



Carmage Walls
Commentary Prize

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Please give a brief explanation of issues discussed and the results achieved. (This space will expand as you type in your comments.) The courts ruled in 2015 that gay marriage was the law of the land. What's a conservative editorial page to do? Our writers do what they've always done, which is guide Gentle Reader through the proceedings, with conviction, great (maybe the best) capital-E Example, and respect for the law.

EDITORIALS



An example to follow

And lawmakers who should see the light

THAT DIDN'T take long, not even by the standards of the Arkansas Legislature. Less than a week after the U.S. Supreme Court struck down bans on same-sex marriages, some lawmakers were already talking about finding ways around the law of the land.

The state has to issue licenses to homosexuals who want to be married. Them's the rules now. At least for state and local governments. As Governor (and Republican in good standing) Asa Hutchinson noted last week, the Supreme Court's ruling "affects government action only. It has no bearing on private individuals or institutions." In other words, nobody can make a pastor or priest violate his own convictions when it comes to homosexual marriage, no matter what some might have said on Facebook. There's still something called the First Amendment in this country, long may it protect all Americans.

But county clerks? They're part of the local government. And if a couple wants to get married, they are allowed a license from the government. Simple.

Or maybe not. It didn't take long for state Senator Jim Hendren, R-Re-election, to say the law should be the law only sometimes. Or as he put it, Republican lawmakers are now looking for ways that county clerks "with sincere religious convictions" can get around issuing marriage licenses for homosexuals.

Sincere religious convictions? As opposed to insincere religious convictions? What about those convictions that aren't all that sincere? Maybe tepid convictions? Apathetic convictions? We're so confused we don't know whether we've lost a horse or found a rope.

"It is somewhat unfair," Senator Hendren says, "to change the rules and the interpretation for somebody in the middle of their term. We need to make some sort of accommodation for them."

Accommodation for those who have sincere religious beliefs? What in the world for? What are sincere religious beliefs if they can be accommodated? Can somebody put up with just a little heresy? Maybe only on weekdays, 9 to 5?

If a person has Sincere Religious Convictions then, dammit, they should have *sincere religious convictions*. And not ask for ways to cheapen or compromise them. Since when do sincere

religious convictions come without sacrifice? Has there ever been such a time?

Having conviction is no tea party, or shouldn't be. It's not all public prayers and midnight vigils and guest appearances on Fox. Convictions come from a higher law. If county clerks in Arkansas have convictions that will keep them from issuing marriage licenses, then, bless them, shouldn't they accept the obligation that goes with that? That is, the willingness to sacrifice?

BETTER to follow the example of one Dana Guffey in beautiful Cleburne County, Ark., who last week announced she would resign as county clerk rather than issue same-sex marriage licenses. And not only did she announce her resignation, but did so with a kind of dignity and Christian charity that really does come when somebody holds actual sincere religious convictions, and doesn't just talk about them. Here she is when the press caught up with her:

"It is definitely a moral conviction for me. I didn't announce anything publicly or on social media or anything because I didn't want my decision to be seen as hateful. I know some people will look at it like that, but this wasn't easy. It wasn't a decision I made lightly. And I do not hate anybody."

"My office mates understand," she said. "They're not judging me, the same as I'm not judging anyone else who issues the licenses. It's my conviction, though."

Her conviction though. Which means she cannot hold the job of county clerk, and she knows it. Funny, but she didn't appear in her statement to try to find a backdoor way out of standing up for her convictions. Which might be the best way to tell if they are sincerely held.

Dana Guffey's is an example to follow. For all of us, no matter where we stand on one political issue or another.

Having convictions never has been easy. Tell it to Paul and Silas singing in the prison house after they had been beaten and chained. Tell it to the man who wrote "Letter from a Birmingham Jail." People like that make changes, real changes, in their world. And they don't usually go around looking for exemptions from the local magistrates or sheriffs—or Arkansas lawmakers—to make their convictions easier to endure.

OTHERS SAY

Enough talk

CHICAGO TRIBUNE

The U.S. and its allies may have a deal with Iran over its rogue nuclear program by the end of the week. Or they may all traipse through yet another self-imposed deadline as discussions go on in Vienna.

U.S. Secretary of State John Kerry says the chances for a deal are 50-50. "We want a good agreement, only a good agreement and we're not going to shave anywhere at the margins in order just to get an agreement," he said last weekend.

So who's sweating? Not the Iranians. A couple of weeks ago, Iran's supreme leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei proclaimed his terms, several of which contradicted the terms reached in April in a tentative deal.

