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President CJ's Letter

Dear Colleagues:

When I was teaching American Government to high school students (a lifetime ago), I developed a unit to teach about George Washington's Farewell

Speech and its fundamental warnings regarding the survival of our great country. A lesson much needed in 2023.

Washington gave his address to the nation in the form of a letter to "Friends and Fellow Citizens." Published in the *Daily American Advertiser*, a Philadelphia newspaper, on September 19, 1796, and later reprinted in papers throughout the country, this address would become one of the most widely reprinted documents in American history, with powerful implications that continue to resonate today.

The letter contained three main principles. Washington urged Americans to always place the interests of the Nation over their political and regional affiliations. Washington warned that the forces of geographical sectionalism, political factionalism, and interference by foreign powers in the nation's domestic affairs threatened the stability of the republic.

Washington cautioned against sectionalism and regional affiliations, "You have in a common cause, fought and triumphed together," Washington declared. "The Independence and Liberty you possess are the work of joint counsels, and joint efforts, of common dangers, sufferings, and successes." "Your Union ought to be considered as a main prop of your liberty and ... the love of the one ought to endear you to the preservation of the other." The newly formed "united" states, together, represented "one Nation under God, indivisible, with liberty and justice for all."

Political parties were starting to emerge during Washington's second term of office and he did not favor this

type of division. (Economic policies of Hamilton, a "Federalist" from the North, were opposed by Jefferson, a "Democrat-Republican" from the South.) According to Washington, one of the chief dangers of letting regional loyalties dominate loyalty to the Nation as a whole was that it would lead to factionalism, or the development of competing political parties. When Americans voted according to party loyalty, rather than the common interest of the nation, Washington feared it would foster a "*spirit of revenge*," and enable the rise of unprincipled leaders who would "*usurp for themselves the reins of government; destroying afterwards the very engines, which have lifted them to unjust dominion.*" Does this sound familiar? How many times do our politicians choose what is best for the Nation and its citizens, rather than what suits their own agenda or that of their political party? Rarely.

Just as regionalism would lead to the formation of political parties, Washington believed, partisanship would open the door to "*foreign influence and corruption.*" While he advocated for the United States to be on good terms with all nations, especially commercial relations, he argued that "*inveterate antipathies against particular Nations, and passionate attachments for others, should be excluded.*" A foreign policy based on neutrality was the safest way to maintain national unity, and stability, in the United States. Although Washington saw the need for the nation to involve itself in foreign affairs in the case of war or other emergency, he argued that it must "*steer clear of permanent alliances with any portion of the foreign world.*" Today we can list countless foreign policy entanglements that apply – an almost infinite number if we include foreign commerce.

Washington's farewell address was rooted in the specific challenges he saw facing the United States at the time. His eloquent message of unity and his cautionary warnings, have wisely guided many of his successors. Yet have also been ignored by many others. Two-hundred and twenty-seven years have passed, yet Washington's Address reads as if they were written yesterday. If we, as a Nation, could change direction in these three principled areas, we would

solve most of our current problems. A difficult prospect, yes, but worth it. And, certainly a lesson worth teaching.

- C. J. Hatcher, WAC President

INSIDE CONTENTS

WAC Members Honored Outgoing Delegate Rob Bell at Our March Luncheon.....	2
US Representative Bob Good from Virginia's Fifth Congressional District Addressed WAC in April.....	3
Dominion's Blow to Free Speech, By Christopher Caldwell, Compact Magazine.....	5
Don't Cede Fairness to Liberals, By Joshua Bandoch, Washington Times.....	6
FBI Plan to Target Christians Exposes the Left's Fear of Faith, By Tammy Bruce, Association of Mature American Citizens.....	7
How Leftist Activists Hijacked Corporate America, By Justin Danhof, Washington Examiner.....	9
Conservative Group Rolls Out "Woke Alerts" to Combat Activist Corporate America, By Ramsey Touchberry, Washington Times.....	10
The Ivy League Has Gone Mad, By Jesse Adams, Washington Examiner	10
Duncan's Debacle Shows We Need Fiercer Free Speech Protection, By Samuel Mangold-Lenett, The Federalist.....	12
The First – and so far Only – Presidential Campaign from Behind Bars, By Fred Lucas, The Daily Signal.....	13
Board Members.....	14

WAC Members Honored Outgoing Assembly Delegate Rob Bell at the March Luncheon

On March 29, WAC members were delighted to honor Delegate Rob Bell who has decided not to seek re-election this year in the redrawn 55th District. Members enjoyed many laughs listening to Del. Chris Runion and former Delegate Steve Landes roast Rob mercilessly about some of their memories of their times together in Richmond. WAC President CJ Hatcher presented Rob with an engraved silver plate expressing our gratitude for all he has done for the residents of Virginia's 58th District. Rob has served in the Virginia House of Delegates, in the seat held by Thomas Jefferson, for 22 years. Since taking office, Rob has written laws for and taken on many important causes in the General Assembly including cracking down on repeat offense drunk driving, keeping sex offenders off school property, expanding protective orders to require life in prison for those convicted of raping children, addressing sexual assaults on college campuses, expanding stalking laws, and empowering

crime victims, to name a few. We are sad to see Rob go and wish him well wherever his future takes him.



