



**Carmage Walls**  
**Commentary Prize**

**2019 Entry Form**

**Name of Author(s):** David Barham and Walter Hussman

**Author's Title (editor, columnist, etc.):** David Barham is editorial page editor, Walter Hussman is publisher

**Newspaper:** Arkansas Democrat-Gazette

**Address:** 121 E. Capitol Ave.

**City:** Little Rock

**State:** Arkansas

**ZIP:** 72201

**Phone:** 501-399-3641

**Fax:**

**E-Mail:**

dbarham@arkansasonline.com

**Submitted by:** David Barham

**Title of Person Submitting:** Editorial Page Editor

**Phone Number:** 501-399-3641

**E-mail Address:** dbarham@arkansasonline.com

**What is the subject/title of the entry? A series of editorials about Little Rock's school district and changes endorsed, and made.**

**Date(s) of publication? Fall of 2018, various**

**Is your newspaper under 50,000 circulation or above 50,000 circulation? Above**

**Please give a brief explanation of issues discussed and the results achieved. (This space will expand as you type in your comments.) For years, Little Rock's school district has been failing its students. In some of the most challenging ZIP codes, students don't even show up much of the time. But that's not surprising. At these schools, many TEACHERS are considered chronically absent. And although a state law grants the district the ability to more easily remove these teachers, the law wasn't used. That is, until the Arkansas Democrat-Gazette began editorializing on the matter. After several months and many editorials, the governor finally got involved, and . . . success! Here is a sampling of those editorials. Enjoy.**

- After you have completed this form, please save it to your hard drive in Microsoft Word format. (Mac users, please save as a Microsoft Word for Windows 6.0 or 95 document or later.) Then e-mail the form to SNPA at [cindy@snpa.org](mailto:cindy@snpa.org). Questions? Call SNPA at (404) 256-0444.



EDITORIALS



COLUMNISTS

EDITORIALS

## Definition of a crisis

*What else would you call this?*

The three worst schools in Arkansas are three of the five high schools in Little Rock—J.A. Fair, McClellan, and Hall. That's not according to us; that's according to the state of Arkansas, which just released the ratings for all 1,034 public schools in the state.

If this is not an educational crisis, what would a crisis look like? Certainly preventing black students from going to school with white students in 1957 created a crisis. But what about assigning low-income and minority students to failing schools—and doing nothing about improving those schools?

Unfortunately, far too many people don't consider this situation to be a crisis. It's simply the status quo—one they are willing to live with, both now and in the future.

Little Rock's Cloverdale is 13th from the bottom, and Henderson is 41st from the bottom. Out of 1,034 schools. Both of these failing middle schools feed failing high schools.

Four of those schools have an F rating from the state—Henderson has a D. These are five of the six schools that put the Little Rock School District in academic distress and caused the state takeover of the school district.

The state has had supervision of the district for four years now. How would you rate its management of these schools? Would you give it an F? The state has a year left to improve the schools. How much would you wager that it will get the job done in 12 more months?

Now consider this: Taxpayers in Little Rock are spending \$100 million to build one of the most expensive schools in Arkansas history to merge two failing

schools, J.A. Fair and McClellan. If the leaders who made this decision think a new building is going to solve the education problems in the schools, they simply haven't consulted the research. It shows that buildings, no matter how new and shiny, don't improve education.

*It's quality teachers and principals that improve education.*

Why are these kids getting such a poor education? Consider this: At Hall High, there are 10 classrooms devoted to teaching English as a second language. We've been told that only one of the 10 teachers speaks Spanish. If you were confronted with such a problem, wouldn't you find the teachers who spoke Spanish, even if you had to pay them more, maybe \$5,000 a year more?

Of course you would, but the principal at Hall High does not have the authority to do that. He is blocked by the teachers' union contract that prevents such a common-sense approach.

Arkansas law permits waivers. So the state, which is responsible for the schools, does not have to abide by such nonsensical rules. To seek a waiver, it takes courage, and apparently there's been a great lack of courage by Superintendent Michael Poore, Commissioner Johnny Key, and Governor Asa Hutchinson to do something about these struggling schools.

In 1957, it was the state of Arkansas that created the crisis in the Little Rock schools. Today it's the state of Arkansas that has failed to address the crisis of these five failing schools—which are failing low-income minority students.

With only a little more than a year left, it's time for the state to take action. Past time.



## The court speaks

WITH THURSDAY'S ruling from the Arkansas Supreme Court, the state's voter identification law has been declared seaworthy, no holes. And now we can put one more matter to bed before early voting starts in a couple of weeks.

