepeople.com](mailto:info@mercerwethepeople.com) so that we can check the voter rolls and make sure it was properly removed.

## New Jersey November Election - Mail In Ballot Update and Trends

By Mark Demo, Citizens4NJEI (<https://www.facebook.com/groups/mercercitizens>)

As of October 2nd, New Jersey had mailed out 988,141 mail-in ballots, and 139,731 of these ballots have been returned, representing a 14% response rate.

Historically, New Jersey has averaged a 26% return rate for mail-in ballots, suggesting that at least another 117,000 ballots could still be received. This number could likely rise, however, due to increased interest in the presidential race.

In Mercer County, **44,653 mail-in ballots** were sent out. So far, **9,126 ballots** have been returned, which is **20.4%** of the total. In Hopewell Township, including Pennington Borough, **3,950 ballots** have been mailed, with **822 ballots returned**, representing a **20.8%** return rate.

An analysis of the overall returned ballots across the state shows the following breakdown by party affiliation:

- **91,505 ballots** were returned by Democrats, accounting for **65.5%** of the total returned ballots.
- **28,963 ballots** were returned by Republicans, representing **20.7%** of the total.
- **18,761 ballots** were returned by unaffiliated voters, which makes up **13.4%** of the total.
- **502 ballots** were returned by voters from all other registered parties, contributing **0.4%** to the total.

**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](http://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](http://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](http://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](http://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](http://www.nj.gov/state/elections/vote-track-my-ballot.shtml)

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## PILOTs and School Referendum

### More Referenda are Coming, and the School Board is not to Blame

By Dufresne

The Referendum failed overwhelmingly and the School District is likely to bring forth a scaled down request in the near future. Get used to it. Over the course of the next 30 years, the School District will be forced to bring forward referenda and to increase their yearly budgets substantially.

Why?

Most residents of the township expressed their indignation at the prospect of higher taxes, but residents should know that the School District has been placed in an untenable position by the Payments in Lieu of Taxes (PILOTs) approved by the Hopewell Township Committee.

#### **These PILOT agreements were optional and not required by the state's affordable housing mandates.**

They mean that 95% of the tax money forwarded from the new construction of market rate homes and affordable housing units will go directly to the Hopewell Township Municipal government coffers and NOT a cent to the School District.

Normally, the township collects your tax dollars and forwards along the School's share.

In a PILOT, the School District receives nothing, not one dime.

Sure, the Township says that it will voluntarily forward some money to the Schools, but far less than the School District would receive had the Township not passed the PILOTs.

Confused. That's because the Township wants you to be confused. **They insist that they are forwarding every dime that they are required to give to the Schools. Under a PILOT, that amount is zero dimes.**

**Does it matter to you? Yes, because over 30 years, the Hopewell Valley Schools will fail to receive more than \$220 million from the new residents of the township! That's right. \$220 million!**

That's a big part of why Hopewell Borough and Pennington Borough are suing Hopewell Township.

And that's why you will see rising School taxes and more referenda in the years to come.

**When will it stop? Only when the residents of Hopewell Valley come to Township Committee meetings and express their indignation at how the PILOT agreements are distorting how our tax dollars are collected and used.**

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## Education

### HVRSD Board of Education Meeting September 16, 2024

By The Wall of Ed

Recording: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=gc0p8kgztyo>

The next BOE meeting will be on October 14, 2024, at 6:30pm at the board office 425 South Main St. Pennington.

#### **Nearly 70% of Voters Reject the Special School \$87M Bond Referendum**

On September 17, 2024 Hopewell Valley let their votes be their voice, with nearly 70% saying no to a proposed \$87 million school bond referendum, signaling loud and clear that they are tired of the high tax burden placed on families. Dr. Treece, Superintendent of HVRSD, sent this email in response to the HVRSD Community.

Voters denied the bond referendum for Hopewell Valley Regional School District. Visit [hvrdsd.org/vote](https://hvrdsd.org/vote) for more details.

The district administration and Board of Education thank residents who took the time to learn about and vote on the referendum. Our building needs remain, and we face tough decisions to address those challenges. We will continue to carefully consider how to balance those demands with our programming needs. Have a good afternoon.

#### **HVRSD Board of Education Meeting September 16, 2024**

In her Superintendent's update at the September board meeting, Dr. Treece talked about concerns due to the rapidly rising enrollment levels, as the district saw 14 new students move in within a week and several of them had a need for special education services, which required them to hire a new teacher.

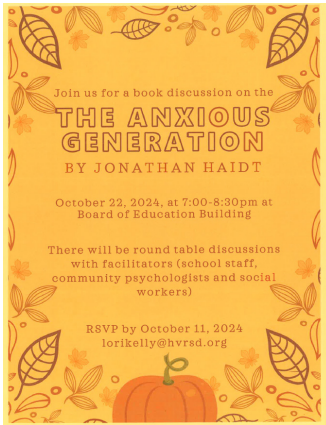
In March 2022, the township committee stated in an article "this (new housing) project should generate less than 30 new students, which is well within the current number of open seats in the Hopewell Valley Regional School system." Those estimates are proving to be untrue and our schools are being burdened with an influx of new students. Here is the article from

2022: [https://www.communitynews.org/news/commentary/from-hopewell-township-financing-a-better-future-with-pilots/article\\_629c5bfc-999e-11ec-97e1-a7d3e3a3ebf8.html](https://www.communitynews.org/news/commentary/from-hopewell-township-financing-a-better-future-with-pilots/article_629c5bfc-999e-11ec-97e1-a7d3e3a3ebf8.html)

**Voters should consider this when deciding who to vote for in the Township Committee race in November, an incumbent (Uma) with false claims on reducing taxes and housing projects that won't impact our schools, or a person (What about Bob?) who brings a fresh perspective and stands for our values that make Hopewell strong.**

In Dr. Treece's closing remarks, she said that if this referendum fails, she will have to come back to the community in year with a new proposal and perhaps remove one of the projects, and it's going to end up costing us more for less due to rising costs.

## HVRSD to Host a Roundtable Discussion on the Book "The Anxious Generation"



Please join HVRSD for a roundtable discussion about the book *The Anxious Generation* on October 22. This book explores how the increase of "phone-based" vs "play-based" interactions is causing an epidemic of childhood mental illness.

This book was reviewed by Mercer We the People of HV in July 2024, to read more about the book, please click here and see page 12.

<https://mercerwethepeople.com/wp-content/uploads/2024/08/0724-MercerWe.pdf>

### Looking to get More Involved in HVRSD?

Dr. Treece outlined several ways for parents and guardians to get more involved with the school. Here are a few ideas:

### Ways to get Involved

- 🍁 PTO's (school-based, STRIVE, Single Parents, EcoPTO)
- 🍁 HVEF (Hopewell Valley Education Foundation)
- 🍁 Principals Councils/District level Committees
- 🍁 School-based Green Teams
- 🍁 Music and Theatre Parent Association (MTPA)
- 🍁 Various TMS and HV CHS sports teams and extracurricular clubs

## Update on HVRSD Strategic Planning Goals

Dr. Treece provided an update on the HVRSD strategic goals and she plans to review the progress on a quarterly basis. Click here to view her presentation and read more about each goal and what has been done so far:

<https://go.boarddocs.com/nj/hvrtd/Board.nsf/files/D96SW5749C>

## September is suicide awareness month

Dr. Treece ended her presentation on a somber note, as she highlighted that September is suicide awareness month. This cause is something she is very passionate about after losing her son to suicide in 2017, and she highlighted that the district offers both financial and counseling support to families in need.

## Curriculum and Instruction

Dr. Pilitsis presented her curriculum and instruction (C&I) budget review and she outlined new initiatives, budget impacts, and vision and goals for the 2024/2025 school year. Three goals she outlined are responsive practices and setting up classroom expectations during the first week of school, using data to drive instruction, and effective tier 1 instruction. She said the main driver to her increased C&I budget surrounds a new K-5 English and Language Arts (ELA) program that the district plans to roll out in order to meet new ELA standards that Governor Murphy recently signed into legislation.