U.S. Representative Bob Good from Virginia's Fifth Congressional District Addressed WAC in April

On April 12, WAC members were excited to hear from U.S. Congressman Bob Good about his efforts in Congress to combat liberal policies of the Biden Administration and protect our Constitutional freedoms. He spoke in particular about the harms to Americans caused by Biden's open border and immigration policies, his policy to protect life from the moment of conception, and his efforts to reign in government spending and unwillingness to vote to increase the debt ceiling unless spending is curtailed. Good was also one of twenty members of the House Freedom Caucus who opposed the election of Kevin McCarthy to be Speaker of the House because they considered him to be not conservative enough and part of "the swamp." After many concessions were agreed to by McCarthy, Good and several others voted 'present' on the fifteenth ballot to allow McCarthy to become Speaker. The Congressman believes McCarthy has done a good job this year as Speaker.







Dominion's Blow to Free Speech

By Christopher Caldwell,
Compact Magazine, condensed

Fox News's payment of \$787.5 million to settle a defamation suit against it by Dominion Voting Systems has been cheered by many. In the days after the election in November 2020, the network gave airtime to Donald Trump's legal aides, Rudy Giuliani and especially Sidney Powell, as they spun a tale of doctored voting machines, Venezuelan skulduggery, and spoiled election tallies. It proved true in none of its particulars. Dominion, which has election contracts in 28 states, will receive the largest defamation payout on record.

Whatever one makes of Fox's 2020 election coverage, this settlement is a disappointment and a danger.

The present regime of press freedom took shape in the 1960s and '70s with the Supreme Court's ruling in *New York Times v. Sullivan* (1964), the Washington Post's mythic role in breaking open Watergate after 1972, various "sunshine" laws, and a vague set of Boomer deals. The media were to be protected from any kind of government intimidation. Politicians had to understand they were in a rough business. They would be called names. Journalists had a right to go overboard. They even had a right to be wrong, as long as they didn't do so with a "reckless disregard for the truth." The penalty for bad reporting would be paid in the currency of reputation.

But the present generation is more preoccupied with "misinformation" and, therefore, more focused on protecting society *from* the media. Since the First Amendment forbids legislating against press freedoms, the courtroom is the most promising venue for rolling them back. Fox is only the first company to be swept up in this reaction.

The 2020 elections were explosive because of the way three things interacted: the voluble incumbent, an irregular electoral system devised in the wake of Covid, and the shocking closeness of the result. A shift of 80,000 votes in Arizona, Georgia, Nevada, and Wisconsin would have given former President Donald Trump a commanding victory. Vote-counting dragged on for days in all of those states. To a Trump supporter who had seen his candidate surveilled by intelligence agencies before the 2016 election, treated as illegitimate in the news media while in office, and impeached (at that point only once), the election results certainly looked fishy. In this age of ideological polarization, it is easy to pass off as a "fringe conspiracy

theory" an idea that 100 million people might be discussing every night over the dinner table. It may be that the suspicions they expressed were misplaced and that the election was on the up-and-up. But in a free society, trust is produced through the robust and unbullied scrutiny of an opposition press.

Fox, as we know, embraced that responsibility with zeal. One can say in retrospect that the network should have known better than to solicit the opinion of Powell, a woman whose theories sounded (implausible) even at first acquaintance . . . Shame and ostracism are powerful tools for keeping reporters in line. It can be a sound journalistic instinct – although it should go without saying that safeguards are needed – to talk to a source *just because* an interested party describes him as "discredited." Fox host Tucker Carlson, whose instincts about Powell were consistently sound (which is to say, consistently skeptical), nonetheless said of the general issue of voting-machine integrity: "This is a real issue, no matter who raises it or who tries to dismiss it as a conspiracy theory." Good – this is old-fashioned journalistic defiance of convention, of the sort that Fox's loyal audience has come to expect.

And there was another thing: For weeks, Powell was confidante to a spokesperson for a president alleging an unprecedented conspiracy. Whatever one thought of trump's allegations, she was newsworthy.

One novelty revealed by the Dominion lawsuit has thus far been little appreciated: namely, that the overlap between public and private power has made criticism of the government vulnerable to counterattack. In the old days, a theory about polling stations might have been accurate or crazy – put polling was a government function and, thus far, fair game. Now, an increasing number of government duties are contracted out to private companies that can demand compensation for any reputational damage that might affect their private interests (even if, as is the case with Dominion, their contracts are largely with the government). Presumably, the same vulnerability to litigation can be turned against the newspapers that criticize the military strategy of Constellis (formerly Blackwater) or conditions in prisons run by CoreCivic (formerly the Corrections Corporation of America). We often think we use the word "plutocracy" as a metaphor, but in fact, certain prerogatives for public-private entities are being formalized through cases like *Dominion v. Fox News*. If you criticize a government activity run by a private company, the company can retaliate.

After *New York Times v. Sullivan*, news organizations evolved an impressive arsenal of prerogatives and protections – privileges for neutral and fair reporting, a virtually unlimited right to opinion, and an understanding

that they could explore repugnant and even false views if they were newsworthy.

The heart of Dominion's case lay not in what Fox and its employees said, but in the theories Powell and Giuliani spouted during interviews. That's a new one: The interviewer was held responsible for the statements of the interviewee. In traditional print journalism an interview is usually just raw material – not journalism itself. In broadcasting, the interview *is* the journalism – except that the journalist, of course, can't control what the subject says. It could be argued (and was) that a "pre-interview" can turn interviewer and interviewee into collaborators. But conversations are mostly opinion, anyway. Under the old media doctrine, punishing Fox for interviewing Powell and Giuliani would have been well-nigh impossible. Indeed, it would have been undesirable.