It's not an undue burden to require identification before casting a ballot, and the law sees to it the defense liberals typically use against the measure is disarmed. Opponents have argued requiring an ID card to vote is too burdensome because ID cards cost money. And if you have to pay money for an ID card, you're essentially having to pay for the constitutionally given right to vote.

Thankfully, our betters in the Ledge provided a way to solve this problem in their recently-upheld law. The Arkansas Secretary of State's office told us anyone who needs one can pay a visit to their county clerk and be provided a voter identification card, no charge. How

about that? No charge.

Our county clerks have been given equipment that can produce a voter identification card the same day it's requested and without financial burden to the person who needs it. Now even those who struggle to make ends meet can still get a card and vote.

And if you happen to forget your ID card when you go to vote? No worries. The law states you can still cast a provisional ballot. Seems like all the loose ends have been tied up, and no dead folk will be voting in this upcoming election.

The ID issue on the ballot early next month? It's a backstop, we're told, to enshrine such requirements in the state constitution. So a court can't come along later, maybe much later, and throw the whole thing back into doubt and confusion. Either way, for now, the law's on the books. Have your ID ready when you vote.

OTHERS SAY

## Sears could have saved itself

CHICAGO TRIBUNE

The most impressive statement to make about Sears as it seeks bankruptcy court protection is also the most damning: Sears was the Amazon of its time.

Impressive because Sears really was that influential long ago. Damning because the company's decline wasn't pre-ordained. Sears could have maintained pre-eminence and elbowed out Amazon and other retailers. Some companies do preserve and build on success through reinvention. Look at McDonald's, to choose another great Chicago-area company that has survived challenges and remains the iconic name in its industry. There was no law that said the biggest hamburger chain of the 20th century should still be competitive in 2018. McDonald's kept up with changing consumer demands. Sears instead became a victim as its customers found other retailers who would better meet their needs.

On Sunday night, Hoffman Estates-based Sears filed for bankruptcy protection. The company's future now likely rests with outsiders, including its

creditors and a federal judge.

The dominance Sears squandered is breathtaking to consider. Richard Sears and Alvah Roebuck founded the company in 1893—125 years ago—to sell watches by mail. As recently as the 1960s, Sears was known as the “colossus” and “paragon” of American retailing. By 1972, two of every three Americans shopped at Sears in any three-month period, and more than half of households had a Sears credit card, according to *The Big Store*, an engaging 1987 biography of the company by Donald R. Katz.

Almost two out of three U.S. adults purchased something via Amazon in a three-month period in 2017, according to market researcher Packaged Facts. Amazon's \$177 billion in revenue last year is in the neighborhood of 1 percent of GNP.

The question of what befell Sears isn't hard to answer. It was internal attitude as much as external forces.

The company survived the turbulence of decades, then slowly lost relevance. The most impressive statement may now be its epitaph: Once and long ago, Sears was a mighty retailer.



COLUMNISTS

## We'll have to get used to it



Philip Martin

They say we're going to have to get used to these storms, that we're past the point where anybody can do anything about them. The temperatures and sea levels are going to rise, the woods are going to burn, there's going to be misery. Just as you can tell it's going to be a rough winter by the thickening of a cow's nape, you can divine the coming apocalypse in the contingency escape plans of Silicon Valley dudes with homesteads in New Zealand.

Scientists say that no matter what measures we take now, average temperatures on the planet are going to go up at least four degrees by the end of the century, and the results are going to be catastrophic. The Trump administration says it's not that bad; it's worse. Temperatures are going to rise about seven degrees, and there's no use worrying about it.

Because people are driving the world, and avoiding the coming horror show would require us to make very serious cuts in our carbon emissions, which would be highly inconvenient. Because somewhere back in the day we lost the ability to do hard things. Or as the statement drafted in August by the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration to justify President Trump's decision to freeze federal fuel-efficiency standards for cars and light trucks built after 2020 puts it, to do so “would require substantial increases in technology innovation and adoption compared to today's levels and would require the economy and the vehicle fleet to move away from the use of fossil fuels, which is not currently technologically feasible or economically feasible.”

Since we're on double secret probation anyway, we might as well throw a toga party.

I for one am relieved. I once got scolded for throwing an empty water bottle in the trash can rather than the recycling bin (which looked exactly like another trash can) and I've resented all this do-goodery ever since. I cheered in that episode of *Mad Men* where the Drapers went on a picnic and left their garbage to rot on that verdant hillside. That's when America was great, before that old fraud Iron Eyes Cody shed his snowflake tear and guilted us all into behaving like responsible caretakers of a world we're only passing through.

