

Eye on the World

Jan. 20, 2018

This compilation of material for “Eye on the World” is presented as a service to the Churches of God. The views stated in the material are those of the writers or sources quoted by the writers, and do not necessarily reflect the views of the members of the Church of God Big Sandy. The following articles were posted at churchofgodbigandy.com for the weekend of January 20, 2018.

Compiled by Dave Havir

Luke 21:34-36—“But take heed to yourselves, lest your hearts be weighed down with carousing, drunkenness, and cares of this life, and that Day come on you unexpectedly. For it will come as a snare on all those who dwell on the face of the whole earth. Watch therefore, and pray always that you may be counted worthy to escape all these things that will come to pass, and to stand before the Son of Man.”



An article by Nicole Darrah and Kathleen Joyce titled “Hawaii’s False Missile Threat: Worker ‘Feels Terrible’ After Pushing the Wrong Button” was posted at foxnews.com on Jan. 14, 2018. Following are excerpts of the article.

After Hawaii emergency officials confirmed that an alert about an inbound ballistic missile was a mistake, they said the employee who pushed the wrong button feels awful about the panic-inducing incident.

Vern Miyagi, who oversees the Hawaii Emergency Management Agency (EMA), said at a news conference late Saturday that the civil defense employee who pushed the wrong button regrets what took place.

“This guy feels bad, right. He’s not doing this on purpose—it was a mistake on his part and he feels terrible about it,” said Miyagi in a press conference Saturday afternoon.

Miyagi, a retired Army major general, said the employee would be “counseled and drilled so this never happens again,” but he did not say whether there would be disciplinary measures.

Rather than triggering a test of the system, it went into actual event mode. He confirmed that to trigger the alert, there is a two-step process involving only one employee—who both triggers the alarm, then also confirms it.

"There is a screen that says, 'Are you sure you want to do this?'" Miyagi said. The employee confirmed the alert, inadvertently causing a panic in a state already on edge over saber-rattling missile threats from North Korea.

Hawaii Gov. David Ige said in a statement Sunday that the false alert was "an unfortunate situation that has never happened before and will never happen again."

"On behalf of the State of Hawaii, I deeply apologize for this false alert that created stress, anxiety and fear of a crisis in our residents and guests," Ige said.

At about 8:07 a.m. local time, Hawaii citizens received an emergency alert on their phone that read: "BALLISTIC MISSILE THREAT INBOUND TO HAWAII. SEEK IMMEDIATE SHELTER. THIS IS NOT A DRILL."

At 8:20 a.m. local time, Hawaii EMA tweeted that there was "NO missile threat" to the state. However, the tweet didn't reach people who aren't on the social media platform.

Around the same time, House Rep. Tulsi Gabbard, D-Hawaii, tweeted: "HAWAII— THIS IS A FALSE ALARM. THERE IS NO INCOMING MISSILE TO HAWAII. I HAVE CONFIRMED WITH OFFICIALS THERE IS NO INCOMING MISSILE."



A Reuters article titled "Saudi Arabia Shoots Down Yemeni Missile: Ekhbariya TV" was posted at reuters.com on Jan. 16, 2018. Following is the article.

A ballistic missile fired by Yemen's armed Houthi group towards Saudi Arabia's southern Jizan region was shot down by Saudi forces on Tuesday, Saudi state TV Ekhbariya reported.

The station gave no further details. There were no reports of casualties or damage.

The Iranian-aligned Houthis have fired several missiles at the kingdom, and while these have not caused any serious damage they have served to deepen tensions between Riyadh and its arch rival Tehran.

Saudi Arabia accuses Iran of supplying missile parts and expertise to the Houthis, who have taken over the Yemeni capital, Sanaa, and other parts of the country during its civil war. Iran denies the charge.

Saudi Arabia is leading a coalition that has been fighting the Houthis in neighboring Yemen since March 2015, after the movement drove Yemeni President Abd-Rabbu Mansour Hadi into exile.

Saudi Arabia said on Nov. 4 it had intercepted a ballistic missile over Riyadh's King Khaled Airport, an attack that led the coalition to close air, land and sea access to Yemen in a move it said was meant to stop Iranian supplies to the Houthis.

The conflict has killed more than 10,000 people, displaced over two million and brought much of the country to the brink of famine.



A Reuters article titled "Israel Puts Tunnel Dug Under Gaza Border on Display" was posted at reuters.com on Jan. 18, 2018. Following is the article.

The Israeli military brought journalists on Thursday to film a 2 km (1.25 mile) tunnel dug by militants from the Gaza Strip to Israel, saying it was putting the construction on display to show the continuing threat it faces from the territory.

The Islamic Jihad militant group has claimed responsibility for building the tunnel, saying its aim was to use it to attack Israel in the next armed confrontation.

Twelve Gaza militants, most of them from Islamic Jihad, were killed in the destruction of the tunnel and in rescue efforts when Israel destroyed the underground passage on October 30.

The tunnel, around the height and width of an upright person, was lined with concrete slabs. It was discovered about 120 meters inside Israel near Kissufim, about six meters below ground, as tunnelers burrowed towards the surface looking to build an exit, the Israeli military said.

