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Blundering Bruce's Budget Battle

By Eleonora di Liscia

Last year when Blundering Bruce Rauner was elected governor, I stupidly and overconfidently said things like, "It won't be too bad because, fortunately, Illinois has Democratic super majorities in both houses, not like those poor people in Wisconsin."

What I underestimated was how much Republican CEOs like Rauner, with no prior experience answering to the public sector, dislike people saying "no" to what they want. And when they don't get what they want, they stamp their feet and hold their breath until they turn blue. Except in this case, Governor Rauner's tantrum has left not him, but the elderly, disabled, victims of domestic violence, museums, schools, the needy, state contractors, and state workers starving for oxygen.



IL Gov. Bruce Rauner (R)

And Rauner's response to these victims of his policies? The fabulously wealthy and fabulously insulated governor has opined that "change causes pain."

Before last year's election, I warned that Wisconsin Governor Scott Walker was on Rauner's short list for governors he admired. What Rauner really liked was how Scott Walker rammed his anti-union agenda down the throats of Wisconsinites,

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Tenth News

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Lox, Not Glocks: Why Your Grocer Hasn't Banned Guns

By Lee Goodman

As an organizer of the Shop Safer campaign to get grocery stores to post no-gun signs, I am frequently asked why so many local grocery stores won't put up signs banning guns. At a recent meeting, the CEO of one of the grocery chains indicated that he has several related reasons. 1) He doesn't want to alienate pro-gun customers, 2) he doesn't believe it makes any difference whether people are walking around his stores with guns, and 3) he doesn't think that anti-gun customers will stop shopping at his stores just because other shoppers might be carrying guns.

I pointed out that I've heard from some people who said they have already stopped shopping at his stores because he allows guns, even though we have not asked them to take this step. His agitation at the idea that a boycott might be organized revealed that, contrary to what he said, he was quite worried that customers would stay away from his stores in order to make a point and to avoid being shot.

What it comes down to is this: as long as people remain silent, nothing will change. When people take action, they can influence others. Every politically active person knows this. And so, we email our elected officials, make phone calls for candidates, and are otherwise engaged. But will we tell our grocers we want them to keep us safe? If they won't, will we buy our milk and eggs from a different store if that is what it will take to bring about change? Will we go the extra quarter mile to another nearby store?



Compared to other consumer-led efforts, the Shop Safer campaign is not asking much. We aren't asking the stores to increase employee benefits and wages or to build stores in food deserts. All we are asking is that the stores put stickers on their doors, and we are offering to supply the stickers at no cost.

This campaign has gotten off to a strong start. Now, we need people who have not already talked with their grocery store managers to ask them to post the no-gun signs. We need people who have talked with their grocers to talk with them again, so that they see that we have not given up.

Too many children have been shot. Too many gun accidents occur every day. Are we willing to endure slight inconveniences and make modest efforts in order to prevent a tragedy in our own community?

Lee Goodman is an organizer with Peaceful Communities.

Trump's Repugnancy Knows No Limits

By Steven Gan

Why is it I find myself writing about Donald Trump again? I guess it's because not only are his outrageous comments difficult to ignore, but also he still appeals to a large swath of the GOP, a fact that continues to confound many of us who are offended by his irrational diatribes.

How tragic was it that 129 people were killed and over 300 injured by ISIS terrorists on November 13th, 2015 in Paris? Just regular people out to dine at a restaurant, see a concert, or watch a soccer game were gunned down. It's mind boggling when you think about how you can go out for a fun evening with family and friends and come home in a body bag.

The world's conflicts and its demented souls have made it so that our daily lives are filled in the background with worry and concern that what happened in Paris could happen in our own neighborhoods, schools, and communities. And it's not only foreign terrorists that we have to be paranoid about. With thousands of hate groups in this country, we've got plenty of our own home-grown terrorist nut cases who walk around with their semi-automatic rifles and fantasize about fighting the government.

On the same day as the brutal terrorist killings in France, Donald Trump quickly and insensitively injected his moronic opinions, stating that tough gun control laws in Paris contributed to the high death toll. The attacks, he added, also revealed the danger in allowing Syrian refugees into the country.

Trump elaborated, "You can say what you want, but if they had guns -- if our people had guns, if they were allowed to carry -- it would have been a much, much differ-

How to Respond?