Now Iran's negotiators are piling on more last-minute demands. They want the United Nations to lift restrictions on Iran's trade in missiles and other conventional arms. They act, at least publicly, as though they have all the leverage, that they know their adversary craves a deal more than they do.

Where would they get that idea? Probably from the U.S. and its allies,

who reportedly have been backpedaling on key points to eke out a deal.

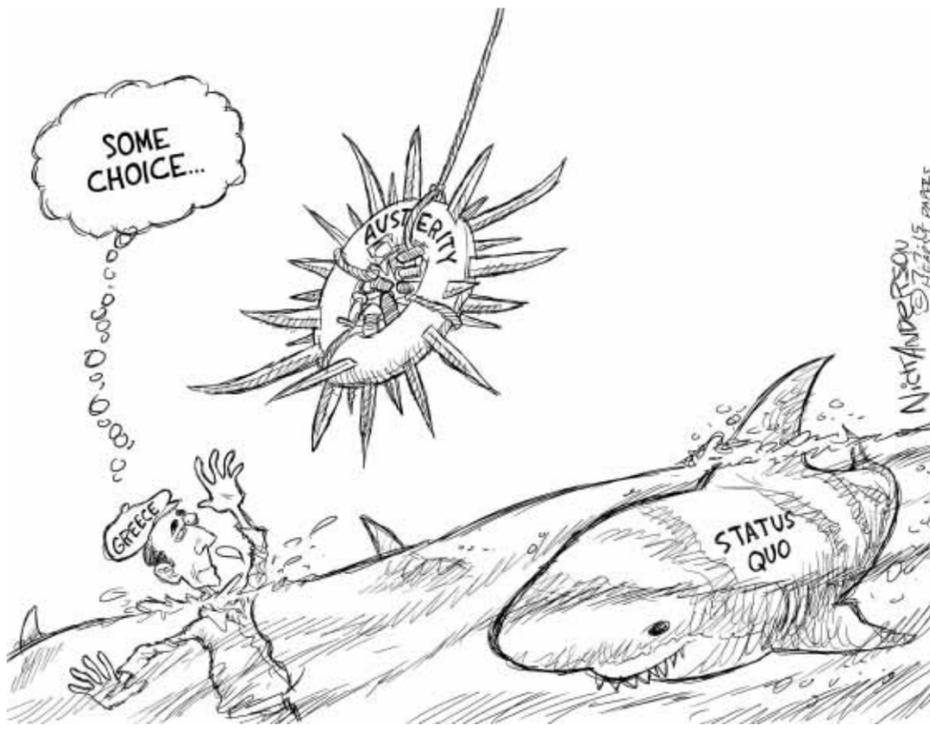
Latest case in point: Under the interim accord, Iran was supposed to process some of its nuclear gas stockpile into a form that is harder to use in a bomb. Last month, the International Atomic Energy Agency said Iran didn't fulfill all of its promises. The U.S. response—a shrug and a defense of Iran.

The unavoidable conclusion is that instead of calling out Iran, the U.S. gave it a pass to keep the talks going.

The U.S. and its allies should remember what Gerard Araud, the French ambassador to the U.S., tweeted earlier this year: "We want a deal. They need a deal. The tactics and the result of the negotiation should reflect this asymmetry."

Iran needs a deal. These talks started 18 months ago. Iran is still feeling the economic pain. The U.S. still holds the option of imposing even more impactful sanctions on Iran's key industries and banks.

President Barack Obama has said many times that he'd walk away from a bad deal. He will not get an effective agreement unless he means that. And he may well have to walk away.



COLUMNISTS

Cal roars to life!

PETULA DVORAK
WASHINGTON POST

As he barreled around the field, Calvin Coolidge—the taciturn, lackluster president—shoved Honest Abe aside, then sprinted to the finish line just in time to push poor Teddy into the dirt, bagging a win on his first outing.

How Washington is that?

Silent Cal, as the 30th president was nicknamed, joined the ranks of our beloved Racing Presidents at Nationals Park last week and left his Rushmore-worthy competitors in the dust.

"Who?" asked everyone.

I know. It's mostly like that.

"He must've done something good if they named a school after him," said David Robinson Jr., 35, a gas station attendant at the D.C. Costco. "I don't know anything about him. But I didn't go to Coolidge."

Coolidge may not have been memorable commander-in-chief, but his debut clearly brought some good juju our way. The Nats swept the formidable San Francisco Giants. And the U.S. women's soccer team won the World Cup.