"The tunnel that we see here is one of three tunnels that have been destroyed over the last two months," Israeli military spokesman Lieutenant-Colonel Jonathan Conricus, said. "The threat has not passed and the terror from Hamas has not passed."

Palestinian tunnel diggers have long operated in border areas of the Gaza Strip, using the underground passageways to bypass tight border restrictions imposed by Israel and Egypt on the movement of goods and people, and to smuggle weapons.

Israel captured Gaza in a 1967 war. It is home to two million Palestinians, who complain that the blockade has left the enclave isolated and impoverished. Israel cites security concerns for the restrictions, tightened after the Islamist militant group Hamas took power in Gaza more than a decade ago.



A Reuters article by Madeline Chambers titled "Leader of German Social Democrats' Youth Wing Could Be Merkel's Nemesis" was posted at reuters.com on Jan. 18, 2018. Following is the article.

On the face of it, a fresh-faced, hoodie-wearing 28-year-old is an unlikely threat to the leader of Germany's Social Democrats (SPD), let alone to conservative Chancellor Angela Merkel.

Yet before an SPD vote on Sunday on whether to enter formal talks with Merkel, the leader of the party's Jusos youth wing has struck a chord with members with his campaign against a re-run of the "grand coalition" that has ruled Germany since 2013.

"The chancellor is hanging on a Jusos drip," wrote the daily Die Welt this week, reflecting a flurry of headlines about Kevin Kuehnert, Jusos leader since November, as a potential nemesis for the upper middle-aged leaders of Germany's two main parties.

Three days before SPD delegates decide whether to enter formal coalition negotiations with Merkel's conservatives, Kuehnert, a Berliner, looked serious but relaxed.

"To keep returning to a grand coalition out of fear that everything else is even worse really diminishes the SPD in the long run," Kuehnert told reporters.

His style brings a breath of fresh air to the somewhat staid world of German politics. In an open-necked black shirt, jeans and trainers, Kuehnert stood in front of a microphone and spoke articulately without notes.

Despite the age difference, some German media have called him Germany's Jeremy Corbyn, the 68-year-old leftist leader of Britain's Labour party leader who has galvanized young supporters.

Kuehnert's clear message and congenial manner have resonated. SPD rank and file are split over the policy blueprint deal that would be the basis for talks with the conservatives.

"I am very optimistic that on Sunday, we have a real chance of winning the vote," Kuehnert told reporters at SPD headquarters, a venue he said he chose to emphasize solidarity with the party.

The stakes could barely be higher.

If delegates vote against the blueprint agreed with Merkel, SPD chairman Martin Schulz is widely expected to quit.

Moreover, Merkel would have failed twice at forming a coalition after a previous attempt with other parties collapsed in November, putting a big question mark over her own future. The result could be a minority government or new elections.

However, Kuehnert is at pains not to attack Schulz. "After Sunday, I won't be calling for anyone to resign," he said.

A soccer fan whose mother works in a jobs center, Kuehnert sought to demolish the argument made by some in the SPD that it must avoid a new election due to its dismal ratings, by saying an election is not inevitable if there is no grand coalition.

In the September election, the SPD saw its support slump to 20.5 percent, its lowest since 1933 and underlining its loss of identity and profile in a coalition that was dominated by Merkel. Now opinion polls put it on at 18 percent.

Kuehnert is adamant that the SPD needs to go into opposition to reinvent itself. "We are looking for a path that will lead the SPD back to being the big left party again," he said.

Former Jusos leaders include ex-chancellor Gerhard Schroeder, whom Merkel defeated to start her first term in office back in 2005, and Andrea Nahles, who is tipped as a possible successor to Schulz.



An article by Josh Wingrove titled “Nafta Trio to Gather in Davos As Negotiations Resume in Canada” was posted at bloomberg.com on Jan. 15, 2018. Following are excerpts of the article.

The three ministers leading negotiations to revamp Nafta will get two chances for face-to-face talks this month, including one near the slopes of Davos.

U.S. Trade Representative Robert Lighthizer, Mexican Economy Minister Ildefonso Guajardo and Canadian Foreign Minister Chrystia Freeland are due to attend the World Economic Forum in Switzerland, which begins on Jan. 23, the same day the sixth round of North American Free Trade Agreement talks get underway across the Atlantic in Montreal.

Freeland expects to raise the subject of Nafta informally on the sidelines of Davos, spokesman Alex Lawrence said in a statement. The three ministers are also tentatively scheduled to hold a trilateral meeting in Montreal on Jan. 28, he said. The ministers didn’t attend the last two negotiating sessions in Mexico and Washington, after attending previous rounds.

The fate of Nafta remains unclear—U.S. President Donald Trump and House Speaker Paul Ryan each said last week they’d rather renegotiate than walk away from the pact altogether, though Trump reiterated his threat to pull out. Canadian officials said they believe the odds are rising that Trump will give notice of a Nafta withdrawal. Treasury Secretary Steven Mnuchin said last week the U.S. delegation will discuss its “America First” agenda at Davos.

The Nafta talks are due to run until January 28, two days longer than the Davos summit. Only two Nafta chapters are completed out of a new deal that’s expected to include almost 30; Freeland has said several others are close to completion.