## Access for Multilingual Learners

A presentation was given to the HVRSD BOE about ACCESS, which is the district's program for multilingual learners. Presenter Lois Baldwin said that most elementary students exit the program in 1-2 years, while students at the secondary level, refugee students, and students who have experienced interrupted learning may take longer to exit the program.

## Public Comment

A member of the community asked that the board review policy 5657, which is the district's Transgender and Nonconforming policy, to revise the definition of sex and gender. She provided resources that the board can use to revise the policy. Dr. Treece said that the policy committee will review it.

A second community member shared her concerns about the referendum's proposed turf fields. She said that the district has repeatedly stated that athletic fees may need to be reinstated and middle school sports may need to be cut due to rising costs and the issue of meeting our budget needs. She asked if this could lead to a decrease in student participation in sports, would this negate the need for 2 new turf fields?

### District Goals

- 🍁 Student Learning—Autonomy
- 🍁 Facilities and Finance
- 🍁 Health and Wellness
- 🍁 Communication



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# The American Dream

## The American Way Under Siege

By Werner Graf

Ronald Reagan famously said in 1964: "If we lose freedom here, there is no place to escape to. This is the last stand on earth." That was the year I was born and those words have never been truer than today. In the third and final reflection on "Truth, Justice and the American Way!" we reflect on the exceptional and fragile nature of the "American Way", and the great risk of losing it in our generation.



Our culture yearns for "truth" and "Justice" as bedrock virtues. These are inherent in "the American Way". But when this phrase was coined in 1940 for the Superman radio program, what did it actually mean? Clearly it resonated and has lasted now for almost a century. But why was it embraced and how is it understood by every day Americans?

Perhaps a good way to answer is to think of The American Way metaphorically as a tapestry or flag, interwoven with truth and justice for sure, but also with many other equally powerful cultural threads. We salute the flag, are inspired by it at parades and drape our soldiers' coffins with it. We are angered when miserable wretches showcase the grievance of the day by defiling it.

Yet no one is born patriotic. It is not pre-ordained. Patriotism must be instilled through constant reintroduction of subsequent generations of why our system of government and culture are exceptional. The flag is a symbol that we share regardless of our race creed color financial status or, assumably, political views. In addition to the threads of truth and justice, three particular threads in this interwoven tapestry of the American Way are under tremendous assault currently.

**1. Subsidiarity:** the founders believed quite clearly in the governing concept of subsidiarity. Subsidiarity is the principle that a central authority should have a subsidiary function performing only those tasks which cannot be performed at a more local level. States, for example, were much more autonomous and independent of the federal government at the country's inception.

Our founders were deathly afraid of government overreach and incursion into individual rights. It is the whole premise of the revolution for which they risked their blood and treasure. They understood that organizations over time become living things, taking on lives of their own to perpetuate their survival and expansion. Groups don't always act with the same integrity that individuals do and individuals often become expendable for the good of the collective. Our founders looked ahead and tried to build a framework of **subsidiarity** to stave off the natural tendencies of collectivism

Therefore, the Constitution is essentially a document restricting government, not one addressing the behavior of the citizenry. Problems are to be solved at the most local level--this is why we have local school boards, local police forces, and local voting organizations. However, the natural tendency of government is to grow and to centralize. We saw this locally a few years ago when Princeton Township merged with Princeton borough under the false promise of lower taxes through consolidated services. No such luck.

This trend away from subsidiarity is happening across the United States as more and more functions which should be locally governed and controlled are being usurped by larger government organizations. Many people think that local New Jersey School Board's control their district's own costs and content, but Trenton imposes many unfunded mandates which drain local school boards of control as well as curriculum mandates such as the pornography being peddled now masquerading as tolerance.

Similarly, the teacher's union has rigged the system so that if a local school board wished to hold the line on wage increases, the State imposes itself as an arbiter and imposes salary increases on average with surrounding districts. Local control is a mirage, and the folks entrusted by the community to manage local school districts are now powerless to do so.

These are two small examples however we see the vast expansion of the administrative state nationally. The Federal bureaucracy has essentially become a fourth branch of government and beholden apparently to no one as Congress cannot get answers to basic questions nor remove administrative bureaucrats who are incompetent, purposely doing damage or become predatory to their own citizenry. The legislative branch is often reduced to a loud and often indignant harem of eunuchs in the face of DOD, FBI and Homeland "Security" transgressions.

As subsidiarity erodes, accountability to the people erodes also. With this, the temptation to be predatory (financially or otherwise) to citizens who no longer have recourse, is immense. We see that now with the increasingly adversarial role government takes to it's own constituents at the behest of politicians who do not have legitimate authority.

**2. The Concept of “Negative Rights”:** Negative rights, as opposed to positive rights, are rights inherent in personhood. They impose no obligations on others, nor do they require permission from others to be exercised. For example, in the United States we have the right to bare arms. The reason we have this right is because it is an inherent right of every man to find the means necessary to protect themselves, their family and their possessions from predators--whether they be neighbors, a mob, or their government. This right requires nothing from anyone else and is not to be infringed upon.

Same with the right to assemble, the right to worship your God as you see fit, and the right to free speech. These rights require nothing of others. They are God-given and self-evident and exist with the only guardrails being they cannot infringe on others' rights. For example, if worshipping your God requires human sacrifice, it infringes on another and is not a “Negative Right”

Positive rights, on the other hand, are those rights which do require an obligation on somebody else. It is an imposition on others. The reason you don't have a right to a car, a job, or healthcare, is because it requires an imposition on other people to provide these things. You cannot force a business owner to give you a job, you cannot force a doctor to provide health care. In essence, you cannot conscript your neighbor either by force to perform or pay for it to satisfy your “right”. A positive right is no right at all, only a desire or threat, often carried out by those proclaiming loudly of their own benevolence.

We saw during COVID how little people understand this basic concept. How many people were very quick to demand their neighbor wear a mask, get a vaccine or lose their job, because they had a “right” to be healthy? What they failed to realize is that one man's paranoia is not a sufficient standard to infringe on another man's rights. You cannot tell your neighbor to wear a mask because you're scared any more than they can tell you not to because it's foolish.

Negative Rights are often the first casualties of crisis because it is exactly during those times that the collective mentality, i.e. the needs of the many outweigh the needs of the one mentality, kicks in. The human psyche changes when threatened, making this core tenant of the American Way, very fragile. Great men have fallen prey to it's lure: Adams with the Sedition Act, Lincoln with the suspension of habeas corpus, and Trump by allowing shutdowns of American small businesses by dictator-ish governors. The government uses COVID, Climate Scares, and Race all too often to play upon this all-too-human vulnerability of discarding rights during “threatening times”. As Benjamin Franklin said “any society that would give up a little liberty to gain a little security will deserve neither and lose both.” We are there now.

**3. Freedom of Speech:** The great Italian Priest, Father Luigi Giussani, coined an interesting term “totalizing philosophy”: which is the all-consuming desire of men to satisfy the need to understand and explain. Archbishop William Lori wrote a great synopsis about the troubles of totalizing philosophies, labeling them as “myths and idols”, driving dysfunctional behavior when challenged. Marxism for example, explains all of history in terms of exploitation of classes. Communists see the world as one of oppression. When conflicting facts and viewpoints emerge, their adherence to the totalizing philosophy of oppression causes them to censure and attack the challenge.

Think of it in it's most severe form as a woke “Mass Formation Psychosis”, where entire groups embrace a totalizing philosophy with such fever, it causes them to abandon individual rights like used toilet paper. Currently, “wokeism” views reality through the prisms of several totalizing philosophies. First is race, which demands that prejudice is ever-present and inescapable, driven by a social structure in which imperial powers perpetuated historic wrongs. Their solution, of course, is to brand people today based on their cosmetics so as to address historic wrongs for which people had no part. Individuals are grouped into systemic oppressors or victims, regardless of their actions or character, and penalized or rewarded as such. This totalizing philosophy and others like it (DEI, climate change, COVID danger, J6, etc) demands that all opposing viewpoints be silenced.