"I'd much rather see Reagan as the new one," said Drew Doucette, 36, who works as a media coordinator at the Hirshhorn Museum and Sculpture Garden. "You know, that head would look cool. Or President Obama. There's not much diversity there, with the presidents they have."

Given that the Racing Presidents are all about marketing, wouldn't the obvious clickbait be Richard Nixon? Think of all the Tricky Dick things he could do during the races. The Nats need a bad guy!

But nope. We've got Coolidge, who has Mitt Romney hair and an ordinary face that must've been the bane of Jazz Age editorial cartoonists.

He has none of the star power of Roosevelt or Lincoln, Washington or Jefferson. He's not nearly as fun as Taft.

But he was solid, steady and reserved, even as the 1920s roared around him. He was the last president to reduce a budget so much that it was smaller than when he arrived. He cut more taxes than Ronald Reagan even promised to slash. He decreased the World War I debt by a third.

Political columnist Walter Lippmann said Coolidge's talent was for doing nothing: "This active inactivity suits the mood and certain of the needs of the country admirably," Lippmann wrote in 1926.

And after all that cutting and roaring? The

Great Depression.

But whatever. Silent Cal didn't want to talk about it.

"He wasn't really into chitchat, not in the Washington socialite kind of way," said Matthew Denhart, executive director of the Calvin Coolidge Presidential Foundation in Plymouth, Vermont, down the road from Plymouth Notch, where Cal was born on July 4, 1872.

"He was a docile president, there is some truth to that. But part of it was a political strategy," Denhart said. "When you talked a lot, people had a lot to come back at you with. He always said, 'I never got into trouble for something I didn't say.'"

Coolidge's wife, Grace Goodhue Coolidge, loved to retell the story of a young Washington socialite who was seated next to him at a dinner party and told him she had made a bet that she could get more than three words out of him. Coolidge didn't even look at her when he said: "You lose."

It's those flashy guys, with their cherry trees and stovepipe hats, who are the essence of Washington, right?

Sure, they are the symbols of the Washington we call This Town, the messy, political, American bouillabaisse of narcissistic politicians, mythical heroes, greedy lobbyists, grandiosity and bloody bipartisan battles.

But Coolidge, with his somber way and purposeful demeanor, was an outsider in political Washington. He's the president for Our Town, the Washington of the worker, the legislative assistants, analysts and accountants who keep things going even after they get whacked by furloughs and sequesters, without flash, without comment.

He was a New England lawyer who plodded his way up the public service ladder rung by rung: city council member, mayor, state legislator, lieutenant governor, governor, vice president, president.

He followed the first lady into baseball fandom and was thought to be a lucky charm for the Washington Senators, who had their only national title when he was in office. The luck of Cal may already be with the Nats, judging from their performance this past weekend.

So what happened to his silent, distinguished demeanor once Cal took the field last week and knocked the other presidents around like Japanese soccer players?

Do whatever it takes to win, Cal?

Like I said, he's perfect for Washington.

The hot thing about men

REG HENRY
PITTSBURGH POST-GAZETTE

Let us get to the meat of the matter. As all the girls know, the best way to judge a hot man in summer is by his barbecue equipment.

What happens is that a man—usually a man—goes out and grills something with great gusto. It is that season.

Of course, ladies can also start their grills—and fair enough. But in this sizzling season I can only report about what my pals and I are doing. We are male bonding with fire, fumes and foaming refreshments.

This has been the custom for countless generations, back through the smoky ages when the hunters returned with a mammoth and placed the sorry beast on a crude bed of logs and stones.

There the men gathered, swapping stories and giving each other advice on how long the meat should be cooked. One would say: "For a mammoth, I advise five hours per pound, which means dinner will be in two moons." Another would say: "Is that with the lid up or down?"

Assisted by primitive adult beverages, the conversations went on in this unhelpful manner until a woman—usually a woman, and usually not amused—arrived and told the men to stick on more logs, darn it, because dinner couldn't wait for even one moon.

Nothing much has changed. Well, actually, the equipment has changed, but the cast of characters is the same.

Ah, nothing beats being outside wreathed in smoke. In the past, an old grimy grill on wheels served my purpose. But that has changed since moving to a new address. My new house had a large built-in barbecue grill set magnificently on a veritable altar of bricks and concrete.

On this shining barbecue monster, you could

make burnt offerings unto the Lord, roast a moose, or, you know, fire up a kielbasa sausage.

But something terrible happened. The seller of the house took the built-in barbecue with him.