By Laurence B. Schiller and Barbara Altman

In the wake of the shocking and devastating terrorist attacks in Paris, Americans naturally want to *do something*. Americans want to help, and Americans want to ensure the safety of our own nation.

Recent history teaches that when emotions say, "Do something," it is imperative to take a moment to step back and make sure that the *something* ends up being a response to the threat at hand. After the 9/11 attacks by Al-Qaeda, the United States was right to drive Osama bin Laden out of Afghanistan. Saddam Hussein's Iraq did not possess weapons of mass destruction, and the invasion of that country—supported by an overwhelming majority of Americans and American lawmakers at the time—was a calamity, whether measured in lost lives, treasure, or prestige. Remember Donald Trump's promise last year that if airplanes that originated in African nations with known cases of Ebola continued to land in the United States, "the plague would start and spread in America?"

This is why both of us find the knee-jerk reaction by Republican leaders like presidential candidates Ted Cruz, Donald Trump, Ben Carson, and John Kasich to be so disconcerting. They advocate closing America's borders to the

ent situation." Trump said this to cheers during a political rally at an arena in southeast Texas on the next afternoon. He went on to say, "I hear it all the time, you know. You look at certain cities that have the highest violence, the highest problem with guns and shootings and killings -- Chicago is an example, toughest gun laws in the United States, nothing but problems. So our country better get smart because we're not smart right now."

By making his latest comments, Trump doubled down on a message he had tweeted back in January, following the smaller-scale terrorist attack against the publisher of *Charlie Hebdo*: "Isn't it interesting that the tragedy in Paris took place in one of the toughest gun control countries in the world?" As that dated tweet recirculated on the evening of the Paris killings, the French ambassador to the United States, Gerard Araud, tweeted at Trump: "This message is repugnant in its lack of any human decency. Vulture."

Yes Ambassador Araud, Donald Trump is repugnant but so are his GOP followers who are completely taken in by his shamelessly televangelist-style statements that play on the xenophobic fears and emotions of many mindless Americans.

For the record, France is a country where guns are strictly prohibited and in 2013 there were only thirty-five gun-related homicides. Compare that to the U.S., where we have on average over 10,000 gun-related homicides per year. The sad reality is that all the guns in the world are not going to thwart the religious or politically twisted motivation of any terrorist organization to perpetrate its unspeakable crimes against the innocents of the world.

families—women, children, and elderly—fleeing the same terrorists the West is combatting. The almost instantaneous response of 10th District Congressman Robert Dold to the Paris attacks also was directed at refugees. Dold immediately wrote a letter urging President Obama to "stem the flow of Syrian refugees to enter the United States." He solicited every other Republican Congressman in Illinois to sign that letter. Mark Kirk helped organize a similar letter on the Senate side.

Why this particular concern about refugees? The 9/11 terrorists weren't refugees; they all entered the United States using tourist or student visas. The Paris attacks appear to have been planned and executed by citizens of France and Belgium. Yet the U.S. long has had a "visa waiver program" that allows anyone with a French or Belgian passport to come here without applying for a visa. Some security officials have suggested that the visa waiver program, which applies to citizens of 38 foreign countries, and not the refugee resettlement program, deserves a second look.

In contrast to the ease with which those carrying French or Belgian passports can enter the United States, no Syrian refugee enters this country without passing a stringent screening that can take up to 24 months. The first step is

Blundering Bruce's Budget Battle

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no matter how many ways they said, "No thank you." As a side note, Walker viewed his ability to stand up to all those protestors lawfully exercising their First Amendment rights as a qualification for dealing with terrorists. Fortunately for the country, "God called" Walker to leave the presidential race.

Now, Illinois has been without a budget since June. Rauner will not agree to a budget unless the Democrats forget why they are Democrats and accept his anti-union/business-above-all agenda. This is akin to your boss saying, "I'll give you your paycheck, but only if you burn down your house."

"If it wasn't for the Democratic control of the General Assembly, we'd be going down the same road as Wisconsin, and for labor, that's pretty scary," said Matthew LaPierre, Business Agent of Lake County Federation of Teachers Local 504.

Even now, AFSCME, the largest union of state employees, is in "grueling" contract negotiations with Rauner. Negotiations began in January, long before the contract expired June 30.