There’s no rush to reach a deal, Trump said last week in an interview with the Wall Street Journal, adding it might be difficult for Mexico to agree terms before its July 1 election. Canada, in turn, called that a “constructive position.”

“Provided there is goodwill from all parties, we could make some real meaningful progress in Montreal, and that is what I’m working towards and hoping for,” Freeland said in a television interview aired Sunday on Global News. Freeland said a withdrawal notice by Trump would only be “a step before withdrawal,” and there is uncertainty about what would shake out if the U.S. does give notice.

“This would be the first time the U.S. has actually withdrawn from a free trade agreement, so there is a lot of uncertainty about what would actually happen,” Freeland said.

Nafta talks began in August 2017 and have been scheduled through March, with the seventh round expected in late February in Mexico City. Trump had initially wanted a deal by December, though trade negotiations of this scale typically take years.



An article by Michael W. Chapman titled “Ranked Worst for Economic Freedom: North Korea, Venezuela, Cuba, Congo, Eritrea, Zimbabwe” was posted at cnsnews.com on Jan. 12, 2018. Following are excerpts of the article.

In its 2017 *Index of Economic Freedom*, the conservative Heritage Foundation ranked 180 countries around the world based upon economic freedom, the ability of citizens in those countries to control their own labor and property. Hong Kong ranked first and at the bottom of the list, the lowest ranks in descending order were Eritrea, the Republic of Congo, Cuba, Venezuela and North Korea.

Those countries, along with 18 others, were designated “repressed” by the Heritage Foundation.

The United States was in the “mostly free” category and ranked 17 out of 180; the U.S.A. was behind such countries as Canada, Ireland, England, and the Netherlands in terms of economic freedom. The top five countries, considered “free,” were Hong Kong, Singapore, New Zealand, Switzerland and Australia.

In explaining its annual index, the Heritage Foundation site said, “Economic freedom is the fundamental right of every human to control his or her own labor and property. In an economically free society, individuals are free to work, produce, consume, and invest in any way they please. In economically free societies, governments allow labor, capital, and goods to move freely, and refrain from coercion or constraint of liberty beyond the extent necessary to protect and maintain liberty itself.”

“Economic freedom brings greater prosperity,” said Heritage. “The *Index of Economic Freedom* documents the positive relationship between economic freedom and a variety of positive social and economic goals. The ideals of economic freedom are strongly associated with healthier societies, cleaner environments, greater per capita wealth, human development, democracy, and poverty elimination.”



An article by Terrence P. Jeffrey titled “57.9% of Illegals Caught at U.S.-Mexico Border in FY17 Not Mexican; From 111 Other Countries” was posted at cnsnews.com on Jan. 18, 2018. Following are excerpts of the article.

Only 42.1 percent of the “deportable aliens” that the U.S. Border Patrol apprehended along the U.S.-Mexico border in fiscal 2017 were citizens of Mexico, according to data produced by U.S. Customs and Border Protection.

A significant majority—57.9 percent—came from 111 other countries.

In fact, during fiscal year 2017, the Border Patrol apprehended deportable aliens along the U.S.-Mexico border who came from 84 countries that are not in the Americas.

In fiscal 2017, according to a U.S. Customs and Border Protection spreadsheet, the Border Patrol apprehended a total of 310,531 “deportable aliens” in all 20 Border Patrol sectors. (These include nine sectors along the Southwest Border with Mexico, eight across the Northern Border with Canada, and three along the nation’s Coastal Border.)

Of the total 310,531 “deportable aliens” the Border Patrol apprehended, 303,916 (or about 97.9 percent) were apprehended in the nine sectors along the Southwest Border with Mexico.

Of these 303,916 deportable aliens apprehended along the Southwest Border, 175,978 (or 57.9 percent) were citizens of countries other than Mexico and 127,938 (or 42.1 percent) were citizens of Mexico.

The top three countries that ranked after Mexico for having their citizens apprehended as deportable aliens in Border Patrol sectors along the U.S.-Mexico border were Central American countries: Guatemala (65,871), El Salvador (49,760), Honduras (47,260) and India ranked fifth.

In fiscal 2017, the Border Patrol apprehended along the Southwest Border 2,963 deportable aliens who were citizens of India.

In fact, the Border Patrol apprehended more citizens of India in its nine sectors along the U.S.-Mexico border than citizens of Brazil (2,621) or Ecuador (1,429), which ranked sixth and seventh for having deportable aliens apprehended on the Southwest Border.

The Peoples Republic of China ranked eighth, with the Border Patrol apprehending 1,364 Chinese citizens along the Southwest Border in fiscal 2017.

That put the China ahead of Nicaragua, which ranked ninth. The Border Patrol apprehended 1,057 Nicaraguans along the Southwest Border in fiscal 2017.

Among the Top 41 countries whose citizens were apprehended by the Border Patrol along the Southwest Border, 21 were not in the Americas.

In addition to India (2,943) and China (1,364), these included Nepal (647), Bangladesh (564), Romania (433), Pakistan (224), Albania (49), Vietnam (49), Somalia (48), Sri Lanka (48), Kosovo (45), Turkey (35), Nigeria (28), Ghana (14), Afghanistan (14), Saudi Arabia (14), Israel (11), Jordan (10), South Korea (10), France (9).