Cancellation Culture is blatant violation of a core negative right, free speech, which seems to be acceptable collateral damage to the woke mob. They have no problems ensuring that their fragile worldviews are not subject to scrutiny by using government agencies, no longer restrained by framework of the founders, as their enforcers. The recent collusion exposed by the Twitter files between government and the big tech companies to suppress alternate views on race, climate, and COVID, is disgraceful and destroying the “American Way”. It is the definition of Fascism.

As these threads fray, the tapestry of the American Way, becomes more threadbare and torn. Degradations in the traditions and norms of our culture, perpetrated largely by those on the left who believed the country is inherently racist and unworthy of our love, have driven a patriotic decay which is on overt display.

The American Way cannot be bottled and placed on a shelf for the next generation to open. Heritage is preserved only through active citizenry and, as John Adams loosely said, the American Way (our Constitution) is made only for a moral and religious people, wholly inadequate for any other. We must constantly educate our kids daily, so that they understand and can defend it against those many self-hating detractors, blinded by their totalizing philosophies, who would destroy it from within.

In 1967, as Ronald Reagan was being sworn in as governor of California, he said **“Freedom is a fragile thing and it is never more than one generation away from extinction. It is not ours by way of inheritance, it must be fought for and defended constantly by each generation, for it comes only once to a people. And those in world history who have known freedom and then lost it, have never known it again.”** Our founders established the American Way. We must defend it or freedom will be the natural casualty of its demise.

Please consider donating to the Graf Dairy Hero Foundation by sending a check to:

Hero Foundation  
PO Box 480  
Hopewell, NJ. 08525

You will receive a receipt for taxes if you include your return address.

Watch the Graf Dairy Welcome Exhibit video: [https://drive.google.com/file/d/18RG-FYXLbbYvryG\\_JJ1rSfiHuRGKKET/view](https://drive.google.com/file/d/18RG-FYXLbbYvryG_JJ1rSfiHuRGKKET/view)

More about the Graf Dairy Hero Foundation (GDHF) visit: <https://grafdairyherofoundation.com/>

Facebook link: <https://www.facebook.com/share/tkgb2MABoh5TYySB/?mibextid=K35XfP>

## Making the American dream a reality

### We will fight to cut spending, ensure families are better off tomorrow than today.

*By Rep. Dan Newhouse and Rep. Juan Ciscomani on October 3, 2024 in The Washington Times*

OPINION: The American dream is our national ethos, but it is becoming increasingly difficult to achieve today. Families are struggling, and younger people are not being set up for success, largely due to a broken economy. Mortgage interest rates have increased, gas prices have soared, groceries cost 25.8% more than in 2020 and a college degree no longer guarantees a job after graduation.

In past generations, parents could work hard, save diligently and provide their children with the opportunity for a high-quality education, setting them up for a better future. Children spent time in school dreaming of their futures, and after graduating, they would enter the workforce and secure fulfilling jobs, continuing the cycle.

But now, children and adults alike are starting to recognize that the dream they had hoped for is far more difficult to achieve.

When President Biden took office, inflation was at 1.4%. Since then, it has surged, causing the average American household to spend over \$1,000 more each month than it did three years ago for the same goods and services. It is easy to see why many Americans struggle to make ends meet, let alone save for a rainy day. Buying power has plummeted, and middle-class families are bearing the brunt of egregious price increases.

Even as families face higher inflation and a rising cost of living, real wages are down roughly 4.4% since 2021. For those receiving a paycheck every two weeks, this drop in earnings constitutes a loss of about a paycheck and a half each year. Americans feel the strain of an economy that does not work for them. Let's look at the facts: 56 million Americans have been struggling with credit card debt for at least a year, 1 in 3 adults 18 to 34 live in their parents' home, and the cost of living is so high that 1 in 8 retirees plan to go back to work just to put food on the table.

This is not what the American dream is supposed to look like, but defining the problem is the first step toward making things right. As proud fiscal conservatives and members of the House Appropriations Committee responsible for federal budgeting, we remain committed to advocating a commonsense, conservative approach to spending that works for Americans rather than against them. Every day, we hear from constituents who tell us that things have become unaffordable. As Congress works out next year's federal spending bills, we will fight to cut spending and ensure American families are better off tomorrow than they are today.

The American dream, which we still see as a beacon of hope and opportunity, feels more out of reach today than ever. By working to reduce interest rates, bringing costs back down to reasonable levels and being more strategic with entitlement programs that give incentive to unemployment, we can once again provide a better life for our children, grandchildren and future generations.

*Dan Newhouse represents Washington's 4th Congressional District. Juan Ciscomani represents Arizona's 6th Congressional District.*

Read the article: <https://www.washingtontimes.com/news/2024/oct/3/making-american-dream-reality/>



The American dream illustration by Linas Garsys / The Washington Times

## America desperately needs to bring back civics in education

By Nicholas Giordano, July 5, 2024 in the Washington Examiner

Civil society has deteriorated over the last three decades as people have withdrawn from civic life. The root cause of this trend lies in our failed education system, which has substituted nation-building civic education with destructive activism.

I've seen the results of this failed education firsthand in the classroom as a political science professor. Today's college students lack the fundamental knowledge of our rights and obligations to society.

Our education system was created to cultivate the next generation to build, strengthen, and defend our nation — not just by voting and paying taxes but by participating in the structures that make up civil society: family, faith, community organizations, and charity.

Today, we are suffering the repercussions of an education system that has turned its back on this purpose, and our families and communities are suffering as a result. We must reverse course and reinstall civics into our K-12 classrooms to preserve and strengthen this great country.

We need a populace that loves our country and its people and, to paraphrase President John F. Kennedy, asks what they can do for their country. The retreat of this mentality has allowed big government to expand into our personal lives and our communities, eroding the very character that makes America strong.

The shift away from teaching our youth civics has eroded our populace's concept of self-government and undermined the importance of personal responsibility, both of which are necessary to maintain a healthy republic.

The increasing culture of government dependency threatens our freedoms. For example, in 1945, 1.5% of our federal budget was allocated to social programs. Today, it consumes 65% of the budget. This reliance empowers the government and strips people of their ability to control their destinies.

Making this matter worse, community organizations such as the Knights of Columbus, the Elks Lodge, the Lions Clubs International, the Rotary Club, the League of Women Voters, the Kiwanis, and countless others are now on life support. Membership has dropped significantly, meetings have low attendance, and new people aren't joining. And as service to the community wanes, so do charitable giving and volunteerism. Over the last decade, charitable contributions and volunteer rates have plummeted.

These groups have historically played a vital role in community life, from social engagement to assisting those in need. They demonstrate the principle of self-governance where members come together to solve problems rather than rely on government intervention.

As many civic organizations disappear, so will the vital services they provide to the communities, including social safety nets. Their departure will inevitably lead more people to turn to the government for support. When community groups retreat, the government steps in — and never gets out.

As people relinquish their civic duties and grant more authority to the government, they grow increasingly detached from their communities and the social bonds that once gave our nation its strength. According to the Pew Research Center, we have become more distant — a majority of people don't know their neighbors and barely talk to the ones they do know.

This community detachment is the direct result of an education system that failed to produce an informed citizenry. Just 13% of students demonstrate proficiency in American history and 22% in civics. Most cannot pass a basic citizenship exam and are unaware of their enumerated rights, and fewer than half can name the three branches of government.

Furthermore, students have been bombarded with anti-American propaganda. Some educators even admit that their goal is to "dismantle" America. How can we expect to produce good citizenry when the majority of young people are not proud to be American and 30% of Generation Z believes Osama bin Laden was a force for good?