Fox ran into some bad luck. Critics of "misinformation" often see the prerogatives of a free press as so many sly tricks. Such critics used to be associated with the political right. In Vietnam, they were often the military brass. No longer. Judge Eric Davis of the Delaware Superior Court turned out to be one of them. In a summary-judgment opinion issued on March 31, he denied Fox the right to defend its reporting on the grounds of "newsworthiness." It has been said that it is hard to prevail in defamation cases, because it is almost impossible to show that a news organization has been truly reckless. But if there is no privilege for "newsworthiness," then these cases are not hard to win at all. Fox is a news organization. If its news isn't newsworthy, then almost *anything* it's doing is reckless by definition.

Nor could Fox take refuge in the idea that its anchors were free to express opinions. Davis insisted on a bipolar distinction between facts and opinions, such that a question asked by Fox host Maria Bartiromo –

Sidney, I want to ask you about these algorithms and the Dominion software . . . Sidney, we talked about the Dominion software. I know that there were voting irregularities. Tell me about that.

Becomes a "statement of fact," because Bartiromo used the formulation "I know." The question thus loses the protection as journalism and is liable to be read as defamation. Bartiromo was certainly among the more credulous Fox reporters, but this is absurdly literal-minded, as if Judge Davis were playing a game of Simon Says.

On any matter of serious political controversy, the difference between a fact and an opinion is precisely what is hardest to determine. Is it a fact or opinion that CO2 contributes to global warming? If you assert it as a scientist,

it is a fact. If you assert it as a non-scientist, it is an opinion about the credibility of scientists. From the outside, that looks like the main reason Fox settled. Burrowing underneath the law, the judge laid down a set of courtroom rules that made Fox culpable by definition.

Those disgusted with Fox may thrill to this approach. Celebration is premature. No newspaper is so anti-Trumpian, no network so woke, that its in-house counsel would not shudder to contemplate the implications of the roadmap Dominion has charted for plaintiffs and Davis for judges.

Participants in *Dominion v. Fox* suspected it would find its way to the Supreme Court. Some such case eventually will. We have lost the definitions on which freedom of the press has rested for half a century. Until we get new ones, it is to be feared that "reckless disregard for the truth" will mean nothing more than reckless disagreement with prevailing opinion.



Don't Cede Fairness to Liberals

By Joshua Bandoch, Washington Times

Most people care about fairness. Humans are, after all, moral creatures. And yet it's mostly the political left that speaks of "fairness." That's unfortunate, because policies that flow from the left's conception of "fairness" often harm those most in need of "fairness." Conservatives can close this massive moral messaging gap with a more persuasive narrative about what's fair.

President Biden is leading the way on the left. In his State of the Union address, he wielded "fairness" as a rhetorical

cudgel, insisting on fairness anywhere and everywhere, including tax policy, antitrust enforcement and prescription drug prices.

The president doubled down in his budget. The White House justified nearly every component in terms of fairness, understood as “equity,” including housing, criminal justice and education. Democrats on the House Budget Committee released a report praising the budget for advancing ... you guessed it, fairness.

The Department of Justice’s mission is to “uphold the rule of law, to keep our country safe, and to protect civil rights.” Still, the agency’s 2022-2026 strategic plan asserts a need to “ensure economic opportunity and fairness for all” as a key plank.

Expect the left to ratchet up their rhetoric as the 2024 election approaches.

And on the right? Mostly crickets.

The left’s focus on fairness is psychologically sensible. Research in moral psychology by social psychologist Jonathan Haidt and others shows humans are wired to care about “fairness.” It just depends on what’s meant by “fair.”

Research reveals that the left and right generally hold fundamentally different conceptions of “fairness.” The left sees fairness as “equity,” which prioritizes equal treatment and equal outcomes. Hence the growing dominance of the DEI (diversity, equity and inclusion) narrative.

The right, by contrast, views fairness as “proportionality,” which focuses on individuals being rewarded in proportion to their industriousness, merit and contribution.

Conservatives tend to respond to appeals to equity fairness in one of two ineffective ways. First, they argue that “fair” policies are substantively undesirable or untenable. Even if the data is on the conservatives’ side, this approach doesn’t work because humans feel (not reason) first, and “fair” policies make us feel good.

Second, conservatives tend to package unpopular policies as “fair.” Consider the FairTax Act of 2023, which would impose a national sales tax of 23% in exchange for getting rid of the income and other taxes — a plan that even The Wall Street Journal’s editorial board called “masochism” and Americans for Tax Reform’s Grover Norquist labeled a “free gift to Democrats.”

Conservatives have a chance to pivot to a persuasive fairness narrative made up of three complementary parts.

First, conservatives need to advocate principles and policies explicitly and consistently on fairness grounds. Lean in by

advocating proportionality as an American value. Consider income inequality. “How is it fair,” conservatives can ask, “to prevent people who work hard from getting ahead?”

These appeals will resonate. For example, a 2019 Pew Research Center survey showed that majorities of Americans of all ages agree with the statement that “Most people can get ahead if they’re willing to work hard.”

Second, conservatives can offer an alternative conception of “equality” as an opportunity. After all, America is founded on the pursuit of happiness. Policies such as school choice that promote opportunity are popular, too. A 2022 survey showed 72% of voters favor school choice.

Third, conservatives can highlight how the “fairness as equity” agenda actually harms those it is meant to help, including by increasing inequality. In an attempt to help the least well-off, the left advocates policies like tax increases and regulations. That results in scarcity of things felt most by the poor, such as jobs and housing. For example, the Institute for Justice has shown that occupational licensing makes it harder and more expensive for millions of low-income Americans to find work or open a business.