The altar of barbecue now stood desecrated. I vowed that I would restore this monument to grilling, no matter how much money it took, how much time, how much trouble... if my wife let me.

But I had never bought a grill without wheels. Where to go? Finally, I found a showroom that specialized in built-in grills, but Kubla Khan could not have afforded one. Then one of my pals, Loren, came to my rescue.

Loren had a built-in grill bought on the internet and I had seen it in action. Why, I had even offered him some tips during cooking. The problem was the dimensions of my gaping space did not match the standard grill dimensions.

At Loren's suggestion, I settled on one that seemed too wide but was wider at the top than the bottom. It might slide in snugly. Might.

When the grill arrived, it only weighed about a ton. Another friend, Mike, helped me manhandle it off the pallet. Would it fit? Such tension had not been seen since large ships entered the Panama Canal for the first time. It fit perfectly. Whew!

Since then, it has been like the last days of Pompeii, with five main burners, two separate side burners and an infrared burner playing Vesuvius. Men gather in the smoke and give advice. They are clearly jealous, and I hear them whisper, "He has five burners, you know."

Every so often, a woman's voice interrupts the reverie and tells me to take the steaks off this instant before they become ashes. Yes, it is a man's life, this grilling.

Reg Henry is a columnist for the Pittsburgh Post-Gazette.

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EDITORIALS

A lesson from the past

But one that needs to be repeated today

“But when thou doest alms, let not thy left hand know what thy right hand doeth:

“That thine alms may be in secret: and thy Father which seeth in secret himself shall reward thee openly.

“And when thou prayest, thou shalt not be as the hypocrites are: for they love to pray standing in the synagogues and in the corners of the street, that they may be seen of men. Verily I say unto you, They have their reward.”

—Matthew 6:3-5

SAY WHAT you will about the Prophet from Galilee, he wasn't naive. Verily He said unto us, *they have their reward.*

Yes, it is a reward—a very real reward—to be seen by men as you pray out loud in the synagogues. Or strut your stuff on television. Or take to Twitter to show the world just how all-fired good and moral and religious you are. The reward is fame. Depending on where you live, maybe even popularity. And a lot of people chase fame and popularity as others might chase money. If you're into that sort of thing, that kind of notoriety can feel good. Call it . . . rewarding.

Apparently there's a county clerk in a nearby state who appears very much into that sort of thing. And boy does she have her reward. The television stations can't get enough of her. She has defied the law of the land and has refused to give marriage licenses to homosexual couples. Even after a judge ordered her to do so.

She was found in contempt of court and jailed.

Folks are talking about her all over. And quoting her. And holding protests outside the clerk's office in support of her. It must feel great.

“This has never been a gay or lesbian issue for me,” said clerk told Fox News. “This is about upholding the word of God.”

No, this is about upholding the law. Or refusing to. If the clerk feels as though she cannot uphold the law—which, let it be noted, is a big part of a county clerk's job—then she has another recourse. And a good example can be found right here in Arkansas.

Back in July, the county clerk in Cleburne County, Ark.—one Dana Guffey—told the papers she would resign as clerk rather than issue marriage licenses to same-sex couples. And she did so with a kind of dignity and charity that's rare in today's world. Call it her Christian witness.

“I didn't announce anything publicly or on social media or anything because I didn't want my decision to be seen as hateful,” she told the press. “I know that some people will look at it like that, but this wasn't easy. It wasn't a decision I took lightly. And I do not hate anybody.”

And so she resigned. She had her convictions, bless her, and she acted accordingly. Without lawyering-up or going on TV or praying loudly on the corner where she could be seen by others and reaping those (very real) rewards the Teacher talked about all those years ago.

Here endeth today's lesson.
cc: *The Clerk of Court's Office*
Rowan County, Kentucky



COLUMNISTS

Hillary is inevitable

Charles Krauthammer



Unless she's indicted, Hillary Clinton will win the Democratic nomination.

That kind of sentence is rarely written about a major presidential candidate. But I don't see a realistic third alternative (except for one long-shot, below).

Clinton is now hostage to the various investigations—the FBI, Congress, the courts—of her emails. The issue has already damaged her seriously by highlighting once again her congenital inability to speak truthfully. When the scandal broke in March, she said unequivocally that she “did not email any classified material to anyone.” That's now been shown to be unequivocally false. After all, the inspector general of the intelligence community referred her emails to the Justice Department precisely because they contain classified material.