**If we fail to address this crisis, we risk losing the very essence of what it means to be American. That's why we need a robust civics education program — a curriculum that celebrates America's achievements and examines its shortcomings without reducing it to anti-Americanism. One that promotes patriotism and instills the values of personal responsibility, hard work, merit, charity, and an appreciation of liberty, all of which make up the American identity.**

By reintroducing civics, we can impart a lost generation with a sense of purpose instead of a sense of entitlement.

**As we look back to July 4, 1776, we ought to remember the ordinary men who rose to become statesmen as they pledged their lives, their fortunes, and their sacred honor for a cause that would change the course of human civilization. It's time for us to do the same and remember who we are as Americans and what makes our nation exceptional.**

*Nicholas Giordano is a political science professor at Suffolk Community College and a Leadership Institute Campus Reform Higher Education fellow.*

Read the article: <https://www.washingtonexaminer.com/restoring-america/patriotism-unity/3070741/america-desperately-needs-to-bring-back-civics-in-education/>

## The Real Questions of the Immigration Debate

Recent migrant scandals force us to consider who, how, and how much.

By Christopher F. Rufo, Sep 25, 2024

Political campaigns are symbolic ventures, designed to drive attention to certain issues and to marshal facts, language, and emotion to deliver a material advantage. From Cicero's campaign for the consulship to Kamala Harris and Donald Trump's campaigns for the presidency, it has always been thus.

This is a useful lens through which to view the current immigration debate. For several weeks, two migrant-related stories have dominated national attention: Venezuelan gang members apparently seizing apartments in Aurora, Colorado, and tensions resulting from large-scale Haitian migration in Springfield, Ohio. Beneath the surface of their rhetorical heat, the controversies point to three key questions of immigration policy: who, how, and how much.

Let's first clear away some misconceptions. Both Trump and Harris's stated views on immigration—which may not, of course, reflect their actual views—are more nuanced than commonly portrayed. In 2021, Harris warned illegal migrants that “if you come to our border, you will be turned back,” acknowledging, at least rhetorically, that Americans have the right to decide who enters the country. Likewise, Trump, despite his restrictionist reputation, often interleaves calls to “build the wall” with appeals to build a “big, beautiful door.” In other words, between the candidates, the questions of who, how, and how much are ordinal, rather than categorical.

The first and most controversial of those questions is “who.” Progressives believe that human beings are interchangeable, and that all differences are socially constructed and ultimately arbitrary. At first glance, this position seems grounded in the theory of natural right encapsulated in the Declaration of Independence's famous phrase, “all men are created equal.”

But this ignores a critical distinction. Yes, all men are born equal—that is, they are all born with the same human fundamentals—but this does not imply that all cultures, or civilizations, are equal. Culture is the product of tradition, not unmediated nature. Among the principles that cultures adopt and inculcate in their members, some are better, others are worse; some are compatible with America's traditions, some are not. For American immigration policy, this means that the “who” matters.

The question of “who” has historically involved considering migrants' national origin. A more refined approach would include other characteristics, such as educational attainment, employment history, language skills, and cultural values. The United States, which has an interest in admitting immigrants capable of integration and economic productivity, is well within its rights to prefer, say, an English-speaking software developer from Venezuela over a violent, uneducated gang member from the same country.

On the same principle, we must acknowledge that immigrants from some cultures are more capable than others of assimilating to America. In much of the Muslim world, for example, majorities believe that honor killings are justified and that Sharia law ought to be enforced by the state. While many Muslim immigrants embrace Western values, some emphatically reject them, as demonstrated by the widespread pro-Hamas protests that have broken out in the aftermath of the October 7 massacre in Israel. Pluralism is valuable, but it has limits, and America ought to select newcomers who share its core values.

The next question is “how.” The answer is not to be found at our southern border today, which has become an anarchic, free-for-all zone. While there will always be some degree of undocumented migration—the United States is, after all, still the land of opportunity—the numbers we have seen in recent years are unprecedented. Americans have the right to insist on a rational, orderly process of immigration, with clearly defined standards and a carefully crafted selection process.

The final question is “how much.” To answer, one must consider not only the sheer number of immigrants but also the amount of migration-driven demographic change occurring over time. Both the absolute size and pace of recent migration give reason for America to be more cautious in the current moment, despite our unique ability to assimilate newcomers. Both that scale and speed of recent migration—some 8 million new arrivals since Joe Biden's presidency began—is putting enormous pressure on each level of government. Localities have struggled to meet surging demand for housing, medical care, and education, particularly given the proportion of migrants with limited earning potential and English language proficiency.

The debate in Springfield, Ohio, is relevant here. There is a material difference between assimilating 150 Haitian migrants and 15,000 Haitian migrants into the fabric of a small town. The former is easily done; the second represents a transformative challenge. And for towns like Springfield, accommodating these newcomers is made harder by progressive ideology, which discourages integration into the national culture and claims that assimilation is a form of racism, colonialism, and xenophobia. As the Left reorients our institutions away from assimilation and toward multiculturalism, our capacity to integrate newcomers will continue to degrade.

Across the developed world, mass migration is undermining native-born citizens' quality of life and sparking a global anti-immigration backlash. Instead of insisting that these concerns are racist conspiracy theories, defenders of mass migration would do well to take them seriously.

The best outcome for the United States, in the closing stretch of a presidential campaign, would be to engage in a real discussion about these questions, which the Left is intent on avoiding. For them, mass migration is a potential source of patronage and votes, best cultivated surreptitiously. But the country at large must grapple with immigration, in all its complexity. The nation's future depends on it.

Read the article: [https://christopherrufo.com/p/the-real-questions-of-the-immigration?utm\\_source=post-email-title&publication\\_id=1248321&post\\_id=149371083&utm\\_campaign=email-post-title&isFreemail=true&r=v5y4h&triedRedirect=true&utm\\_medium=email](https://christopherrufo.com/p/the-real-questions-of-the-immigration?utm_source=post-email-title&publication_id=1248321&post_id=149371083&utm_campaign=email-post-title&isFreemail=true&r=v5y4h&triedRedirect=true&utm_medium=email)

## **Martin Luther King Jr. "The American Dream" Sermon Delivered at Ebenezer Baptist Church" July 4, 1965**

***Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. left us with many inspirational thoughts, in this sermon he delivered at Ebenezer Baptist Church in Atlanta, on July 4 of 1965 Martin Luther King Jr. starts his sermon:***

I would like to discuss some of the problems that we confront in the world today, and some of the problems that we confront in our own nation by using as a subject The American Dream. I choose this subject because America is essentially a dream. It is a dream of a land where men of all races, of all nationalities, and of all creeds, can live together as brothers. The substance of the dream is expressed in these sublime words, "We hold these truths to be self-evident that all men are created equal, that they are endowed by their Creator with certain inalienable rights, that among these are life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness."

Now, we notice in the very beginning that at the center of this dream is an amazing universalism. It does not say some men, but it says all men. It does not say all white men, but it says all men, which includes black men. It does not say all Gentiles, but it says all men, which includes Jews. It does not say all Protestants, but it says all men, which includes Catholics. That is something else that we notice in this American Dream, which is one of the things that distinguishes our form of government with some of the other totalitarian systems.

It says that each individual has certain inherent rights that are neither derived from or conferred by the state. They are gifts from the hands of the almighty God. Very seldom, if ever, in the history of the world has a socio-political document expressed in such profound, eloquent, and unequivocal language, the dignity and the worth of human personality. While the American Dream reminds us that every man is a heir of a legacy of worthfulness.

But ever since the Founding Fathers of our nation dreamed this dream, America has been something of a schizophrenic personality. On the one hand, we have proudly professed the noble principles of democracy. On the other hand, we have sadly practiced the very antithesis of those principles.

Indeed, slavery and segregation have been strange paradoxes in a nation founded on the principle that all men are created equal. But now more than ever before, America is challenged to realize its noble dream, for the shape of the world today does not permit us the luxury of an anemic democracy.