Indeed, advocates of an “abundance agenda,” fueled by the power of fairness-as-proportionality, have shown how it’s enormously beneficial to the least well-off, dramatically raising living standards and providing people with many more opportunities.

One promising example of more effective messaging on fairness by conservatives came recently with the FAIR (Fifth Amendment Integrity Restoration) Act. This bipartisan bill, meant to protect property rights by raising the level of proof necessary for the federal government to seize property, is co-sponsored by Rep. Tim Walberg, Michigan Republican, and Rep. Jamie Raskin, Maryland Democrat. “How is it fair,” the bill’s sponsors can ask, “for law enforcement to lawlessly seize people’s private property?”

Fairness might be the most potent and persuasive appeal conservatives can make, and fortunately, it’s also one that resonates with a large majority of Americans.



FBI Plan to Target Christians Exposes the Left’s Fear of Faith

By Tammy Bruce, Association of Mature American Citizens, condensed

Anti-Christian bigotry is, horribly, nothing new. At the very start of the faith, Christians were attacked, denigrated, criminalized, and murdered. Over 2000 years later, we still see the ignorant and the envious targeting of Christians everywhere. But there is a new and dangerous development in our 21st century modern world – our own government is joining the mob. From labeling people of faith as extremists, ignoring or downplaying anti-Christian hate crimes, devising a plan to spy on “traditional” Catholic churches, to making jokes when asked about mass shooting targeting Christians. The Biden administration would make Stalin proud with its all-systems signaling that Christians are a problem.

The most recent blatant move against people of faith by this administration was brought to us by a whistleblower who revealed a disturbing Federal Bureau of Investigation plan to implement a national domestic surveillance effort against “traditional” Catholic Churches. The Washington Times reported, “The House Judiciary Committee revealed new details...about the FBI field office in Richmond’s plan to spy on Catholic churches and church leaders, including that the plan was distributed to other FBI offices across the country.”

Moreover, the whistleblower noted the FBI has decided those who attend Latin Mass are the core of a problem producing what the agents labeled “Radical-Traditionalist Catholics,” or RTCs. And how do they “mitigate” this threat? They would recruit spies within the targeted churches and from “mainstream” Catholic parishes.

This tells us many things otherwise hidden – the FBI has already separated what they consider more “conservative” Catholics (i.e. those who attend Latin Mass) from their designation of normal or “mainstream” Catholics. These “mainstream” parishes are more likely to be liberal in nature and demonstrate and act on liberal social politics, fly the BLM and/or the gay rainbow flags, among other woke policies. Rep. Jim Jordan, put it this way, “In this document, the FBI purported to distinguish what it called ‘traditional Catholics’ from the disfavored RTC [radical-traditionalist Catholic] adherents, who the FBI characterized as embracing ‘anti-Semitic, anti-immigrant, anti-LGBTQ, and white supremacist ideology...He added that the FBI ‘even identified certain public policy issues – such as immigration and life issues – that it believed would ‘catalyze’ RTC adherents,” reported Fox News.

Ah, the new avenue with which to declare Christians terrorists. Make no mistake, they’ll start with Catholics, then move to every other denomination and faith that has not fully pledged allegiance to the new woke religion.

Once again, those perceived as current or future political opponents are being isolated, labeled, smeared, and then

criminalized. This is exactly the process Merrick Garland, the DOJ, and FBI used to target and declare parents who were attending school board meetings as “domestic terrorists.” This is exactly what Biden is trying to do writ-large to 70 million Americans who voted for Trump – we are “semi-fascists” who are a threat to democracy.

Ultimately, the FBI church document was withdrawn due to the outrage but the damage was done when it was sent by the Richmond, Virginia field office to every FBI field office in the country. FBI Director Christopher Wray told the Senate Intelligence Committee on March 8 that he was “aghast” by the memo and said his agency does not ‘conduct investigations based on religious affiliation or practices, full stop.’”

Wray’s language here is important because it reveals their strategy: Catholics are being targeted not for their faith (Gasp, of course not! The FBI would *never* do that!) but for their “extremist” views. The acting assistant director of Congressional Affairs said the same thing in a statement in late March, “The FBI is not anti-Catholic in any way, shape, or form, and does not target people of any faith because of their religious beliefs.” Unless, of course, they’re not Catholics but “RTCs, wink wink. This is a word game that the FBI knows is pure gaslighting to hide an actual atrocious overreach of power.

This news in itself is enough to overwhelm. It represents not just an abandonment of the Constitution but a complete rejection of the principles contained in our founding document. This action by federal law enforcement is quintessentially un-American and the antithesis of what this nation stands for. And yet somehow we have enough people in the FBI who not only got the idea, which is bad enough, but then fleshed it out, wrote it down, got it approved, and then distributed it through the country.

It is time to admit the obvious, that the targeting and marginalizing of Christians in particular is a deliberate, complex, culture-wide effort to depress, enrage, and divide Americans. Repulsively, it bears the stamp of approval of the Biden administration and the Democratic Party apparatchiks who continue to prop up the fools who continue to destroy our country, economically and culturally.

This targeting of Christians is a necessary and urgent action for the left, and it always has been. For Marxists, they and their woke church of Big Government cannot survive if people look to God, to faith, to inform their values. There can be only one God, and the miserable left demand that it be them.