The fallback—every Clinton defense has a fallback—is that she did not mishandle any material “marked” classified. But that's absurd. Who could even have been in a position to mark classified something she composed and sent on her own private email system?

Moreover, what's prohibited is mishandling classified *information*, not just *documents*. For example, any information learned from confidential conversations with foreign leaders is automatically classified. Everyone in national security knows that. Reuters has already found 17 emails sent by Clinton containing such “born classified” information. And the State Department has already identified 188 emails on her server that contain classified information.

The truth-shaving never stops. Take a minor matter: her communications with Sidney Blumenthal. She originally insisted that these were just “unsolicited” emails from an old friend. Last week's document release showed that they were very much solicited (“Keep ‘em coming when you can”) and in large volume—306 emails, according to the *New York Times'* Peter Baker, more than with any other person, apparently, outside the State Department.

The parallel scandal looming over Clinton is possible corruption involving contributions to the Clinton Foundation while she was secretary of state. There are relatively few references to the foundation in the emails she has released. Remember, she erased 32,000 emails she deemed not “work-related.” Clinton needs to be asked a straightforward question: “In sorting your private from public emails, were those related to the Clinton Foundation considered work-related or were they considered private and thus deleted?”

We are unlikely to get a straight answer from Clinton. In fact, we may never get the real answer. So Clinton marches on regardless. Who is to stop her?

Yes, Bernie Sanders has risen impressively. But it is inconceivable that he would be nomi-



nated. For one thing, he'd be the oldest president by far—on Inauguration Day older than Ronald Reagan, our oldest president, was at his *second* inaugural.

And there is the matter of Sanders being a self-proclaimed socialist in a country more allergic to socialism than any in the Western world. Which is why the party is turning its lonely eyes to joltin' Joe Biden.

Biden, who at 72 shares the Democrats' gerontocracy problem, is riding a wave of deserved sympathy. But that melts away quickly when a campaign starts. Even now, his support stands at only 18 percent in the latest Quinnipiac poll. For him to win, one has to assume that Sanders disappears and Biden automatically inherits Sanders' constituency.

That's a fantasy, modeled on 1968 when Bobby Kennedy picked up Eugene McCarthy's anti-Lyndon Johnson constituency. But Joe Biden is no Bobby Kennedy. And in a recent Iowa poll, Biden's support comes roughly equally from Clinton and Sanders. Rather than inheriting the anti-Clintonite constituency, he could instead be splitting it.

There is one long-shot possibility that might upend Clinton: Biden pledges to serve one term only and chooses Elizabeth Warren as his running mate—now. One-term pledges address the age problem but they are political poison, giving the impression of impermanence and mere transition. Warren cures that, offering the Democratic base—and the Sanders constituency—the vision of a 12-year liberal ascendancy.

When asked on Wednesday whether she had discussed such a ticket with Biden, Warren answered, “it was a long conversation,” a knowing wink in the form of a provocative non-denial.

I doubt a Biden-Warren ticket will happen, but it remains the only threat to Clinton outside of some Justice Department prosecutor showing the same zeal in going after Hillary Clinton as the administration did in going after David Petraeus.

Otherwise the Democrats remain lashed to Clinton. Their only hope is that the Republicans self-destruct in a blaze of intraparty warfare. Something for which they are showing an impressive talent.

Charles Krauthammer, who has won the Pulitzer Prize for commentary, writes for the *Washington Post*.

He snookers them again

GREG SARGENT
WASHINGTON POST

The much-ballyhooed “loyalty pledge” that the Republican National Committee demanded Donald Trump sign was supposed to “box in” Trump, leaving him no way of running as a third-party candidate if he fails to win the GOP nomination.

Trump announced Thursday that he had signed the pledge.

But it would not be at all surprising if GOP primary voters see this in strikingly different terms than GOP leaders intended. They may think Trump bent the GOP establishment to his will, rather than the other way around.

Here's what Trump said, according to CNN: “The best way for the Republicans to win is if I win the nomination and go directly against whoever they happen to put up. And for that reason, I have signed the pledge.”

Trump added: “I will be totally pledging my allegiance to the Republican Party and for the conservative principles for which it stands.” When Trump was asked what he got in return for signing the pledge, he replied, “assurance that I will be treated fairly.”

The story line is now that Trump and the GOP establishment have reached an understanding after GOP leaders agreed to stop treating him unfairly. Trump said the GOP has been “terrific” to him (he does love that word) because he insisted on that treatment. He—not Republican leaders—set the agenda. Even if the

notion that Trump was ever treated unfairly is absurd, is there any reason to doubt that a whole lot of GOP primary voters will be very receptive to this interpretation of what happened?