***He ends his sermon with these powerful words:***

And as we struggle to realize the American dream, let us realize that we do not struggle alone. Even though there are the difficult days ahead, even though before the victory's won, somebody else will have to get scarred up, somebody else will have to go to jail, maybe someone will have to face physical death.

For the victories won, some will be misunderstood, called bad names, be dismissed as dangerous rabble-rousers and agitators.

Even in the midst of that, the struggle must go on. Knowing that the victory can be won because the odds of the moral universe is long, but it bends toward justice.

And I am convinced that that is something in this universe, which justifies Carlyle in saying, "No lie can live forever."

There is something in the very court of the cosmos which justifies William Cullen Bryant in saying "Truth, cursed to earth, will rise again."

There is something in this universe which justifies James Russell Lowell, in saying: "Truth forever on the scaffold, Wrong forever on the throne —Yet that scaffold sways the future, and, behind the dim unknown."

And so with this faith in the future, we will be able to adjourn the counsels of the staff rise from the fatigue of darkness, to the buoyancy of hope. And we will be able bring into being this new society and realize the American dream.

This will be the day when all of the chosen black men and white men, Jews and gentiles, Protestants and Catholics, will be able to join hands and sing in the words of the old Negro spiritual, "Free at last, free at last, thank God almighty, we are free at last."

The American Dream: Martin Luther King Jr. (Full Transcript): <https://www.rev.com/blog/transcripts/the-american-dream-july-4th-speech-transcript-martin-luther-king-jr#:~:text=On%20July%204,%201965,%20Martin%20Luther%20King,%20Jr.%20gave%20a>

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## Public Corner

### Public Local Meetings

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

#### HVRSD School Board Meeting

Monday, October 14, 2024 (Regular and Business Organization), at 6:30pm  
425 S Main St., Pennington, NJ 08534  
Or Livestream on YouTube

#### Municipal Township Meetings

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

Monday, October 7 at 6:30pm  
Monday, October 21 at 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, October 8, 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 -- October 2024

Tuesday October 8, 2024 6:00pm Agenda Meeting

Thursday October 10, 2024 6:00pm Formal Meeting

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}

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## TruthBTold



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## At the Movies, Bookstores

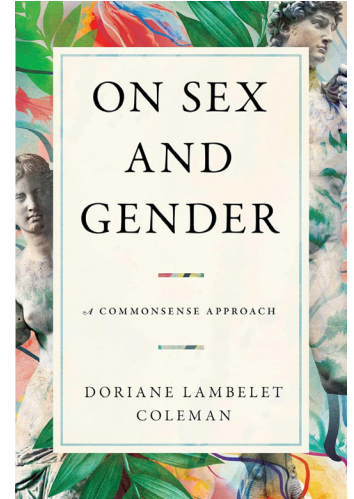
### “On Sex and Gender: A Common Sense Approach” By Doriane Lambelet Coleman

2024, Simon & Schuster, 311 pages

Book Review by Sylvia Kocsis

#### The Battle Against Biology; Society Needs to be Sex-Smart not Sex-Blind

On April 2, 2019 Doriane Lambelet Coleman, professor at Duke Law School, legal scholar focused on women, sports, and children, elite athlete at Cornell University in 1982 and liberal Democrat appeared as a witness before the US House of Representatives Judiciary Committee. She was invited by the Republican members to testify **against the Equality Act known as H.R. 5**. In 2020 presidential candidate Joe Biden announced that this act would be his top legislative priority if elected. Why would a staunch Democrat provide testimony against a bill that is an initiative designed to secure federal civil rights protections for people who are transgender?



Coleman’s answer to that question is the topic of her book **On Sex and Gender: A Common Sense Approach**. While she whole-heartedly supports a federal statute that would “provide national-level assurances that people in the LGBTQ+ communities have the right -like everyone else- to be treated with dignity and respect” she could not support “two radical proposals (in the Act) that would go far beyond what was necessary to achieve that goal” and instead create a sexless society. Those who advocate for a sexless or unisex society (changing the definition of male, female, man, woman, etc.) believe it is inherently good “without any regard to its effects on **equality** or other goals and values” like **safety, privacy, public health and Women’s rights**.

The first proposal was to re-define **SEX** in federal law from “either of the two main categories (male and female) into which humans and most other living things are divided on the basis of their reproductive functions” and replace the definition with a “wish list from progressive advocates pushing for a sex-blind society” -one where certain core biological and legal truths are discarded.

Proposal Two was to “prohibit -without exception- **all sex classifications**”. Coleman recognized that if H.R. 5 passed as drafted it could eliminate all sex-segregated sports. She had been the first female recipient of a full scholarship to Villanova in 1978 for track and field. This was just 6 years after TITLE IX was passed into law. She ran the 800m at Cornell and was a collegiate national champion. Both Democrats and Republicans alike understood that **sex-linked biology** was central to success in competitive sports and that “empowering women and girls through sports had done enormous individual and societal good that can be realized only when athletes are **sorted by sex (biological)**”.

Coleman’s hope in testifying was that she believed most people in both parties “want to insure comprehensive civil rights protections for trans people but not in ways that would undo existing civil rights protections for females by claiming that real sex differences are myth and stereotypes”. Her testimony was non-ideological, common sense, and evidence-based and so is this book. She wrote **On Sex and Gender** “to be both inclusive and true to science and common experience ...and to say my piece. We are at a crossroads in the history of sex and gender...and now we need to decide if, going forward, we’re going to be sex-blind or sex-smart”.

She begins the book with a review of basic reproductive biology and scientific definitions because language is important. First, the distinction is made between the terms sex and gender. They are not interchangeable. Gender, as defined by the WHO, is a “social construct that includes the norms, behaviours, and roles associated with being a man, woman, girl or boy ....that varies from society to society and can change over time”.

Sex, however, reflects 3 facts:

1. Humans are dimorphic: we exist in one of two forms generally referred to as male and female (even the rare intersex condition is not a third sex or third type of human).
2. Our dimorphism is universal and stable over time: it’s what makes us a single species called Homo-sapians.
3. Our dimorphism results in a distinct set of sex characteristics (such as chromosomes, sex hormones, genitals, and gonads that are either ovaries or testicles) that work together through puberty to build the bodies we know as male and female.

In Chapter Two, Coleman states that “law, like biology, defines the word sex- and its associated terms **male and female** in order... to regulate health, safety and morals in the interests of the community’s general welfare”. The 2019 edition of Black’s Law Dictionary defines sex as, “the sum of the peculiarities of structure and function that distinguish a male from a female”. In the law it must mean biological sex and it applies in many situations:



A funeral home could be in violation of Title VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 if it fired a woman who identified as transgender because her sex (male) was irrelevant to the job. But sex is relevant “when a transgender man (female) works as a prison guard. He (she) is not a male for the purposes of the prison’s same-sex strip search teams”. A Muslim prisoner whose religion doesn’t allow him to be seen or touched unclothed by someone of the female sex, whatever their gender identity, has civil rights too.

In the US all male residents and citizens must register with the Selective Service System when they turn 18. Currently, transgender females (males) are not exempt. Another example is the NIH. They “require that all applicants for government grants for medical research take sex into account for their work... so that federally funded medical research also benefits the female half of the population”. Even Justice Ruth Bader Ginsburg agreed in **US v Virginia (1996)** that **“The two sexes are not fungible ...physical differences between men and women are... enduring and immutable”**.

In chapters 4, 5 and 6 Coleman argues that sex matters and that “our inherent natural differences are a personal and a collective good”. Sex-the male and female body- should be celebrated for three distinct reasons: procreation, sexual pleasure and aesthetic value. Without procreation the human race would not survive. Having children sustains our species and offspring sustain our communities and a healthy society. As a parent, creating and supporting a new life can give unique meaning, purpose and value to our existence -it’s a human desire. That’s why assisted reproduction and surrogacy are such thriving businesses.