The earth is ours because we took it from the dinosaurs, right? It's our property and we can do whatever we want with it. And, let's be honest, it's got some miles on it—it's kind of a beater. It can't last forever anyway. So let's just cancel the insurance and push it 'til it drops. Worst case, we got maybe 50 years? Are you going to be around in 50 years? Even if you are, a lot can happen in 50 years. Maybe Matthew McConaughey will lead us through a wormhole to a new home in the sun.

Relax. We're all going to die. (Unless you get your consciousness uploaded into the cloud and downloaded into a succession of increasingly advanced androids. Or into some virtual cosmos. What's dreamt of in your philosophy, Horatio?)

We're going to bull our way through this, like a Senate Judiciary Committee with an under-vested candidate. Call it a triumph of the will. We might as well make a show of our obstinance. Live fast, die hard and leave no witnesses behind. Nothing matters anyway, it's all a game to see who can build the bigger house, amass the most toys, have the most selfies taken with celebrities,

and pay the lowest tax rate.

Or we can close our eyes and wish real hard. Like the man said, climate change could be good, right? Not that it exists; despite his administration's assumptions, Trump has often described anthropogenic climate change as “fake news.” And fewer Americans probably believe it now—according to a Yale University study, 72 percent of us credited climate change as a fact back in

2008, while only 63 percent believed it in 2013, well before Donald Trump emerged as a bully boy for the insensible logic of wishfulness. (But not before Florida Gov. Rick Scott forbade the state's Environmental Protection Agency from using the terms “climate change” and “global warming” and to characterize sea-level rise as “nuisance flooding.” Call it the “nyah-nyah-nyah-I-can't-hear-you” method of dealing with catastrophe.)

Still, for those of us in Arkansas, this could be a good thing. If the ocean takes back some real estate, then the value of the real estate that's not been taken back by the ocean goes up, right? Someone's formerly landlocked property is going to become beachfront. And if you look at a satellite photo of Louisiana, you might wonder if someday El Dorado won't have a port.

Miami, as we know it, is over. Sea walls won't save it because the city is built largely on porous limestone. Sea water is seeping up from the ground. By the end of the century, they'll have structures on stilts, maybe floating buildings, but the city proper is drowning.

Manhattan may be a different story. There's talk of a \$3 billion project that would build a berm around Lower Manhattan, from 42nd Street in the east to 57th Street on the west. (Build the wall.) Wall Street and Tribeca would be protected. But Queens is just going to flood—neighborhoods in and around Jamaica Bay already flood during high tide; Howard Beach will likely be uninhabitable in a few years.

The dispossessed are going to have to go somewhere. No doubt there are those who see that as opportunity.

Like the Christian Bale character in *The Big Short*, who at the end of the movie has decided to go all in on water rights in anticipation of the coming droughts. Or the cruise line that, thanks to the melting polar ice caps, can now offer a cruise through the Northwest Passage from Alaska around Greenland then on to New York.

The softening of the polar ice caps means that we've gained access to a lot of heretofore unavailable oil and natural gas reserves. The U.S. Geological Survey estimates that up to 25 percent of the world's undiscovered fossil fuel has been buried under ice. Now we can go and get it.

So we'll have plenty of gas to drive ourselves over the cliff.

Philip Martin is a columnist and critic for the Arkansas Democrat-Gazette. Email him at [pmartin@arkansasonline.com](mailto:pmartin@arkansasonline.com) and read his blog at [blooddirtandangels.com](http://blooddirtandangels.com).

## Don't ignore climate change

KIM COBB  
THE WASHINGTON POST

This past week was a grim one in climate history.

First, an international group of scientists released a long-anticipated report detailing in excruciating detail the extra damages we can expect unless we slam our foot on the fossil fuel brakes right now. A few days later, Hurricane Michael came barreling out of the Gulf of Mexico with a late-breaking intensification that transformed the Florida Panhandle into a landscape straight out of a horror movie.

We are exceptionally ill-prepared for the climate threats that are unfolding today, let alone those of the next decades. Rising seas caused by warming and rising oceans and melting ice are already bringing low-lying coastlines under threat from so-called “blue sky flooding.” And studies now show that there are plenty of reasons to think that hurricanes will get stronger and wetter as the ocean and the overlying atmosphere warm.