Faith is especially threatening to the fascist and Marxist left as it immediately undermines efforts to crush the human

spirit. Looking to something beyond government for solace, hope, and optimism in the future reminds the individual that they matter, and that government is not God.

For the envious malignant narcissists of the left, faith must be stamped out. As those who survived the old Soviet Union understand, as well as every other nation still suffering under communism and socialism, this is a threat to humanity we must defeat, and it starts here at home defending our children, our families, our faith, our culture, and our futures.



How Leftist Activists Hijacked Corporate America

By Justin Danhof,
Washington Examiner,
condensed

Social justice activists often don disguises. Animal rights activists pose as farmworkers to film footage in secret. Eco protesters pose as museumgoers to glue themselves to art. But the latest trend is something new: Leftists are posing as corporate investors.

Why? Because investors own companies, and companies have power. Climate change warriors can chain themselves to every tree in the rainforest, but without the support of the public, they aren't going to get very far. Investing offers something different: a seat at the corporate table, where decisions are made by a powerful few. Convince those few and you're set.

Activists have learned this lesson the hard way. When PETA tried to convince lawmakers to serve vegan milk in school cafeterias, for example, the initiative was promptly rejected. And when the Biden administration

targeted gas stoves, the backlash was so swift that the administration issued a "clarifying" statement within a week.

So activists changed tactics and venues. It does not matter to them whether the public supports what they're pushing. Their solution isn't to stop pushing, but to start pushing in places most people don't think to look. Rather than shout their advocacy from the streets, they're now whispering it in the ears of CEOs.

Every good subterfuge needs a name, ideally an innocuous one, and the one leftists have adopted for their environmental cause is no different: "environmental, social and governance" or "ESG."

The mechanics of this scheme are straightforward. Activists-turned-investors co-opted a little-known, arcane process of corporate governance called proxy voting. Here's how: Activist groups, such as PETA, buy up a few shares of big, publicly traded companies. Then, as "investors," they're allowed to propose changes to how the company is run. These proposals get put to a shareholder vote once a year.

That season is now upon us. And the proposals are wild. PETA, for example, asked Starbucks to push soy milk in its beverages, waxing poetically about the supposed racially disparate effects of lactose intolerance and environmental impact. PETA has also described cow's milk as "a symbol of white supremacy" and blamed the dietary staple for allergies, diabetes, heart attacks, osteoporosis(!), and more.

De-policing is another beloved cause. This year, activists are targeting Travelers Insurance, demanding that the company stop selling insurance to police departments because it "increase[s] the potential for racist police brutality." Activists have also targeted Comcast for sponsoring Philadelphia's police foundation gala, demanding that Comcast conduct a "racial equity audit" to atone for this particular sin.

The Left's favorite issue, though, is environmentalism. Activists are specifically taking aim at fossil fuels — you know, the stuff we use every day to drive to work and heat our homes. The Dutch nonprofit group Follow This, for example, is asking Shell, BP, Chevron, and Exxon to slash their "Scope 3" carbon emissions — i.e., to drill and sell less gas while also halting emissions in their entire supply chains. Should they decline, the Sierra Club is asking Wall Street to stop financing these oil companies' projects.

From a company's perspective, it's often easier to cave to crazed activistors than be held hostage by them. But the rest of us are left paying the price. Actual investors (i.e., anyone with a pension, or a 401(k), or saving for a child's education) are unwittingly funding these political games with their investment accounts. And all of us, investors or not, are worse off when our country's political agenda is dictated by renegade activists using corporate America as their cudgel.



Conservative Group Rolls Out 'Woke Alerts' to Combat Activist Corporate America

By Ramsey Touchberry,
Washington Times

The conservative advocacy organization Consumers' Research has launched a text notification system dubbed "Woke Alerts" to inform users when they believe a major company is engaging in liberal political activism.

The service is the latest strategy by the group, which brands itself as the leading anti-woke crusader, to combat what they call "woke capitalism" by shining a spotlight on corporations believed to be bending to a liberal agenda.

Consumers' Research Executive Director [Will Hild](#) told The Washington Times the goal of "Woke Alerts" is not necessarily to tell Americans which companies to boycott, but rather to "arm consumers with the best information so that they can make decisions that are in line with their values."

"We want to make sure we're educating people when we see a company take a turn like we saw with Bud Light," Mr. [Hild](#) said. "We can give them a way that they can know and avoid that company and stop giving them their money."

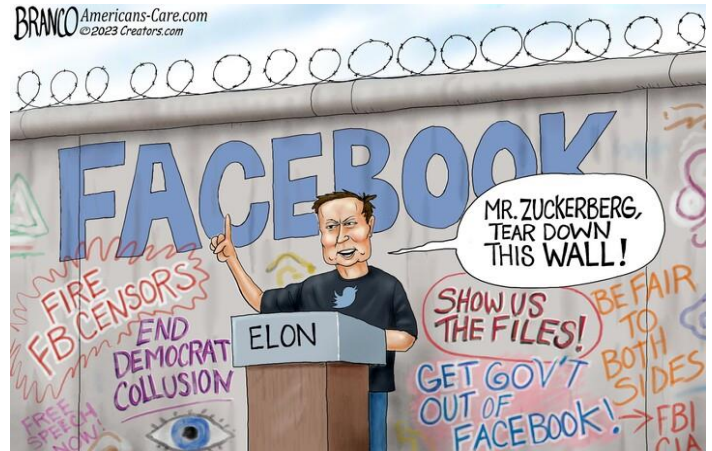
The group is putting six figures behind the service. Last year, it launched a seven-figure culture war battle against the world's largest asset manager, BlackRock, over its support of climate-conscious investing known as ESG. Consumers' Research has also targeted corporations such as Coca-Cola, Nike, American Airlines and Disney in recent anti-woke advocacy campaigns.