Throughout the book she encourages politicians, schools, medical professionals and government to not make “the unnecessary and ironic mistake of sacrificing the enormously valuable good (of Title IX) that is female sports to secure the rights of transgender women and girls. If we can no longer distinguish between females and women with testes for any purpose we risk not knowing the next Simone Manuel” or other elite women athletes “who deserve equality in teams, competitions and in victories”.

**On Sex and Gender** is information dense. Coleman contends that “we have language for a reason and using the words male and female communicate important concepts effectively and efficiently”. To deconstruct sex and require the use of terms such as sex-assigned at birth instead of determined at conception and confirmed at birth denies essential biological facts. For holding her conviction that biological sex and how one expresses one’s gender are different she has been labeled transphobic, de-platformed, censored and cancelled.

Yet she clearly states we should be welcoming and accepting to all people. Trans lives matter. “Nobody should be denied access to goods, services, sports, work, or a seat at the community table because they are trans any more than I should because I am female. We know there are differences between transgender women (biological males) and females. We know there are differences between males and trans men (biological females). Everybody matters, everybody belongs, but we’re not all the same.” Coleman’s premise is that we can provide safe, supportive, inclusive communities for those who identify as transgender and protect their rights without abolishing the term biological sex from our vocabulary and without the erasure of the male/female distinction. Her advice: Be sex-smart and not sex-blind in the battle against this false and unscientific way of thinking because it is an assault against biology and women’s rights.

How can we advocate for and implement sex-smart and not sex-blind policies and practices in our workplace, schools, doctor’s offices and other areas of daily life? Here are some suggestions:

1. Increase your knowledge about the topic then share it with your children, teachers, medical professionals and others when appropriate. In addition to this book you may enjoy reading:

**“Swimming Against the Current: Fighting for Common Sense in a World That’s Lost Its Mind”** by Riley Gaines (<https://www.amazon.com/Swimming-Against-Current-Fighting-Common/dp/B0CJQCQ5G9>)

**“Trans: When Ideology Meets Reality”** by Helen Joyce (<https://www.amazon.com/Trans-When-Ideology-Meets-Reality/dp/0861540492>)

**“The Problem with Saying Sex-Assigned at Birth”** by Carole Hooven and Alex Byrne, New York Times, April 3, 2024 (<https://www.nytimes.com/2024/04/03/opinion/sex-assigned-at-birth.html>)

**“Sex Assigned at Birth: The Medical Establishment Betrays Science, Logic and Common Sense”** by Richard Dawkins and Alan Sokal, Boston Globe, April 8, 2024 (<https://www.bostonglobe.com/2024/04/08/opinion/sex-gender-medical-terms/>)

2. Hopewell Valley Regional School District has a Transgender and Gender Nonconforming Students Policy Code 5756 (see below) that was adopted on June 20, 2016. Its purpose is to set out guidelines for addressing the needs of transgender students including providing a safe, supportive and inclusive learning experience in our schools. But there is language in this policy that is problematic. Biological sex is not defined. It includes terms like sex-assigned at birth (instead of determined at conception and confirmed at birth). The administration agreed to review and possibly revise the policy this year. Offer public comment when the policy is on the agenda at those upcoming board meetings. (Policy 5756 is included in this edition of Mercer We the People of HV newsletter. See below.)

3. Examine school textbooks, library books, reading assignments, digital media, etc. used or assigned by teachers to evaluate whether the language and concepts presented are sex-smart (fact based) or sex-blind. Outside agencies that may visit our schools like Planned Parenthood or Hi-Tops often present or provide instruction that uses unscientific terms and gender theories that promote a sex-blind society. If you have concerns, speak with the appropriate staff member. Encourage students to do the same.
4. Request that medical professionals make all forms, documents, surveys, etc. use biologically correct language and not culturally motivated progressive terminology.

HVRSD Policies (5756): <https://go.boarddocs.com/nj/hvrsd/Board.nsf/Public?open&id=policies> (Under "5000 Series: Pupils"; "5756 Transgender and Gender Non-Conforming Students")

Pdf version: <https://mercerothepeople.com/wp-content/uploads/2024/10/5756-Transgender-NonConforming-Students-2016-06-20.pdf>

## Reagan

NOW PLAYING NATIONWIDE • Rated PG-13 • 2h 21m

Released Date: August 30, 2024

Directed by: Sean McNamara • Producer: Mark Joseph • Screenwriter: Howard Klausner

### Film Synopsis

From dusty small-town roots, to the glitter of Hollywood, and then on to commanding the world stage, REAGAN is a cinematic journey of overcoming the odds. Told through the voice of Viktor Petrovich, a former KGB agent whose life becomes inextricably linked with Ronald Reagan's when Reagan first caught the Soviets' attention as an actor in Hollywood, this film offers a perspective as unique as it is captivating.

Dennis Quaid brings to life a story that transcends the boundaries of a traditional biopic, offering a profound exploration of the enduring impact of the power of one man who overcame the odds, sustained by the love of a woman who supported him in his journey.

Watch the movie trailer: [https://www.imdb.com/video/vi4223780377/?ref\\_=tt\\_vi\\_i\\_1](https://www.imdb.com/video/vi4223780377/?ref_=tt_vi_i_1)



## 'Reagan' Shows How Great We Were, and Can Still Be

By Van Hipp, August 30 2024, Newsmax

The Movie "Reagan" (MJM Entertainment/ShowBiz Direct) tells a powerful American story, one that everyone should see. The film will open to some 3,500 theaters nationally. Very recently, this writer and his wife had the privilege of attending its premiere.

To be sure, it's a powerful story and film — of the sort rarely coming out of Hollywood these days.

The cast of "Reagan" with big screen greats like Dennis Quaid and Jon Voight.

Additionally, we can thank a seasoned Hollywood producer, Mark Joseph.

The film tells an American story that's truly genuine all the way through.

And that story is beyond timely, especially in light of our nation's (and global) current political landscape.

President Reagan's son, Michael Reagan, who also attended the film's debut praised the movie, describing it as "well done," and "a history lesson" that you need to take your family to see.

Mr. Reagan said that Penelope Miller, who plays Nancy Reagan, was great and that Dennis Quaid, who plays his father, "captured him 100%."

After seeing the movie and hearing Michael Reagan's reaction to it, I am reminded of something he once shared with me a number of years ago.

He said, "The secret to my dad's success was that he could tell a story."

He's most certainly right about that.

President Reagan could take a complex issue facing our country, and the free world, and communicate it in such a way with clarity and vision that those listening could wholly comprehend the gravity of the situation, and what must be done.

Yes, he was, indeed, the "Great Communicator."

The movie itself though, like President Reagan, tells a story and clearly communicates to those watching it, the American people.

An appreciable part of the Reagan story is that it's about a man possessing an inner-core to do the right thing regardless of what his handlers said, or if there were strong political headwinds.

This is a tale about a man who inspired hope and confidence when our people needed it.

Most significantly, it's a movie that shows how God can use one man to make a difference globally, for posterity.

In "Reagan" we journey extensively and deeply through his life.

First, as a boy growing up who had the love of a mother instilling Christian values in him, and who also confronted bullies when it was time to do so.

Then we see him as the actor who stood up to Marxists in Hollywood.

Ronald Reagan set in motion a chain of events that would eventually lead to the disintegration of the "Evil Empire" — the Soviet Union, and the film shows us that as well. And viewers will be moved by the courage he displayed in his final battle — his bout with Alzheimer's disease.

Before the premiere began, Dennis Quaid addressed the audience.

He said it was his favorite movie to work on and in.

He also said something that really stuck with me.

He said those who watch the movie and were born before 1985 will see how great America once was and those born after 1985 can see how great America can be.

Ronald Wilson Reagan was beyond right when he gravely reminded us, "Freedom is never more than one generation away from extinction."

As our nation's 40th commander in chief, he went on to say, "We didn't pass it to our children in the bloodstream."

"It must be fought for, protected, and handed on for them to do the same, or one day we will spend our sunset years telling our children and our children's children what it was once like in the United States where men were free."