As the climate report indicates, we need to be preparing for things to get worse. Scientists can provide decision-makers with estimates of the rates of sea-level rise over the next decades. But we also need to consider how the natural and built environments may compound or mitigate flood risks to communities. And policymakers must decide how to allocate finite public resources to protecting lives and property.

The new climate report outlines a path for an aggressive drawdown of atmospheric carbon dioxide levels that would avoid some of the worst damages associated with climate change, and we must get started in earnest on a host of no-regrets actions toward this end. Federal action is long overdue.

Kim Cobb is the Georgia Power chair and professor in the School of Earth and Atmospheric Sciences and director of the global change program at the Georgia Institute of Technology.

Arkansas Democrat  
Established 1878

Arkansas  Gazette  
Established 1819

Lynn Hamilton  
President  
Scott Stine  
V.P. Advertising  
& Marketing  
Larry Graham  
V.P. Circulation  
Kathy Faver  
Controller  
Nick Elliott  
Production Director

Arkansas Democrat  Gazette  
Arkansas' Newspaper

Walter E. Hussman, Jr., Publisher

David Bailey  
Managing Editor

David Barham  
Editorial Page Editor

## EDITORIALS

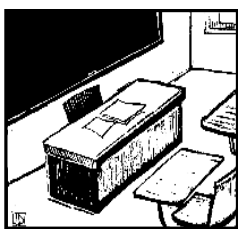
### Definition of a crisis II

*When will leaders make the tough calls?*

THE STATE'S website announces the individual Web pages for every school thusly: "Accountability At-a-Glance." But something strange happened on the way to real accountability for Arkansas' schools. It sorta disappeared.

Over the weekend, the news folks published a story regarding school grades in this state. A lot of schools did just swell. Others, not so much.

Forty-four schools in Arkansas, including nine high schools, received F grades, according to the news story written by our Cynthia Howell. This was based on something called the ESSA School Index scores. For the record, Little Rock's district had eight schools with



Fs—this in a district that was taken over by the state in 2015 because of poor performance.

But down deep in the story, and the weeds, was this telling paragraph:

"Johnny Key, Arkansas' education commissioner, said Friday that the newly released scores and letter grades carry no threat of penalties for low-scoring campuses."

Unlike the previous No Child Left Behind law, which penalized poor-performing schools by allowing kids to transfer out of them, or even in extreme examples shutting down schools, the current accountability plan is mostly plan, little accountability.

Or as Johnny Key put it: "There are expectations for meaningful plans and meaningful results. But [the current system] is different. No Child Left Behind created a fear of being punished. We are really trying to use our ESSA plan to change it from a fear of the punishment that might come to a recognition that, 'We do need help and the department and the education service cooperatives are there to help us overcome the challenges we have so we can drive better student results.'"

So... The state has expectations. Of meaningful results. But if those results aren't forthcoming, then what? We'll ex-

pect meaningful results really hard next time?

The assistant commissioner for public school accountability told our reporter: "Our ESSA plan allows us to individualize, to work with the district and the school to see what a school needs."

What if what it needs, is to be closed? And its teachers sent packing, along with its principal? If a school can't improve an F grade after three years of state control,

then maybe, just maybe, the personnel therein aren't up to the task. Is there any other occupation in which a group of people can fail to do their jobs, year after year, and put up the worst numbers in the field, and still not only hold onto their jobs, but expect to?

For goodness sake, the paper reports that schools among the bottom 5 percent can expect "extra support" from the state—read: money—and might also be eligible for federal school improvement grants. Why reward that behavior? Can we reward the A-rated schools with federal grants next?

IT'S NOT all bad news out there. After the grades for the schools came in, several were noted for above average improvement. Our story noted schools like Harmony Grove High in Saline County, Ballman Elementary in Fort Smith, and others that improved tremendously, in some cases moving up a couple of letter grades.

Why not go to those schools, grab the elbow of the principal, and ask her what's going on? Maybe recruit teachers at those schools to replace teachers at the failing ones. Perhaps pay them more. Or would that be unspeakably levelheaded and justified? Not to mention a favor to our kids and their futures?

If the holdup is a fear to take on teachers' unions and upset the educational apple cart, then students in these failing schools will continue to suffer. Sometimes apple carts need to be turned over.

### Credit where it's due

*Economic pressure on Turkey pays off*

FOR ALL the negative press our president gets, let's give him credit when it's due. On Friday, the results from our dealmaker-in-chief finally came to fruition.