Notably, the deportable aliens from Nepal (647), Bangladesh (564), Romania (433) and Pakistan (224) that the Border Patrol apprehended along the Southwest border in fiscal 2017 exceeded those apprehended from Columbia (196), Dominican Republic (181), Cuba (147), Venezuela (73) and Haiti (57).

Additionally, the Border Patrol apprehended deportable aliens who are citizens of nations outside the Americas more often at the U.S.-Mexico border than at the Northern Border or the Coastal Border.

For example, while the Border Patrol apprehended 2,943 Indian citizens at the Southwest Border, it apprehended only 168 at the Northern Border, and 24 at the Coastal Border. Similarly, the Border Patrol apprehended 1,364

Chinese citizens at the Southwest Border, but only 32 at the Northern Border and 17 at the Coastal Border.

The Border Patrol apprehended 647 Nepalese at the Southwest Border, but only 1 at the Northern Border and none at the Coastal Border. It apprehended 564 Bangladeshis at the Southwest Border, but only 9 at the Northern Border, and 1 at the Coastal Border.

The Border Patrol apprehended 433 Romanians at the Southwest Border, but only 13 at the Northern Border and only 4 at the Coastal Border. It apprehended 224 Pakistanis at the Southwest Border, but only 9 at the Northern Border and none at the Coastal Border.

According to the Department of Homeland Security an apprehension is: "The arrest of a removable alien by the Department of Homeland Security. Each apprehension of the same alien in a fiscal year is counted separately."

According to DHS, the term "deportable aliens" includes "any alien illegally in the United States, regardless of whether the alien entered the country by fraud or misrepresentation or entered legally but subsequently lost legal status."



An article by Spencer P. Morrison titled "Immigration is Destroying the Welfare State" was posted at americanthinker.com on Jan. 18, 2018. Following is the article.

A recent and comprehensive study from the National Academies of Sciences, Engineering, and Medicine found that although immigration is (theoretically) revenue-neutral in America, not all immigrants are created equal. Half of all immigrants actually receive more in government assistance than they pay in taxes, but thankfully, they are balanced out by the other half. Specifically, immigrants who came to America for family reasons, or arrived as refugees, cost a *net present value* of \$170,000.

Net present value is how much money the government would need to invest today, at a yield of inflation plus three percent, to pay for said immigrant's tax deficit over the course of his expected lifetime. Of course, the government does not do this—it spends only as it receives. Therefore, looking at *net present value* creates artificially low expectations.

According to the Heritage Foundation, each non-economic immigrant more realistically costs a net of \$476,000 in welfare payouts. This does not account for any increases in government programs. Applying this more realistic figure to the original study means that immigrants consume far more in government services than they pay for. In fact, if immigration levels remain unchanged, those arriving over the next decade will cost American taxpayers a net of \$1.9 trillion over their lifetimes. The welfare state is already struggling; immigration will make a bad problem worse.

Another important study, conducted by Denmark's Ministry of Finance, found that immigrants are a net drain on the nation's welfare state. In fact, non-E.U. immigrants and their descendants consumed 59 percent of the tax surplus collected from native Danes. This is not surprising, since some 84 percent of all welfare recipients in Denmark are immigrants, or their descendants. The bottom line: immigration is a net burden on Denmark.

Likewise, a study conducted by Canada's Fraser Institute, a think-tank, found that mass immigration costs Canadian taxpayers some \$24 billion per year—and this was using data from nearly a decade ago. The number has since increased significantly, as Canada has one of the highest immigration rates in the world.

Finally, a study from the University College of London found that immigrants consume far more in welfare than they pay in taxes. Specifically, the study looked at the Labor government's mass immigration push between 1995 and 2011. The study found that immigrants from the European Economic Area made a small but positive net contribution to the British economy of £4.4 billion during the period. However, during the same period, non-European immigrants (primarily from South Asia, the Middle East, and Africa) cost the British economy a net £120 billion.

The origin-based economic differences are actually exacerbated by the U.K.'s generous welfare state: while European immigrants often left their extended families at home, to be cared for by their respective governments, immigrants from the Third World generally brought their families with them, knowing that British taxpayers would care for them. From the immigrant's perspective, this is a rational choice, but does it make sense for British taxpayers? No.

For decades, Democrats campaigned on promises of cradle-to-grave care for low-income Americans, while at the same time they have allowed millions of immigrants to enter America and collect welfare—without ever having contributed a dime to the public purse. This is not only unfair; it is unsustainable. The welfare state is collapsing under its own weight, and mass immigration is only making this bad problem worse.



An editorial by Kerry Jackson titled "Why is Liberal California the Poverty Capital of America?" was posted at latimes.com on Jan. 14, 2018. Following is the article.

Guess which state has the highest poverty rate in the country? Not Mississippi, New Mexico, or West Virginia, but California, where nearly one out of five residents is poor. That's according to the Census Bureau's Supplemental Poverty Measure, which factors in the cost of housing, food, utilities and clothing, and which includes noncash government assistance as a form of income.