"It is important to note that our union has represented state workers for more than 40 years in Illinois, and we have never been locked out or forced to go on strike. We've been able to reach a fair agreement with governors of both parties, governors we've endorsed and those that we haven't. But this is a governor that vowed as a candidate to force a strike, and by his extreme demands, seems to want chaos and confrontation," said Anders Lindall, spokesman for AFSCME Council 31.

According to Lindall, Rauner is demanding a free hand to privatize public services without any safeguards for workers' wages, benefits, or voice on the job. Rauner's demands would further undermine the important public services that state employees provide.

"State employees protect kids from abuse and neglect, they protect our environment—clean air and water and

our state parks, they care for people with disabilities; and the governor's demands at the bargaining table would jeopardize those services," said Lindall.

Another Rauner demand is to make pay increases contingent on "merit" rather than seniority, thus allowing the boss to decide who deserves a raise. While this might sound reasonable, in the public sector, it means political favoritism and cronyism.

"If that were allowed to happen the only people who would get pay increases would be the people who do Governor Rauner's bidding," said Lindall. "We think Illinois has seen more than enough cronyism and favoritism in government." Lindall elaborated, "Public service is not quite like the private sector in that you couldn't say well, this worker produced more widgets today so they get a raise. How do you measure that for a correctional officer who keeps our prisons safe or for a child protection worker who goes into a broken home to protect kids or a caregiver for someone with disabilities? Not only are there no obvious measurable metrics for those kind of services, but it opens the door wide for politics and favoritism."

Rauner also seeks to impose huge increases to healthcare costs for state employees, universities, retirees, and their families that would double the cost in the first year alone. "Well," you might say, "So what? My insurance is going up too." Lindall counters that healthcare should be a right for everyone. Furthermore, a University of Illinois study demonstrated that public service employees earn less than their private sector equivalents.

To win at all costs, Rauner's tactics have included attempts to recruit both retired state employees and the National Guard to serve as potential strikebreakers if he succeeded in forcing a strike, said Lindall. AFSCME advocated for a bill last summer that would have provided for a fair arbitration process to prevent a strike or

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The entire State of Illinois is paying for Rauner's insistence on having everything his own way. Let us examine how:

Higher Education - Many smaller state colleges and universities may not be able to absorb the cost of scholarships for low-income students. Eastern Illinois University in Charleston may be forced to shut down during spring semester. Northern Illinois University might also not finish a full year. Because of the impasse, Moody's Investors Services downgraded bond ratings for six universities, making it harder to borrow money to keep the doors open.

Daycare Programs - Rauner tweaked state eligibility requirements to deny daycare assistance to an estimated 90 percent of low-income workers. A single parent working full time at minimum wage no longer qualifies for help. The Child Care Assistance Program also stopped enrolling new children, making it difficult for daycare centers to remain open.

The Elderly and Disabled - The Low Income Home Energy Assistance Program is on hold, meaning more than 150,000 families, including the elderly and disabled, will not get the help they need to pay their utility bills. Meals on Wheels programs and Senior Centers have closed.

Crime is Up in Chicago - Shootings in Chicago have risen because of cuts to counseling services and other programs, such as summer jobs and after-school activities aimed at preventing violence and keeping youth off the street. Classes training police on using force and dealing with the mentally ill have been cancelled.

More Crime, More Domestic Abuse, Less Help - *A Safe Place*, which has facilities in Zion and Waukegan, cut counseling and the number of beds for women escaping domestic abuse. Southern Illinois closed one shelter that offered families emergency protection. Some nonprofits, such as one Chicago counseling center, have continued by working without pay. Closing these domestic abuse programs could result in problems with higher unemployment, violence, and long-term psychological problems, especially for women and young children.

Museums - Rauner closed Springfield's State Museum, the Dickson Mounds archaeological site, and a shooting complex in Sparta. He laid off more than 100 workers at those sites. The union sued because the layoffs may violate state contracts. Rauner then postponed the layoffs, pending a court decision. But he still closed the facilities, even though the state continues to pay for workers and to run the buildings.

Our Bills are Unpaid - The state could miss a \$560 million pension payment next month if the standoff continues. State employees are paying medical bills out of pocket while their health insurance is on hold. Vendors are unpaid. A janitorial firm that cleans the atrium in the state's Chicago office building walked away because the state owes the company \$114,000. Illinois lottery winners are suing the state for their winnings. Citing the budget impasse, unpaid bills, and the underfunded pension system, Moody's has downgraded the state's credit rating.