What qualifies for Woke Alerts will be subjective and is not defined by any set standard of criteria. Mr. [Hild](#) said

Americans who subscribe for the free service will see a company be put on blast in their text messages if it appears to be pandering to liberal culture war issues.

He cited Bud Light's recent ad campaign featuring transgender influencer Dylan Mulvaney as an example of what would trigger a notification.

"If we see a company that is instead of focusing on serving their consumers is cozying up to woke activists or woke politicians, then that will trigger a Woke Alert," Mr. [Hild](#).



The Ivy League Has Gone Mad

By Jesse Adams, Washington Examiner, condensed

These days, there are two broadly accurate stereotypes about who makes up the Ivy League: There's the sort of tweedy ivory tower eccentrics unreasonably invested in Cervantes or quantum physics. And then there's the wide-eyed spittle-flecked activist ideologues steeped in critical theory, driving themselves to fury as they rant at captive audiences, a distinct type spanning all ethnicities and genders.

Members of this second type tend to be obsessive, monomaniacal crusaders for sweeping social justice reform to be imposed by people like them, wounded visionaries whose pain and persecution will righteously redeem the better world to come. Thoughtful people retain the capacity to minimally concede the basic humanity and best intentions of at least the better sort on the other side, but that sense of grace and grayscale has grown increasingly scarce among tenured intelligentsia as of late, let alone the bombastic cranks whose whole gestalt is big promises and furious scapegoating. The Ivy League rewards a Manichean mindset today, not the practical wisdom of meliorism and compromise and nuance. The incentives all pull toward a

totalizing view of the world as a battle between good and evil ideas, represented by good and evil vocabularies.

Since the theory all but proves that reality is socially constructed, every last inequity an arbitrary artifact of power, it's really only a matter of will and sheer relentlessness to at last force an equitable global society. I spent the last decade inside Ivy League academia as an in-house historian and PR flack for Columbia University, and watched this worldview, as a psychological tendency, become more and more a sort of madness. I mean this literally: It attracts the insane, and it pulls people toward insanity.

I saw this firsthand. Ivy League colleges, and Columbia in particular, have long employed radicals with far-out political and ethical ideas among their professoriate. Kathy Boudin, for instance, was both a Columbia instructor and a convicted murderer who was involved in terroristic violence as a member of the Weather Underground. But since graduating from a different Ivy League college myself 16 years ago, I've noticed that it is not only the self-described radicals who espouse radical ideology.

The ideas have become de rigueur. One symposium insisted that anything but a totally open southern border represented "a fear of too much justice." The very concept of borders was unconscionable violence. It wasn't just that students accused of sexual assault should be presumed guilty but that offering them due process compounded the original crime. (I saw a professor shout about that one until she was flushed and quaking with rage.) And when it came to race, anything but reparations and universal quotas was tantamount to Jim Crow, countless Columbians constantly repeated.

Perhaps it may seem like referring to political proposals as insane is a sort of metaphorical use of language or that it is just hyperbole. But I mean it literally, and I know of what I speak. When I was growing up, it was rather routine for people I cared about to declare suddenly that they could control others' minds or were Jesus Christ or that a shadowy cabal of villains was coming after them.

Truth be told, my mother was never thrilled for me and my brother to spend so much time growing up around mental patients. But our father, her ex-husband, was an earthy social worker, head of a local nonprofit organization called "The Self Help Center" that gave tenuously stabilized clients a place to congregate. And he was too damn cheap to hire a babysitter. So, many an afternoon and evening were spent playing cards, board games, and Nintendo with slightly disheveled adults on heavy psychotropic medication — and occasionally off of it.

Seldom did I ever feel physically threatened, but sometimes their outbursts hurt my feelings — *wasn't Larry supposed to be my best friend?* Yet as years have passed, the experience of seeing seemingly intact grownups abruptly lapse into psychosis has proved invaluable in life. The skills I learned defusing the situations the mentally unwell create have served me well, especially at Columbia.

Whether diplomatically navigating unhinged professors' rambling streams of marketable talking points or smoothing things over at meetings after older colleagues inadvertently said something that had recently turned offensive, it's come in handy.

Today, lunatics increasingly dominate the asylums of America's elite institutions — the federal bureaucracies, the media, and most especially the universities. I want to be perfectly clear: I mean no insult, as there goes any of us but for a few bad incentives and a social milieu with the wrong rewards tipping us over the fence. And it's not that the truest of true believers are all that numerous but that they're the most obsessively focused and have gobs of money behind them. The wackiest of excesses are just in the water now, part of the obligatory ambiance. Ambitious folks tend to figure out where their bread is buttered.

How many of their policy prescriptions actually make any sense? Maybe a few, if tweaked to be anchored more firmly in human nature and hard institutional constraints. But that's not what's ever earned them attention or funding or named professorships. A lot of students, donors, and journalists prefer champions whose style is more fire-breathing, ferociously condemning the wicked, and building castles in the sky.

The fundamental insight of Public Policy 101 is that it's essentially always an exhausting, exasperating slog of incremental progress at best. Real political success looks and feels not nearly satisfying enough, particularly for those prone to magical thinking, which is what is needed to believe that changing the language and dominant narratives will — *hey presto* — make pain and injustice things of the past.