Given robust job growth and the prosperity generated by several industries, it's worth asking why California has fallen behind, especially when the state's per-capita GDP increased approximately twice as much as the U.S. average over the five years ending in 2016 (12.5%, compared with 6.27%).

It's not as though California policymakers have neglected to wage war on poverty. Sacramento and local governments have spent massive amounts in the cause. Several state and municipal benefit programs overlap with one another; in some cases, individuals with incomes 200% above the poverty line receive benefits. California state and local governments spent nearly \$958 billion from 1992 through 2015 on public welfare programs, including cash-assistance payments, vendor payments and "other public welfare," according to the Census Bureau. California, with 12% of the American population, is home today to about one in three of the nation's welfare recipients.

In the late 1980s and early 1990s, some states—principally Wisconsin, Michigan, and Virginia—initiated welfare reform, as did the federal government under President Clinton and a Republican Congress. Tied together by a common thread of strong work requirements, these overhauls were a big success: Welfare rolls plummeted and millions of former aid recipients entered the labor force.

The state and local bureaucracies that implement California's antipoverty programs, however, resisted pro-work reforms. In fact, California recipients of state aid receive a disproportionately large share of it in no-strings-attached cash disbursements. It's as though welfare reform passed California by, leaving a dependency trap in place. Immigrants are falling into it: 55% of immigrant families in the state get some kind of means-tested benefits, compared with just 30% of natives.

Self-interest in the social-services community may be at fault. As economist William A. Niskanen explained back in 1971, public agencies seek to maximize their budgets, through which they acquire increased power, status, comfort and security. To keep growing its budget, and hence its power, a welfare bureaucracy has an incentive to expand its "customer" base. With 883,000 full-time-equivalent state and local employees in 2014, California has an enormous bureaucracy. Many work in social services, and many would lose their jobs if the typical welfare client were to move off the welfare rolls.

Further contributing to the poverty problem is California's housing crisis. More than four in 10 households spent more than 30% of their income on housing in 2015. A shortage of available units has driven prices ever higher, far above income increases. And that shortage is a direct outgrowth of misguided policies.

"Counties and local governments have imposed restrictive land-use regulations that drove up the price of land and dwellings," explains analyst Wendell Cox. "Middle-income households have been forced to accept lower standards of living while the less fortunate have been driven into poverty by the high cost of housing." The California Environmental Quality Act, passed in 1971, is one example; it can add \$1 million to the cost of completing a housing development, says Todd Williams, an Oakland attorney who chairs the Wendel Rosen Black & Dean land-use group. CEQA costs have been known to shut down entire homebuilding projects. CEQA reform would help increase housing supply, but there's no real movement to change the law.

Extensive environmental regulations aimed at reducing carbon dioxide emissions make energy more expensive, also hurting the poor. By some estimates, California energy costs are as much as 50% higher than the national average. Jonathan A.

Lesser of Continental Economics, author of a 2015 Manhattan Institute study, "Less Carbon, Higher Prices," found that "in 2012, nearly 1 million California households faced . . . energy expenditures exceeding 10% of household income. In certain California counties, the rate of energy poverty was as high as 15% of all households." A Pacific Research Institute study by Wayne Winegarden found that the rate could exceed 17% of median income in some areas.

Looking to help poor and low-income residents, California lawmakers recently passed a measure raising the minimum wage from \$10 an hour to \$15 an hour by 2022—but a higher minimum wage will do nothing for the 60% of Californians who live in poverty and don't have jobs. And research indicates that it could cause many who do have jobs to lose them. A Harvard University study found evidence that "higher minimum wages increase overall exit rates for restaurants" in the Bay Area, where more than a dozen cities and counties, including San Francisco, have changed their minimum-wage ordinances in the last five years. "Estimates suggest that a one-dollar increase in the minimum wage leads to a 14% increase in the likelihood of exit for a 3.5-star restaurant (which is the median rating)," the report says. These restaurants are a significant source of employment for low-skilled and entry-level workers.

Apparently content with futile poverty policies, Sacramento lawmakers can turn their attention to what historian Victor Davis Hanson aptly describes as a fixation on "remaking the world." The political class wants to build a costly and needless high-speed rail system; talks of secession from a United States presided over by Donald Trump; hired former attorney general Eric H. Holder Jr. to "resist" Trump's agenda; enacted the first state-level cap-and-trade regime; established California as a "sanctuary state" for illegal immigrants; banned plastic bags, threatening the jobs of thousands of workers involved in their manufacture; and is consumed by its dedication to "California values." All this only reinforces the rest of America's perception of an out-of-touch Left Coast, to the disservice of millions of Californians whose values are more traditional, including many of the state's poor residents.

With a permanent majority in the state Senate and the Assembly, a prolonged dominance in the executive branch and a weak opposition, California Democrats have long been free to indulge blue-state ideology while paying little or no political price. The state's poverty problem is unlikely to improve while policymakers remain unwilling to unleash the engines of economic prosperity that drove California to its golden years.



An article titled "New California Declares Independence From Rest of State" was posted at cbssacramento.com on Jan. 15, 2018. Following is the article.

With the reading of their own version of a Declaration of Independence, founders of the state of New California took the first steps to what they hope will eventually lead to statehood. CBS Sacramento reports they don't want to leave the United States, just California.