American pastor Andrew Brunson was arrested in Turkey during all the chaos of a failed coup. The papers say Rev. Brunson was held for a year without any charges at all. Then, when the authorities decided that looked bad, he was charged with terrorism, of all things. For a time he was held in a prison cell with 21 others. (That cell, by the way, was made for eight people.) And while in prison, he lost 50 pounds, the hard way.

He was later moved to house arrest but was still unable to leave the country. And Americans tend to get a little angry when our citizens are wrongfully held abroad. Rev. Brunson, a Presbyterian minister, had a small church over in Turkey. Since 2016, evangelical leaders here in America have been trying to bring him home, and thanks to our president, that's happened.

The *Washington Examiner* reports: "A judge ordered Brunson's release as part of a reported deal in which President Trump will 'ease economic pres-

sure.'" Prosecutors aren't dropping their ridiculous case, but Mr. Brunson will be allowed to leave the country.

Maybe other countries holding American citizens on flimsy charges will take note. We don't take kindly to our citizens being wrongfully held in shoddy cases, with shoddy evidence and shoddy charges.

When Turkey initially refused to release our pastor, President Trump laid down the law, in his style. And through some fast-acting and rather tough sanctions, Turkey's economy took more than a few lumps. The papers say its currency has been declining for a while now, but the commander-in-chief's moves sure didn't help.

For the American president, this was a fulfilled campaign promise. Mr. Trump said he intended to bring the pastor home, and now that's done. Check the box. It's a promise kept, and we're making note of it.

As for Mr. Brunson, welcome home, sir. Giving up the congregation you've worked more than two decades to build won't be easy. Give it a while.

For now, just take a deep breath of free air.

## OTHERS SAY

### Into the trap

THE NEW YORK DAILY NEWS

Elizabeth Warren, a U.S. senator who's putting forward serious ideas about how to build a fairer economy, earned a top teaching job at the University of Pennsylvania law school in the late 1980s purely on the merits, before she ever made any claim to Native American ancestry.

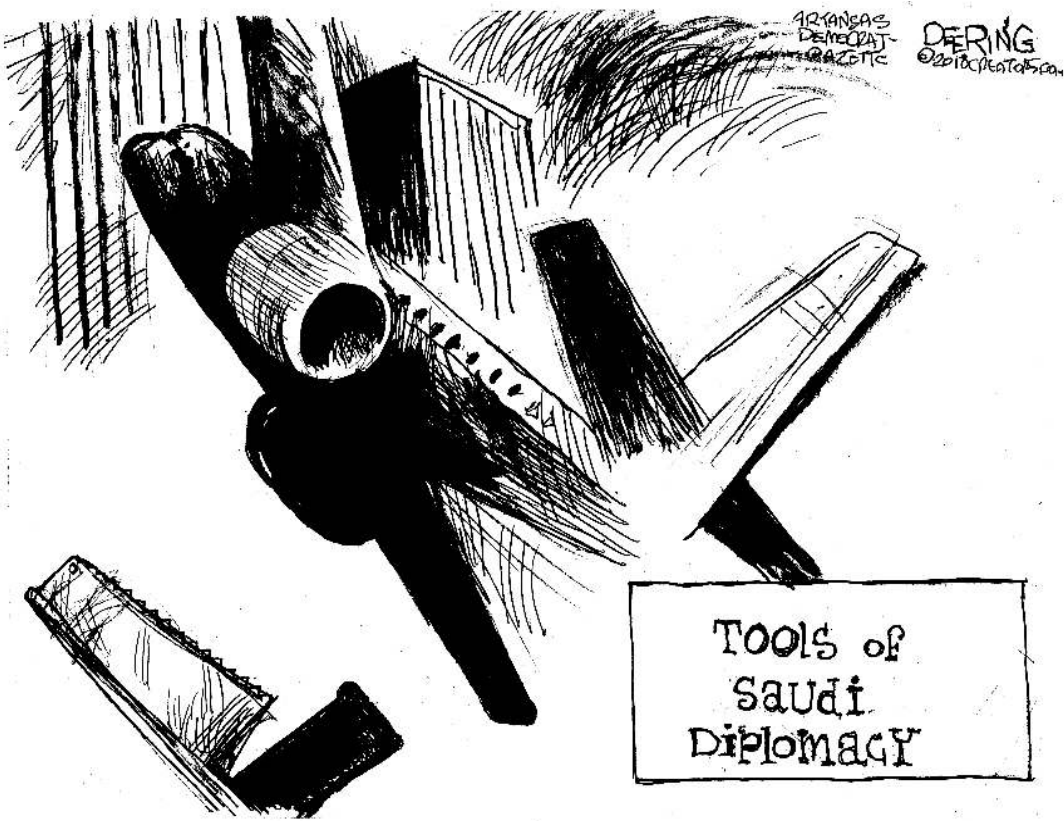
It was in late 1995, nearly three years after she was offered a professorship and five months after she started in her tenured position, that she marked

"Native American" as her ethnic status, prompted, she said, by family conversations about Cherokee roots on her mother's side.