As even the most cursory scroll through TikTok demonstrates, crazy people do often have a kind of superpower: the tireless ability to create compelling spectacles at scale, winning far more attention and adherents in this atomized and desensitized age than more staid and sober voices. Serious policymaking is a game of inches and intractable trade-offs, the best of intentions crumbling to dust, and not half as entertaining as charismatic narcissists.

There's no easy fix for a society and institutional culture that have come to actively reward delusion. Sanity has fallen way out of fashion, and there's no reason to expect it will bounce back anytime soon. As Public Policy 101 reminds us, you get more of what you subsidize.

Is there anything voters in the vicinity of the center can do to self-help? Batten down the hatches, for one, because the derangements are only going to get worse. Most important, reject credentialism — an Ivy League affiliation or *New York Times* byline or government title no longer connote credibility, if they ever did. They are gradually becoming pretty good proxies for dangerous detachment from reality.



Duncan's Debacle Shows We Need Fiercer Free-Speech Protection

By Samuel Mangold-Lenett, *The Federalist*, condensed

The culture of free speech that for so long characterized American academia is dead. Increasingly, struggle sessions and violent eruptions are how the nation's best and brightest choose to handle the ideas, individuals, and situations that make them uncomfortable.

Earlier this month, Fifth Circuit Court of Appeals Judge Kyle Duncan was invited by the Stanford Federalist Society to their law school to give a talk titled "Covid, Guns, and Twitter." What ensued is what has become the norm. A coalition of the dysgenic and well-dressed filled a lecture hall to shout down and demean a *federal judge* while a school diversity administrator chastised him with prepared remarks.

Disagreement is OK and clearly would have been welcomed by Duncan, but when students feel emboldened to tell a federal judge, "We hope your daughters get raped," as one individual allegedly did, a course correction is desperately needed.

On Friday, Duncan addressed this very topic in a talk titled "Free Speech and Legal Education in Our Liberal Democracy" at the University of Notre Dame's Center for Citizenship and Constitutional Government.

"This is a talk about another talk," Duncan quipped to inform those in the audience who were unaware that he would be, in part, discussing the incident at Stanford.

In a general defense of student protests, Duncan stated, "It's a great country where you can harshly criticize federal judges and nothing bad will happen to you. ... The students at Stanford and other elite law schools swim in an ocean of free speech. ... Has any group of people ever been so privileged?"

Continuing, the judge referenced a memo published on March 22 by the dean of Stanford Law, Jenny Martinez, in which she condemned the disruptions and "threatening messages directed at members of [the Stanford Law] community" and pledged to adopt stricter policies regarding event disruption.

Martinez's memo specifically contrasts student protests with malicious disruptions, noting that universities, as institutions, have unique obligations to curtail the latter in the pursuit of academic freedom through the enforcement of conduct codes and administrative policies. And as Duncan noted, a rigid commitment to the cause of academic freedom is absolutely vital to both the preservation of the university system and American society.

The universities that, at one point in time, were renowned for their unyielding commitment to free speech and the relentless pursuit of excellence in all things, to this day — despite the diminishing quality of graduates — still churn out leaders in every single sector.

Noting the undeniable trend of woke radicalization among young people in elite universities and the threat it poses to the maintenance of civil order and liberal democracy, Duncan asked, "What would happen if the cast of mind in that Stanford classroom becomes the norm in legislatures, in courts, in universities, in boardrooms, in business, in churches?"

"We must resist this at all costs," Duncan continued. "Otherwise, we will cease to have [the] rule of law."

Toward the end of her memo, Martinez also ruled out disciplining the individuals who disrupted Duncan's lecture

at Stanford Law, as it would be onerous to discern which students “crossed the line into disruptive heckling while others engaged in constitutionally protected non-disruptive protest” and that university administrators sent “conflicting signals about whether what was happening was acceptable or not.”

Instead, the offending students — along with the rest of the law school’s student body — will be required to attend a “mandatory half-day session in spring quarter for all students on the topic of freedom of speech and the norms of the legal profession.”

In the final moments of his speech at Notre Dame, Duncan mentioned he was “cautiously encouraged” by this measure as it indicated Stanford Law’s leadership was in some form committed to fighting for the foundational principles of American academia. He also noted that the point of the struggle session wasn’t *purely* to intimidate or dissuade him. After all, he’s a federal judge — he has life tenure; his future is secure.

The point of heckling Duncan, denying him a chance to make his case, and even wishing rape upon his children was to make an example out of him and to intimidate the students who invited him to speak. The disruptors want to destroy what is left of American civil society and replace it with an even more omnipresent woke authoritarianism, further preventing the dissemination of dissent. In order to accomplish this, they need future generations of leaders — their classmates — to be afraid, so they jeer and they threaten.

This ethos, one that is undeniably a well-established, if not the dominant, worldview on American campuses, cannot be remedied through scolding. Half-day sessions “on the topic of freedom of speech and the norms of the legal profession” might knock some sense into a couple of dozen Stanford Law students, but what about every other campus in the U.S.?

Days after the incident at Stanford Law, militant Antifa groups descended upon the University of California, Davis, in an attempt to prevent Charlie Kirk, founder of the conservative student organization Turning Point USA, from speaking on campus. Prior to the event, Gary May, the chancellor of UC Davis, circulated a [video](#) claiming Kirk “advocated for violence against transgender individuals.” Ultimately, the militants were unsuccessful in their attempts, but unlike at Stanford, the disruptors attempted violence and destroyed public property in the pursuit of denying an individual’s right to free speech.