"Well, it's been ungovernable for a long time. High taxes, education, you name it, and we're rated around 48th or 50th from a business climate and standpoint in California," said founder Robert Paul Preston.

The state of New California would incorporate most of the state's rural counties, leaving the urban coastal counties to the current state of California.

"There's something wrong when you have a rural county such as this one, and you go down to Orange County which is mostly urban, and it has the same set of problems, and it happens because of how the state is being governed and taxed," Preston said.

But unlike other separation movements in the past, the state of New California wants to do things by the book, citing Article 4, Section 3 of the U.S. Constitution and working with the state legislature to get it done, similar to the way West Virginia was formed.

"Yes. We have to demonstrate that we can govern ourselves before we are allowed to govern," said founder Tom Reed.

And despite obstacles, doubters, and obvious long odds, the group stands united in their statehood dream.

The group is organized with committees and a council of county representatives, but say it will take 10 to 18 months before they are ready to fully engage with the state legislature.

This is not the first effort to split up California. In 2014, Silicon Valley venture capitalist Tim Draper submitted signatures to put a measure that would split California in six separate states.



An editorial by Walter Williams titled "Constitutional Ignorance—Perhaps Contempt" was posted at jewishworldreview.com on Jan. 17, 2018. Following is the article.

Hillary Clinton blamed the Electoral College for her stunning defeat in the 2016 presidential election in her latest memoirs, "What Happened?" Some have claimed that the Electoral College is one of the most dangerous institutions in American politics.

Why?

They say the Electoral College system, as opposed to a simple majority vote, distorts the one-person, one-vote principle of democracy because electoral votes are not distributed according to population.

To back up their claim, they point out that the Electoral College gives, for example, Wyoming citizens disproportionate weight in a presidential election. Put another way, Wyoming, a state with a population of about 600,000, has one member in the U.S. House of Representatives and two members in the

U.S. Senate, which gives the citizens of Wyoming three electoral votes, or one electoral vote per 200,000 people.

California, our most populous state, has more than 39 million people and 55 electoral votes, or approximately one vote per 715,000 people. Comparatively, individuals in Wyoming have nearly four times the power in the Electoral College as Californians.

Many people whine that using the Electoral College instead of the popular vote and majority rule is undemocratic. I'd say that they are absolutely right.

Not deciding who will be the president by majority rule is not democracy. But the Founding Fathers went to great lengths to ensure that we were a republic and not a democracy.

In fact, the word democracy does not appear in the Declaration of Independence, the U.S. Constitution or any other of our founding documents.

How about a few quotations expressed by the Founders about democracy?

In Federalist Paper No. 10, James Madison wanted to prevent rule by majority faction, saying, "Measures are too often decided, not according to the rules of justice and the rights of the minor party, but by the superior force of an interested and overbearing majority."

John Adams warned in a letter, "Remember Democracy never lasts long. It soon wastes, exhausts and murders itself. There never was a Democracy Yet, that did not commit suicide."

Edmund Randolph said, "That in tracing these evils to their origin, every man had found it in the turbulence and follies of democracy."

Then-Chief Justice John Marshall observed, "Between a balanced republic and a democracy, the difference is like that between order and chaos."

The Founders expressed contempt for the tyranny of majority rule, and throughout our Constitution, they placed impediments to that tyranny. Two houses of Congress pose one obstacle to majority rule. That is, 51 senators can block the wishes of 435 representatives and 49 senators.

The president can veto the wishes of 535 members of Congress. It takes two-thirds of both houses of Congress to override a presidential veto. To change the Constitution requires not a majority but a two-thirds vote of both houses, and if an amendment is approved, it requires ratification by three-fourths of state legislatures.

Finally, the Electoral College is yet another measure that thwarts majority rule. It makes sure that the highly populated states—today, mainly 12 on the East and West coasts, cannot run roughshod over the rest of the nation. That forces a presidential candidate to take into consideration the wishes of the other 38 states.

Those Americans obsessed with rule by popular majorities might want to get rid of the U.S. Senate, where states, regardless of population, have two sen-

ators. Should we change representation in the House of Representatives to a system of proportional representation and eliminate the guarantee that each state gets at least one representative?

Currently, seven states with populations of 1 million or fewer have one representative, thus giving them disproportionate influence in Congress. While we're at it, should we make all congressional acts be majority rule? When we're finished with establishing majority rule in Congress, should we then move to change our court system, which requires unanimity in jury decisions, to a simple majority rule?

My question is: Is it ignorance of or contempt for our Constitution that fuels the movement to abolish the Electoral College?



An article by John D. Donaldson titled "End Judicial Tyranny With One Single Word" was posted at americanthinker.com on Jan. 16, 2018. Following is the article.

Since the election of President Trump, we have witnessed a series of rulings by Clinton- and Obama-appointed federal judges to block executive orders (EOs) related to immigration. In each case, the current system has allowed a single unelected judge to block the actions of a duly elected president who has attempted to exercise the authority conferred upon him by the Constitution and the voters. Such judicial tyranny cannot be tolerated.