Econ 101, Part 2: Taxes - Where They Go, and Who Pays Them

By Larry A. Marks

This article is the second in a series.

Last month we talked about deficit and debt and the difference between the two. Now we turn to the question of how governments raise revenue: How does a national or local government get money to pay its bills or repay its debt?

The primary way, of course, is through taxes: corporate taxes, personal taxes (including sales taxes, income taxes, property taxes), fees, licenses and permits. Taxation by government funds the services everyone makes use of—things like street lights, roads, and mass transit; police, fire, and emergency medical services; the military, airports, and schools, etc.

It makes sense for the public to pay for these things. That's where taxes come in. We pay a portion of what we earn or spend or own to a local, state, or federal government to cover the cost of the community's commonly needed resources -- everything from libraries to aircraft carriers.

That seems fair and logical. So why do we hate taxes so much?

Much like our earlier discussion of debt, we tend to forget about our using



the streetlights, police, or roads when we pay our taxes. We see the expense, but not the value. Is that fair? No, of course not, but it is how people think.

What is the difference between companies that pay taxes and individuals, i.e., consumers?

Quite a bit, actually. The government knows that some things are absolutely necessary or highly desirable for people to do, so they allow them to deduct those activities (at some level) from the taxes they pay. So if you donate to a charity, drive miles for volunteer work, take classes that are necessary for your career, or pay interest on a mortgage or student loan, you can typically deduct those from your taxes.

There are a limited number of things that a consumer can deduct. Companies, on the other hand, can deduct pretty much anything. If it's an expense to the business, it's de-

ductible as a business expense.

Well, that seems a bit unfair.

It is. The number of deductions allowed to businesses has been growing substantially, especially in specific industries, while the deductions allowed to consumers have been shrinking. Put another way, Congress—well, mostly the Republicans in the House—is saying that businesses are more valuable to the country than the people that work in those businesses.

How does that make any sense?

Well, it doesn't, really. But that's the subject of our next installment.



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a referral from a United Nations agency, after a lengthy U.N. screening process that includes a personal interview. Following extensive background checks, biometric screenings, additional interviews, and case reviews, the U.S. then selects a fraction of the referred would-be refugees for further screening. This lengthy process ends with an in-person interview by Homeland Security officers who are trained to ferret out deceit. The Department of Defense and various law enforcement agencies participate in additional screening. All of this happens abroad.

Since 2011, just over 2000 Syrian refugees have come to the United States through this program. Not one of them has been arrested or removed on terrorism charges. Homeland Security and other relevant agencies know who they are and where in the U.S. they have settled.

In a letter to Congress, prominent American humanitarian organizations, including the Anti-Defamation League, urged that this process of refugee resettlement continue. "To turn our back on refugees would be to betray our nation's core values," they said, and "would send a demoralizing and dangerous message to the world that the United States makes judgments about people based on the country they come from and their religion."

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Congresswoman Tammy Duckworth (IL-8th), who is one of three Democratic candidates for Republican Senator Mark Kirk's seat, said much the same thing in commentary appearing in the Nov. 19 edition of *The Chicago Tribune*. Duckworth called for the U.S. "to lead with strength, not fear." She noted that closing our doors to refugees may be exactly what the terrorists would hope for, as that would reinforce potential recruits' grievances against the West. According to Duckworth, for the U.S. "to appear indifferent to human suffering...poses a threat to our national security."

More than 11 million people have fled violence in Syria to date. The U.S. can admit only a minuscule fraction of that number through the refugee resettlement program. Rather than try to stop this so-far successful program, Congress and the President should be working on ways to ensure it remains stringent and exacting. Turning away desperate families and orphaned children is not consistent with American values. Americans do not have to deny our humanity to remain safe.

What else can be done? The visa waiver program certainly merits serious review. Given concerns for security of the homeland, Congress should heed the President's call to deny gun purchases to people on the terror watch list.

Bruce's Budget Battle

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other work stoppage. Rauner first vetoed the bill, and then killed it by making false claims about its contents.

Lindall sees little difference in the dynamic between the governor's tactics in dealing with state employees and in dealing with the budget impasse.