For the full article: <https://www.newsmax.com/vanhipp/evil-empire-quaid/2024/08/30/id/1178515/>

## Vindicating Trump

NOW PLAYING NATIONWIDE • Documentary • Rated PG-13 • 1h 36m

Released Date: September 27, 2024 Written and Directed by: Dinesh D'Souza, Bruce Schooley, Debbie D'Souza

Character assassination. Political assassination. Legal assassination. An actual assassination attempt. They will try anything to stop Trump. We can't let them.

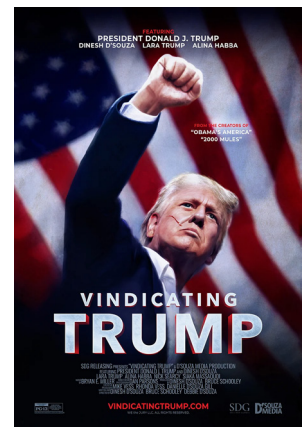
Watch the trailer: <https://vindicatingtrump.com/>

This film is a journey to discover the real Donald Trump, and to make the case for him as a man and as a leader. It begins with a puzzle. How can a man be so intensely loved and hated? Not since Lincoln have we had such a divisive figure on the national scene. The film also considers a danger that Lincoln warned about—the rise in America of a tyrant like Caesar who would promote lawlessness and subvert the foundations of our constitutional republic. Is Trump such a man?

The film shows Trump's meteoric rise to billionaire status and cultural celebrity. Yet even if Trump is a larger than life figure who has the dimensions of a Caesar, he never did anything tyrannical. In fact, Trump's term in office reveals that the real lawlessness comes from Trump's adversaries, who will stop at nothing to defeat him. The film spells out their tactics, from an invented accusation of treason to criminal indictments intended to lock him up for life, and even an attempted assassination.

The story line of the film is to show that Trump's enemies—the Left and the Democrats—are the real Caesar. They are the ones creating lawlessness at the highest levels of government. They despise Trump because he is the only one who has the power and the will to stop them. The film features interviews with Lara Trump, Trump's daughter in law and co-chair of the Republican National Committee, and Alina Habba, Trump's attorney. It also has an in-depth one-on-one interview with Trump himself.

Throughout the film there are entertaining and powerful re-creations of "war rooms": a media war-room, a war room at the Democratic campaign headquarters, and a legal war-room where the criminal plots against Trump are hatched. This is Dinesh D'Souza's most urgent and important film. It offers a fresh and eye-opening perspective on the most intriguing and controversial figure in America today. It will inform, amuse, infuriate, engage and finally motivate Americans of all backgrounds.



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## We the People of Interest

### Why Columbus Day Is Worth Defending and Celebrating

By Scott S. Powell on October 11, 2021 in Discovery Institute, Originally published at Townhall

[www.discovery.org/m/2021/10/barcelona-monument-to-christopher-columbus](http://www.discovery.org/m/2021/10/barcelona-monument-to-christopher-columbus)

Among the federal holidays, Columbus Day has become one of the least honored, partially due to controversy about misdeeds associated with colonization. In fact, Columbus never set foot on or came close to any territory that later became part of the continental United States.



**The history of Christopher Columbus is actually less messy and more consequential than many of the other heroes of our national holidays. There is not only a great deal to celebrate in Columbus, but the man embodied a range of attributes that are necessary to solving many of our contemporary problems and even saving our country from further decline and collapse resulting from group think, corruption and abuse of power.**

The American story began with the seafaring discovery momentum created by Columbus's feat of sailing from Europe some 4,000 miles south and west across the Atlantic Ocean in the late 15th century. His quest was twofold: to find a western passage to the Spice Islands and India, and second, to carry the good news of Jesus the savior to people in new parts of the world.

Columbus had grown up in a working-class family and his life was one of hardship, punctuated by near death and failures that would have been the demise of most ordinary people. If he had not been a man of character and determination with deep faith in God, self-confidence to ignore critics, and go against the crowd and remain steadfast in his vision and his calling, he never could have accomplished what he did, which was of course the discovery of the New World of the Western Hemisphere.

Columbus left voluminous writings that bear witness to what motivated him to do what he did. Born and raised in Genoa, Italy, he was the consummate self-made man who shipped out at an early age. Experiencing the militant face of Islam at the eastern end of the Mediterranean that created a blockade to Europe's important overland trade with the Orient, he knew that finding a western sea route would have far-reaching benefits.

Columbus faced death when the Flemish-flagged ship on which he was crew was attacked and sunk off the coast of Portugal. But for a seafarer with his ambition and vision, as fate would have it, there was no better place to wash up than on the shore of Portugal, a nation that had developed the world's most advanced tools of navigation and map-making. In Portugal, Columbus's exposure to celestial navigation further confirmed his confidence to sail west across the Atlantic and find a trade route to India and the Spice Islands. By his late 30s he felt "called," writing in his diary, "It was the Lord who put into my mind, [and] I could feel his hand upon me...that it would be possible to sail from here to the Indies."

Recognizing that such an undertaking would need state sponsorship, Columbus and his brother spent the next six years traipsing across Europe seeking support from sovereignties of the leading maritime countries, only to find rejection and ridicule. Queen Isabella and King Ferdinand of Spain had turned down Columbus several times. But because of his seafaring skills, conviction in his vision of a westward passage, and his bravery and willingness to lead an armed flotilla to rescue the Holy Sepulcher from Muslim hands in the eastern Mediterranean, they had a change of heart toward Columbus.

**Few years in history have been punctuated by such pivotal events as what happened in 1492. It was in that year that Christendom—still suffering from the loss of Constantinople to the Muslim Turks 40 years prior—drove Islam out of Spain and Europe with Isabella and Ferdinand playing the pivotal role. They then decided to support Christian expansion and back the exploration and evangelistic expedition of Columbus.**

In his first voyage of three ships—the Nina, Pinta and Santa Maria—after being at sea for nearly two months Columbus faced an anxious crew, who believed landfall should have been made by week four or five. The situation became mutinous with threats to heave Columbus overboard if he did not agree to their demands to turn back. Recognizing that he could hardly restrain let alone punish his mutinous crew given that there were 40 of them against only one of him, **Columbus turned to God. In a letter that has been preserved among his personal historical records, Columbus wrote that God inspired him to make a deal with his Spanish crew and stake his life on it. He asked for three more days, and if land was not sighted, the crew could do with him as they wished.**

**As fate would have it, in the early morning hours of the third day on October 12, under the light of the moon and the stars, the lookout from the ship Pinta, gave the long-awaited signal of sighting land.** Assuming it was an island to the east of India or perhaps China, Columbus had no idea that he was about to discover a new part of the world—the outskirts of a massive continent—far from the Orient.

Today's "woke" culture, which has held Columbus accountable for the chain of disasters that followed in his wake in the Caribbean and South America is not only unfair to him, but it overlooks the essence of the man. Not of Spanish culture, **Columbus was at heart a simple but ambitious individualist—a seafaring explorer and evangelist.** He had neither interest in founding colonies nor was he an effective leader and administrator of strong-headed hidalgos that undertook setting up colonial outposts at the behest of Isabella.

**Columbus's perseverance and courage in his transatlantic feat in crossing a vast ocean inspired successors from northern Europe who had been transformed by the Protestant Reformation with the ideas of equality and freedom. They would set out to pursue a new life in a new world, ultimately establishing 13 different colonies in coastal North America.**

Suffering injustice from Great Britain, those colonists reluctantly banded together to fight for independence. Over the six years of the Revolutionary War they lost more battles than they won. But like the course of Columbus, George Washington's persistence, courage and faith in God empowered an underequipped and underfunded colonial army to get to final victory and achieve independence. That in turn enabled the founding of a new nation, unlike any other—one based on the revolutionary idea that people's life, liberty and pursuit of happiness were inviolable because those rights came from God and not man or the state.