The only court created by the founders of the Constitution is the Supreme Court (SCOTUS), with all other federal courts established by Congress and administered by the Judicial Branch of government. District courts, appellate courts and the various circuits are all congressional initiatives. Federal judges are nominated by the Executive Branch but confirmed by the congressional arm of government.

Throughout the history of the Republic, the appointment of judges by the party in power has been an ongoing effort to seat individuals of their own political philosophy. When the parties were each more centrist, the process was somewhat less contentious, but, as the left drifted farther from the Constitution using the concept of it being a living document, the divides have widened. We now have a cadre of Obama-appointed far-left judges who are prepared to exercise their political ideology over their sworn constitutional duties. Some of these individuals in fact might have been more suitable for ambassadorships than lifetime judicial appointees, for their primary qualifications appear to be their history of donating or bundling money for a sitting president plus their demonstrated talent in the writing of legal fiction.

Currently, judge shopping, an action elevated to an art form by advocacy groups and lower government entities in liberal circuits, will most likely engender a ruling devoid of legal merit but coinciding with the philosophy of the plaintiff. The activist judge delivers a ruling, which then is arrogantly applied to the

entire nation and interpreted as blocking the sitting president. These rulings are most often overturned, but the glacial pace of the courts allows the ruling to stand for an inordinate time, often running out the clock on the original EO.

There is talk of resolving the situation by appointing strict constitutionalist judges, as Trump is now doing, and "packing" the court. "Dilution" would be a better term, for the sitting liberals will still enjoy their lifetime appointments, and it is axiomatic that impeachment is all but impossible, requiring two thirds of the Senate to agree. While appointments are helpful by improving the odds of finding a judge prepared to fulfill his duties honestly, they do nothing to alleviate the judge shopping or the inordinate delays.

There is a relatively simple answer: Congress can deliver a fix already contained within the Constitution but requires the defining of a single word.

This word is found in Article 3, Section 2, which deals with judicial power and jurisdiction:

"In all Cases affecting Ambassadors, other public Ministers and Consuls, and those in which a State shall be Party, the supreme Court shall have original Jurisdiction. In all the other Cases before mentioned, the supreme Court shall have appellate Jurisdiction, both as to Law and Fact, with such Exceptions, and under such Regulations as the Congress shall make."

The solution is for Congress to define "public Ministers" to include the president and vice president of the United States and all Senate-confirmed Cabinet ministers. This would allow the Executive Branch to ignore lower-court rulings for EOs and various acts of Congress signed by the president and avoid the interests of the nation being held up by a single unelected lawyer of either political persuasion. Some time limits for appeals should be built in to allow an issue to reach SCOTUS in a reasonable time less than the current two-year hiatus. If the lawyers have done their research, there is no reason why an initial appeal to the circuit appeals court cannot be done in 30 days and a ruling given in another seven.

If SCOTUS refuses a case, then the lower-court ruling will be moot, and the EO or legislation will proceed as promulgated. Alternatively, if the nine rule on the case, that decision will be considered constitutionally binding on the Executive and Legislative Branches. Again, a time limit for hearing and ruling should not exceed 60 days.

This will infuriate the left, even though it does not limit leftists' access to the courts or threaten their appointments, for they have used the legal system to achieve goals they could not attain legislatively or at the ballot box. It does, however, return the ability of the president to protect the nation and to address issues that Congress must ultimately decide on. It also removes the ability of the "Resistance" to wait out a sitting president by setting definite time limits for judicial review.

Conversely, if an administration signs an EO that is patently unconstitutional, as were many of Obama's declarations, particularly those relating to immigration,

the EPA, and other federal agency regulations, a ruling will be rendered before major harm can be done, or the regulation can be overturned by Congress.

If Congress determines that a solution can be achieved by defining a single word, they might look at other areas where this would be a useful technique. For example, the definition of “natural born” in the Fourteenth Amendment has already been kicked back to Congress by SCOTUS to define. It should be defined as an individual born in the USA or territories of at least one parent who is a U.S. citizen or of two parents who are both legal residents of the USA. This will end the concept of “anchor babies” as a means of invading the USA.

The Constitution is a document where definitions have been used to bend society on a political basis. Defining a single word, “ministers” in Article 3, as suggested here will end the ability of a politicized judiciary to resist the will of the people being exercised by their elected officials. This can be done without all the bitter and useless efforts to impeach individual judges or to “pack” that branch of government. Congress would thereby remove delay as a tactic while still giving all groups “their day in court”—and ending the current judicial tyranny.



An article by Cortney O’Brien titled “Veteran Earns Spot at State of the Union After Maxine Waters Announces She’s a No Show” was posted at townhall.com on Jan. 18, 2018. Following are excerpts of the article.

When Rep. Maxine Waters (D-CA) joined the list of Democrats who said they’d be skipping President Trump’s first State of the Union address (because he’s a “despicable” human), one veteran jumped at the opportunity to be a seat filler.

Army Vet Ricky Taylor let it be known last week that he’d gladly take her spot.

Thousands of retweets, an appearance on “Fox & Friends,” and a meeting with Rep. Sean Duffy (R-WI) later, and

Taylor has earned himself a spot in the room.

Duffy reached out to Taylor after seeing his Fox News. Long story short: he invited the veteran to the SOTU address as his plus one. The extra ticket usually goes to his wife Rachel Campos Duffy, but she too was more than happy to give it to Taylor.