"Just as we know he is holding the state budget hostage, and he's indifferent to the harm he is causing, from students to seniors, he's also holding a fair contract for state workers hostage," said Lindall.

Rauner is turning our state into a joke. It's too bad nobody's laughing.

A Physician's Open Letter to Dr. Ben Carson

Dear Dr. Carson,

I am writing to you as a fellow physician who has long been concerned about public policy, although I write as an advocate, not as a candidate for President of the United States—at least not yet. I empathize with your desire to take your concerns to a higher level, yet I recognize the limitations of my own background in healthcare and public policy.

You have described Obamacare as slavery, but what about the millions denied access to healthcare? I have long been an advocate for expanding access to healthcare, from the State Children's Health Insurance Plan (SCHIP) to the Affordable Care Act, as I have seen the consequences to families who are unable to afford healthcare and forgo necessary treatment and medications. Imagine the millions of children who receive care that was unavailable to them for years. Undoubtedly, some of those children are cared for by your neurosurgeon colleagues.

My training began in the 1970s at Cook County Hospital where, as a medical student, I saw women who were the victims of backroom abortions, arriving at the hospital in septic shock, many of whom we were unable to save. I learned through those experiences to respect a woman's right to choose, knowing there were some gray areas that were not mine to decide. We have come a long way from the

David Yepsen to Headline

Fall Fundraiser Dec. 16

Former chief political reporter for *The Des Moines Register* to speak at Hyatt Deerfield

Tenth Dems will hold our annual Awards Dinner on Wednesday, Dec. 16 at 6:30 p.m. at the Hyatt Deerfield. The keynote speaker will be David Yepsen, former chief political reporter for *The Des Moines Register*, where he earned the moniker, "The King of the Iowa Caucuses."

Former Illinois Senator Paul Simon noted, "Every four years, the chief political reporter for *The Des Moines Register* becomes the most im-



Keynoter David Yepsen

portant reporter in the nation."

Tenth Dems is proud to welcome David Yepsen to our annual dinner! For full details, or to RSVP for the dinner, email events@tenthdem.org.

We look forward to seeing all of you at the Hyatt Deerfield on Dec. 16!



paternalistic decision making of my training days to today's shared decision making—but that is clearly not reflected in your policies.

Despite clear evidence of the effectiveness of vaccines, you claim that "a multitude of vaccines should be considered with discretion." It is hard to believe that someone trained to evaluate scientific literature would add fuel to the fire of the anti-vaccine crowd.

Despite the scientific community's near unanimous position on climate change, you remain a skeptic, saying, "We may be warming, we may be cooling." On which planet do you reside?

"If there is some force evolving to the maximum, why isn't everything a human?" is your approach to evolution. In the face of centuries of violence and genocide, it is hard to claim that humans have reached the maximum of our potential. It is clear that faith has guided your beliefs more than clear thinking. Is that what we want for our next President?

Despite an admirable narrative about your childhood, growing up in a poor household and relying on food stamps to survive, many aspects of that narrative have been challenged, from your supposed temper later brought under control to an offer of admission to the U.S. Military Academy at West Point. One might have expected that those advantages would have inspired empathy for those who are raised in poverty, yet you would deny essential food support and Medicaid to the economically-challenged underclass in America.

As physicians, many of us can relate to the narratives of our patients and become effective advocates for them. Dr. Carson, you have taken the benefits of the American way of life to your own advantage, yet would deny them to others. How can we believe this soft-spoken, self-proclaimed underdog can become an effective President of the United States?



Sincerely yours,
Mark Rosenberg, M.D.

Congress Watch: He Says He's Pro-Choice - What Bob Dold Doesn't Want You to Know

By Barbara Altman

Bob Dold wants 10th District voters to think that he's pro-choice. He is not. As long as he thinks his constituents won't notice, he supports the Republican anti-choice agenda.

In 2011, Dold voted to defund Planned Parenthood, and he voted for an extreme anti-choice bill known in the pro-choice community as the "Let Women Die Act" (because that's what it would have done). Then, in 2012, he lost his seat to Democrat Brad Schneider.

Now he's back in Congress. Knowing that he will face a strong Democratic challenger next November, either former Congressman Schneider or Highland Park Mayor Nancy Rotering, Dold is understandably desperate to appeal to genuine pro-choice voters. So, on September 18, he voted against H.R. 3134, the latest Republican bill to defund Planned Parenthood.