**Seen from the big picture, Columbus Day is worth keeping and honoring for the simple reason that it celebrates beliefs and qualities of character that are foundational to America. It could even be said that Columbus Day is the holiday that commemorates the human character, attitudes and choice of action that made the other American holidays possible.**

Read the article: <https://www.discovery.org/a/why-columbus-day-is-worth-defending-and-celebrating/>

## Biden revokes Trump order to punish statue vandals

In June (2020), a damaged Christopher Columbus statue in Boston's North End neighborhood was removed. On Oct. 6, Boston Mayor Martin Walsh announced that the statue would not return to its original location in the area's waterfront park. AP file photo/ Steven Senne

By BBC on May 14 2021

...Biden has revoked a string of proclamations by Donald Trump, including an order to punish vandals who destroy monuments.

Read the full article: <https://www.bbc.com/news/world-us-canada-57124887>



## Christopher Columbus: Five things you thought you knew about the explorer

World History Archive/Newscom

By Andrew Mach on October 10 2011, *The Christian Science Monitor*

It's Columbus Day – a time when faulty lore about the “discoverer of America” abounds. The myths surrounding the epic voyages of Christopher Columbus are as plentiful as the riches he supposedly discovered. Here are some commonly held beliefs that have endured since, well, 1492.

1. Myth: Columbus set out to prove the earth was round.
2. Myth: Queen Isabella of Spain sold the crown jewels to pay for Columbus's voyage.
3. Myth: Columbus's ships were the Niña, the Pinta, and the Santa Maria.
4. Myth: Columbus discovered America.
5. Myth: Columbus died a penniless man in prison.



Uncover a few facts around the myths, read the full article: <https://www.csmonitor.com/USA/2011/1010/Christopher-Columbus-Five-things-you-thought-you-knew-about-the-explorer/MYTH-Columbus-set-out-to-prove-the-earth-was-round>.

## Our Newest American Monument Is a Masterpiece

By Gerald P. Boersma on August 12 2024 in First Things

On September 13, a new and immense public memorial will be unveiled in the heart of our nation's capital commemorating America's contribution to World War I. Designed by master sculptor Sabin Howard, the memorial is perhaps the greatest work of public art commissioned this century. The massive bronze sculpted relief, named *A Soldier's Journey*, will depict a single soldier's progression through the war, visually narrating America's reluctant entry into the fracas engulfing Europe.

Sculpture is an art form uniquely suited to collective commemoration. Consider America's history and heroes chronicled in metal and stone: the Washington Monument, the Lincoln Memorial, the Statue of Liberty, Mount Rushmore, and the Vietnam Veterans Memorial. To erect a sculpted memorial is to make a statement: "We will remember." Bronze, stone, marble, steel—the very matter of sculpture wills its permanence.

To forge a collective memory is the sacred responsibility entrusted to the sculptor commissioned to create a public memorial. The purpose of his art is to direct a nation's gaze back over its past with reverence and gratitude; it is also to cast our values, ideals, and faith irrevocably into the future. Artistic public monuments like *A Soldier's Journey* bridge past, present, and future, forging a common identity. "I am my memory," remarked St. Augustine, "there I meet myself, I recall what I am, and what I have done." What is true for the individual is true for a people. To walk the hallowed precincts of the National Mall is to meet America, to share its memories—to recall what it is and what it has done.

We live in an age that prefers to forget. This is not only because our attention spans are calibrated to the evanescent flickerings of a screen, to a barrage of quickly forgotten tweets and disappearing images. These are merely symptoms. The deeper moral malady is the malaise of memory—of the will to forget. Today, the very notion of a collective memory, a shared identity, or a common life is met with deep suspicion. And so, we live in an age that tears down its public monuments.

The soon-to-be-unveiled National World War I Memorial in Washington, D.C., serves to resist such willed amnesia. America's contribution to the war in Europe was immense: 4.7 million Americans served in the trenches and battlefields across Western Europe, and over 116,000 gave their lives in the various theaters of war. And yet, this staggering national sacrifice receives only a fraction of the attention given to the American Civil War fought fifty years earlier or to World War II. Indeed, World War I is the only major conflict of the modern era not represented by a great national monument.

To remedy such apparent widespread nescience, Pershing Park was chosen by Congress as the site in which to erect the moving new memorial. The park is prominently located next to the National Mall and down the street from the White House. It is named after Gen. John J. Pershing, the dashing commander of the American Expeditionary Forces during World War I. A statue of the intrepid general has long stood in the eponymously named park, but a fitting tribute to the millions who served in the Great War had been lacking.

*A Soldier's Journey* will be a formidable sight, imbuing Pershing Park with its dramatic story. The sculpture's five bronze reliefs—a "movie in bronze," as Howard describes it—will total 58 feet in length and 10 feet in height. As we proceed along the five distinct reliefs, we witness the soldier engage with thirty-eight individual figures in diverse settings. Perhaps no art form is as paradoxical as sculpture: It seeks to infuse dynamism, movement, and vitality into a medium that would appear wholly unsusceptible to life. And yet, Pershing Park will now pulse with life as the drama of Howard's historical masterpiece recounts the memory of the Great War to future generations.

In the first scene, we witness the unnamed soldier saying goodbye to his wife and daughter. In the second, he begins—full of muster and confidence—to march in arms with his brothers toward war. The center of the pentptych, and the climax of the monument, captures the dramatic moment when the soldier, rifle in hand, leaps from the trench, urging his men forward directly into enemy fire. The fourth panel pivots to a somber reflection; the soldier's melancholic gaze falls upon the carnage and loss all around, on the wasted limbs and ruined lives. The final panel sees our soldier return home, handing his daughter his helmet. Like all great epics, Howard's monument is the story of a hero who journeys away from home, is transformed by his experience, and, finally, returns—but now both home and hero are different.



NPS Photo: "A Soldier's Journey (11)" sculpture at the World War I Memorial



Howard, pictured here, reported that the "buzz" within the veteran community about this World War I monument has been "over the top." (Superhuman Films)

We can't miss the artist's message: This "Soldier's Journey" is equally "America's Journey." The space of Pershing Park that Howard's sculpture makes sacred invites visitors to enter more deeply into our nation's memory and make its journey our own. In Howard's sculpture we contemplate the immense sacrifices, heroism, and the indomitable spirit and glory that marked America's contribution to a European war initiated two and a half years earlier. At the same time, we are asked to reflect on the absurd, inestimable loss of life, the senseless butchery, and stupid arrogance that drives the carnage of war.

There is no people without a common memory. Sabin Howard's magnificent sculpted masterpiece will join the pantheon of American monuments and will, like them all, insist—but with new stridence appropriate to our forgetful age—"We will remember."

*Dr. Gerald P. Boersma is professor of theology at Ave Maria University.*

Read the article: <https://www.firstthings.com/web-exclusives/2024/08/our-newest-american-monument-is-a-masterpiece>

Learn more about the artist: <https://sabinhoward.com/>

Visit the World War I Memorial in District of Columbia: <https://www.nps.gov/wwim/index.htm>

### **Mercer We the People of Hopewell Valley Newsletters:**

September 2024: <https://mercervethepeople.com/wp-content/uploads/2024/09/0924-MercerWe.pdf>

August 2024: <https://mercervethepeople.com/wp-content/uploads/2024/08/0824-MercerWe.pdf>

July 2024: <https://mercervethepeople.com/wp-content/uploads/2024/08/0724-MercerWe.pdf>

June 2024: <https://mercervethepeople.com/wp-content/uploads/2024/08/0624-MercerWe.pdf>

May 2024: <https://mercervethepeople.com/wp-content/uploads/2024/08/0524-MercerWe.pdf>

April 2024: <https://mercervethepeople.com/wp-content/uploads/2024/08/0424-MercerWe.pdf>

March 2024: <https://mercervethepeople.com/wp-content/uploads/2024/08/0324-MercerWe-FIRST-EDITION.pdf>

To report a correction or share feedback, please email us at [info@mercervethepeople.com](mailto:info@mercervethepeople.com)