It is an “honor” and “a great American experience” to be sitting in the chamber listening to the president of the United States—regardless of political affiliation, Rep. Duffy said.

Asked why Waters herself didn’t offer him her ticket, Taylor mused that it’s probably because as a black, Latino, Trump supporting veteran, he “doesn’t fit her narrative.”

No worries, he’s going anyway.



An article by Tim Graham titled “CNN Leaps Into the Toilet: Network Aired 195 Uses of ‘S***hole’ on Friday” was posted at newsbusters.org on Jan. 15, 2018. Following are excerpts of the article.

In the contest for Most Offended News Network after President Trump reportedly referred to African nations as “s***hole” countries, CNN wins hands down. NewsBusters staff combed through CNN transcripts on Nexis for the S-hole word in the 24 hours of January 12—the first full day after *The Washington Post* reported the controversy—and found CNN staffers and CNN guests uncorked the profanity 195 times in one day.

That doesn’t count Saturday, Sunday or Monday. They could be headed for 1,000 by now. It also doesn’t count the amount of time they put the S-word on screen (sometimes *twice*, as you can see on Cuomo’s temporary prime time show.)

- The curse count on Fox News was zero. FNC told staff and guests not to say it.
- ABC, CBS, and the *PBS NewsHour* were also zero, and the *NBC Nightly News* uncorked one on January 11. FCC obscenity regulations apply only to broadcast TV stations between 6 am and 10 pm, so cable networks can let it fly without any fear of fines.
- MSNBC’s prime-time shows (the only ones in Nexis) used 14 S-words from 5 pm to 11 pm on Friday.
- Some hours of Friday were much more aggressive in their use of the word. Don Lemon’s show *CNN Tonight* used 33 S-bombs—22 in the 10 pm hour, and another 11 at 11 pm. Lemon did everything but ask if the missing Malaysian jet vanished into an S-hole.
- Technically there were 196 S-bombs, since Van Jones noted in Lemon’s space “I understand what he actually said was s***house, and so he didn’t say s***hole.”
- CNN’s *New Day* also rolled out 33 S-bombs in its three hours from 6 am to 9 am. Let’s hope the soccer moms didn’t watch Cuomo and Camerota on Friday.
- By contrast, Wolf Blitzer’s and Erin Burnett’s hours only aired two apiece.
- The cursing cavalcade was cheered by CNN’s Jeff Yang, who despised reporters beating around the hole: “I’m proud that the great majority of CNN’s anchors and correspondents—including Jim Acosta, Anderson Cooper, Don Lemon, Phil Mudd, Jake Tapper and Brian Stelter—did not do so.”



An article by Cortney O’Brien titled “Bannon Strikes Deal With Mueller to Avoid Grand Jury” was posted at townhall.com on Jan. 17, 2018. Following is the article.

Former White House Chief Strategist Stephen Bannon was the first subject to be handed a grand jury subpoena in the special counsel investigation into Russian collusion led by Robert Mueller. Yet, after negotiations between Bannon's attorney and Mueller's office, the two parties have agreed that Bannon will be interviewed by Mueller's office like other White House staffers instead of testifying before the grand jury.

Bannon refused to answer any questions before the House Intelligence committee Tuesday, which frustrated Rep. Trey Gowdy (R-SC) to no end. On Fox News, he said Bannon was trying to assert a privilege that does not exist. Why was Bannon "happy" to tell controversial author Michael Wolff about supposed unpatriotic acts made by the Trump campaign, but not elected representatives?

Bannon, Gowdy said, "can't pick and choose" who he answers questions for.

Rep. Adam Schiff (D-CA) was pretty upset too. It's "unprecedented" that Bannon refused to give any details about the Trump transition.

"But here was an entire time period that was essentially made off-limits by the White House," Schiff fumed.

Gowdy didn't agree with his Democratic colleague on everything, however. How is it that Schiff found evidence of collusion before the investigation had even begun, Gowdy wondered on Fox News Wednesday.

"I'm not sure how you do that, but he did it," Gowdy said.

Bannon was quoted in Wolff's book "Fire and Fury" as having called Donald Trump Jr.'s meeting with a Russian lawyer "treasonous." It infuriated President Trump, who now refers to Bannon as "Sloppy Steve."

Asked by Fox News's Bill Hemmer if any collusion had been found between Russia and the Trump campaign, Gowdy said, "No, sir."



Isaiah 55:6-11—"Seek the LORD while He may be found, Call upon Him while He is near. Let the wicked forsake his way, and the unrighteous man his thoughts; Let him return to the LORD, and He will have mercy on him; and to our God, for He will abundantly pardon. For My thoughts are not your thoughts, Nor are your ways My ways," says the LORD. 'For as the heavens are higher than the earth, so are My ways higher than your ways, and My thoughts than your thoughts. For as the rain comes down, and the snow from heaven, and do not return there, but water the earth, and make it bring forth and bud, that it may give seed to the sower and bread to the eater, so shall My word be that goes forth from My mouth; it shall not return to Me void, but it shall accomplish what I please, and it shall prosper in the thing for which I sent it.' "