How much longer can we continue to delude ourselves about free speech? There are, to be sure, legal protections for speech, but the leftists who control the institutions where

these protections are most needed (academia, Big Tech, et al.) actively eschew and chip away at them in collaboration with the federal government.

A more muscular approach to protect the speech of Americans is needed.

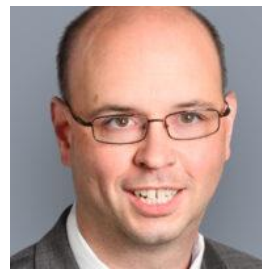
In 2019, President Donald Trump issued an executive order requiring American universities “to foster environments that promote open, intellectually engaging, and diverse debate [] through compliance with the First Amendment” in order to access specific federal funds.

But even this, as we can see, didn’t — rather, it couldn’t — address the underlying ideological issues at play.

Sure, threatening to cut off federal grants might encourage university administrators to be more vigilant in their defense of (or less hostile in their attacks on) free speech. But, at the end of the day, the left controls these institutions and interprets “free speech” in a way that is fundamentally at odds with the American founding and the First Amendment; speech must be contained within their preferred paradigm, or else it and anything descending from it is an affront to their very existence and must be eradicated.

Back at Stanford Law, Tirien Steinbach, the diversity administrator who chastised Duncan, has been put on leave, and per Martinez’s memo, an explicit role of other Stanford Law administrators moving forward “will be to ensure that university rules on disruption of events will be followed, and all staff will receive additional training in that regard.”

So perhaps Duncan is right to be *somewhat* optimistic.



The First – and So Far Only – Presidential Campaign from Behind Bars

By Fred Lucas, The Daily Signal,

condensed

The prosecutor made the point that no one—not even a presidential candidate—is above the law.

“No man, even though four times the candidate of his party for the highest office in the land, can violate the basic law of this land,” said Edwin Wertz, the federal prosecutor charging Eugene Debs, perennial Socialist Party presidential candidate, in 1918.

Fast-forward more than 100 years. Manhattan District Attorney Alvin Bragg, and other Democrats, have used a similar line in referring to Donald Trump, a former president and current presidential candidate, indicted for alleged state crimes in connection to so-called hush money payments to porn star Stormy Daniels.

The first-ever indictment of a once and possibly future president has invited comparison to Debs, convicted under a Woodrow Wilson-era sedition law for opposing America's involvement in World War I. Debs was sentenced to 10 years in prison.

While politically Debs had more in common with Sen. Bernie Sanders, I-Vt., than he would with the 45th president, the Debs case—similar to Trump's case in New York—was perceived by many at the time as a politicized prosecution, since President Wilson did not appreciate criticism of the war effort.

Debs was also the first—and so far only—presidential candidate to run a campaign from prison. During the 1920 campaign, his [fifth and final run](#) for the presidency, all things considered, he did OK, winning a bit less than 1 million votes.

Serving time in a federal prison in Atlanta as Prisoner No. 9653, the skilled orator couldn't deliver campaign speeches. But as a prominent national figure, he issued widely read weekly campaign statements from prison published by the United Press wire service.

In his campaign statements, he rarely went after either the Republican nominee, Warren Harding, or the Democrat nominee, James Cox.

He instead directed [his ire at Wilson](#) as a “a tool of Wall Street” and “a college professor who isn't fit to be president because he doesn't know the lives of the people.”

His supporters actually passed around campaign buttons with a picture of Debs that read “Prisoner 9653,” creating a martyr image, according to The [Washington Post](#).

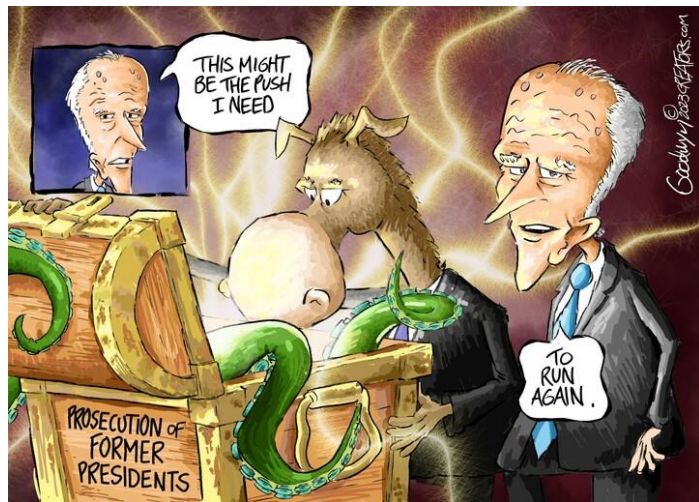
Another Debs campaign statement per the Post: “I thank the capitalist masters for putting me here. They know where I belong under their criminal and corrupting system. It is the only compliment they could pay me.”

Debs also vowed to pardon himself if elected. That's something that Trump could not do if reelected president if he were to be convicted on state charges, since a president can only issue pardons for a federal offense.

From behind bars, Debs received 913,693 votes. That was his highest vote tally ever. However, it was just 3.5% of the

vote. That's a smaller percentage than when he won 6% of the popular vote in 1912, while garnering 901,551 votes.

Harding won the 1920 election, and issued a Christmas 2021 commutation to Debs, and even invited him to the White House. It was part of Harding's “return to normalcy policies,” to move on from Wilson's progressive governmental and wartime policies.



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