You probably heard about that highly publicized vote.

Now here's something you probably didn't hear about H.R. 3134. It was only one of a pair of anti-choice bills the Republican majority placed before the House that day, and Dold joined the anti-choice Republican caucus to vote in favor of their second shot at interfering with a woman's right to choose.

The anti-choice bill Dold voted for, H.R. 3504, would limit women's access to abortions by exposing physicians to civil and criminal liability in poorly defined circumstances. According to Illinois Congresswoman Jan Schakowsky (D-9th District), it would "create fear among physicians, healers, people who are educated and committed to health and life..." Schakowsky explained that if the bill became law,



a physician "could spend five years in jail for providing the health-care services that a woman needs."

President Obama would veto both of these Republican anti-choice bills because the bill Dold voted for, just like the bill to defund Planned Parenthood, "would have the same consequence of limiting women's health care choices." Both bills "would likely have a chilling effect, reducing access to care," the White House said.

If you're reading this article, you are among the better-informed, more politically astute voters in the 10th Congressional District. Yet, chances are that until now you had no idea that just this fall, Dold went along with his right-wing Republican caucus and cast a significant anti-choice vote.

That's exactly the way Dold wants it to be.

Rest assured that both of the Democrats who are vying for the opportunity to run against Dold in 2016 are genuinely pro-choice. It is fair to conclude that either one of them would have joined with Jan Schakowsky in opposing both of the anti-choice bills the Republicans teed up.

How should a pro-choice voter proceed? Spread the word, and spread Bob Dold's shame. Make sure your friends and family know that if they are pro-choice, they should not support Bob Dold. Rather, they should support the Democratic candidate for Congress from the 10th District of Illinois.

Who should
make a
woman's
reproductive
choices?



The U.S.
Congress?



Or the woman
in consultation
with her doctor?



Trump All Wet About “Operation Wetback”



An American soldier makes friends with a small Korean refugee, early 1950s.



American soldiers gather undocumented immigrants for deportation to Mexico in the 1950s.

By Roger Baron

At the fourth Republican presidential debate, Donald Trump defended his proposal to deport the estimated 11 million undocumented immigrants now in the United States by invoking actions taken in 1954 by the popular Republican President Dwight Eisenhower. What Trump did not point out is that Eisenhower’s program was called Operation Wetback—employing an offensive term used at that time to refer to Mexican immigrants. Its ramifications were every bit as appalling as the program’s name suggests. Nor did Trump take into account that our nation is very different from what it was more than 60 years ago.

First, Eisenhower was acting in cooperation with the Mexican government, which was concerned that emigration to the United States was causing labor shortages on Mexican farms. Thus, Operation Wetback was concentrated on resettling the approximately 1.1 million undocumented Mexican immigrants found in the border areas of California and Texas.

Today, the undocumented immigrant population of the United States is estimated to exceed 11 million, and a Pew Research Center study found that Mexicans account for only a little more than half. These millions of people from around the world are not concentrated in the southwest; they can be found all over the United States. The same study identified 22 states with 100,000 or more undocumented immigrants.

Aimed exclusively at adult laborers, Operation Wetback nevertheless led to egregious human rights abuses. U.S. Border Patrol agents handed undocumented immigrants to Mexican authorities who moved them to unfamiliar places in southern Mexico, often without their belongings, food, employment, or ability to reunite with their families. Some of them were left in the desert to die.

Trump proposes to adopt a similar plan that would apply to entire families, including young children. Is such a thing possible, in a civilized country in the 21st century?

Worse, Trump proposes to deport children born in the United States if their parents are undocumented immigrants. According to the 14th Amendment to the Constitution, such children are U.S. citizens. Under international law, it is a crime against humanity for a nation to expel a population based on ethnicity.

It is hard to imagine that a leading presidential candidate of a major party could propose such an inhumane and impractical plan without being hooted off the stage. Worse, by its silence the Republican Party signals that it finds such a plan acceptable.

Trump suggests that his 21st century “Operation Wetback” would require a new bureaucracy with police powers that he would call a “Deportation Force.” A better term might be “Separation Squad,” or “SS” for short.



In A Democracy... Voting Is Fundamental!



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