We keep hearing that Trump's surge is rooted in the fact that a lot of Republican voters are very angry with GOP leaders because they're feckless and ineffective, and think Trump would bang heads together and accomplish what they can't or won't. Surely a lot of these voters are also happy to believe that said feckless and ineffective GOP leaders want Trump to disappear not because he risks destroying the GOP brand among Latinos but because he'd disrupt their cozy Washington arrangement in which they aren't willing to do what it takes to stop President Obama. That's why they've been treating Trump unfairly! By threatening a third-party candidacy, Trump forced their hand.

As a special bonus, Trump also gets to define what “fairly” means. If at any time in coming weeks and months, Trump even so much as hints that Republicans are treating him unfairly, mass panic will again set in, without anyone even knowing by what objective metric “fair treatment of Trump” can even be gauged.

I don't know for sure how GOP primary voters will react to this whole thing. But Trump has proved astoundingly adept at growing the ranks of his supporters by broadcasting coded messages of all kinds—messages that have hit their marks, and then some. This might not prove to be an exception.

The making of heroes

Where do heroes come from? A study of their backgrounds and biographies, where they went to school and what church they might have attended could provide some answers to that question, but only some. For example, why did those three Americans aboard the Amsterdam-to-Paris Express leap to their feet and go after the terrorist who was rampaging through the train? Because that is what Americans do. We fight back. It's part of our national tradition. And has been since even before Concord and Lexington.

The more we honor our heroes, the more we may have. Which is one reason why it was so good to read about Buddy Smith, a farm boy from Lincoln Coun-

ty, getting his Silver Star nearly 50 years after he'd earned it one terrible day in Vietnam when his patrol was ambushed. He was one of only half a dozen soldiers in his platoon to survive the attack, and he did it heroically, recovering weapons and ammo from the dead to keep the enemy at bay until help could arrive.

And now Army Specialist Smith's heroism has been recognized at last. Good. For the more American heroes we honor, we more we are sure to have. And this land of the brave and home of the free can never have enough. Consider yourself saluted, soldier, as you pin that Silver Star on your chest. It says a lot about you—and a country that does not forget its heroes.

OTHERS SAY

The walling off of reason

MILWAUKEE JOURNAL SENTINEL

Walling off the U.S. from Canada is “a legitimate issue for us to look at,” Wisconsin Gov. Scott Walker said on *Meet the Press*.

That's right, Canada. Why stop there?

If immigration from the north is as big of an issue as Walker claims, he should examine walling off the east and west, too—every inlet, bay and harbor, all 12,500 miles of coastline. After all, the U.S. Census Bureau reports that immigrants from China and India, many with student or work visas, have overtaken Mexicans (and even those pesky Canadians) as the largest groups coming into the U.S.

Expensive? Yes, but we've got to get tough—or show we're as tough as Donald Trump.

Where are you going to plant all that chain-link and razor wire out in Lake Superior? It can't be walled off. Protecting that border hasn't been an issue since the War of 1812.

The threat of terrorists infiltrating our country from the north, though a concern, is often overblown.

Canadians don't appreciate idle talk of a northern “wall.” A third of Canada's Gross Domestic Product comes from trade with the U.S., and border measures that took effect after the Sept. 11 attacks caused a ripple effect that still hasn't completely subsided.

There are legitimate concerns with immigration policy and security at the southern border with Mexico, and there are thoughtful proposals and the need for a healthy debate to address those concerns. But a taller wall and stricter enforcement alone will not solve the nation's immigration system. Solving that will require sensible and humane policies that hold accountable the 11 million people already living in the United States illegally but also taking stock of their value to the nation.

We agree with Rand Paul's assessment. The Kentucky Republican, who like Walker is running for president, told the *Boston Herald*:

“There have been a lot of dumb ideas put out. One that the Mexicans will pay for a wall, [which] was probably the dumbest of dumb ideas . . . It is sort of like everybody is now competing to say, ‘Oh no, I'll put them in camps. Oh no, I'll throw them out. Oh no, I'll put everyone in jail. And I'll have an electric fence, and I'll do this.’ And it's like, you know, the biggest thing we need to do is have a functioning immigration system, with a good work program.”

The education of a presidential candidate continues. We hope Walker finds a higher road, of his own choosing, rather than continue trying in vain to pass Trump on the right. It would make for a more meaningful conversation about real problems that need to be addressed.

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