For a man who specializes in racially divisive mockery, this is enough to hang the nickname "Pocohantas" around Warren's neck.

Warren didn't need to play the president's game. She did.

Warren walked into Trump's trap. Let's hope, if she's running for president in 2020, she sidesteps the next one.



## COLUMNISTS

### Why vote for Democrats?



Cal Thomas

Given what the Trump administration is saying are record achievements for a president at this stage in office, why would anyone consider voting for Democrats in the upcoming midterm elections?

Writing in *The Washington Examiner*, Paul Bedard lists 289 accomplishments of the Trump administration, beginning with the obvious one, the economy: "They include 173 major wins, such as adding more than 4 million jobs, and another 116 smaller victories, some with outside importance, such as the 83 percent one-year increase in arrests of MS-13 gang members."

They also include two justices now on the Supreme Court and 82 other federal judges confirmed to lower courts.

As the White House has touted, unemployment in all demographics is the lowest it has been since 1969. Despite a recent blip in the stock market, portfolios have grown fatter since Trump became president. An analysis in *The Wall Street Journal* predicts economic growth is likely to continue "for years."

Other positives include updated trade deals with Mexico and Canada that will produce benefits for American manufacturers and workers far more than the old NAFTA deal ever did.

Consumer confidence reached an 18-year high in September, according to Lynn Franco, director of Economic Indicators at The Conference Board, which conducts the Conference Board Consumer Confidence Index.

Top this off with the successfully negotiated release of Pastor Andrew Brunson from a Turkish prison and a more realistic foreign policy in confronting America's enemies.

According to Gallup's weekly tracking poll, for the week of Oct. 7, the president's approval rating jumped a percentage point, from 42 percent to 43 percent. His disapproval rating holds at 53 percent, though that number is down three percentage points from the week of Sept. 16.

Rasmussen, which tends to be more favorable toward Republicans, puts the president's approval at 51 percent. That is higher than President Obama achieved at a similar point in his presidency. Presidential polling does not necessarily forecast voter behavior in state and local races, though one Quinnipiac University Poll shows that Sen. Ted Cruz (R, Texas) has a nine-point

likely voter lead over his opponent Rep. Beto O'Rourke (D, Texas).

In view of Republican successes, including tax cuts and the booming economy, what Democratic policies would produce results better than these? Other than spite for the president, why would voters elect candidates who want to return to a past where things were far different?

Do people who didn't have jobs during the previous administration want to embrace policies that kept them unemployed? Do businesses

once prevented from hiring people because of regulations now wish to have regulations re-imposed and to lay off workers they recently hired?

By what logic do some people wish to return to the recent past, including a recent past that includes Republican presidents who cannot lay claim to the type of successes President Trump is enjoying?

Perhaps most amazing is the president's growing approval among African American voters, whose votes he is openly campaigning for as evidenced by rapper Kanye West's endorsement and the president's reciprocal embrace. *USA Today* reported on a new Rasmussen poll that shows "approval rating among African Americans is at 36 percent, nearly double his support at this time last year."

Despite the NAACP's hostility toward the president, African American voters seem focused more on results than symbolism.

Polls have been wrong in the past—take the 2016 election as the latest example—but the president has begun touting his record while campaigning for candidates. That record appears to be resonating with voters, at least in some states. Never has the Ronald Reagan question "Are you better off than you were four years ago" seemed more relevant. Never has the answer appeared more obvious.

Cal Thomas is a columnist for the Tribune Content Agency.

### Low ball

DAHLEEN GLANTON  
THE CHICAGO TRIBUNE

On Monday, I lost a great deal of respect for Sen. Elizabeth Warren.

She allowed Donald Trump to bully her into taking a DNA test that revealed nothing that most of us didn't suspect all along. Yes, she probably has a little bit of Native American blood in her. So do a lot of people.

Science has long proven that there is no pure race in America, especially when it comes to European Americans. We are all mixed with a little bit of something. That makes this entire debate over Warren's ancestry foolish.

But more than that, this senseless feud between Warren and Trump trivializes the struggle Native Americans face in a country that has taken away everything that once belonged to them.

Most of us weren't surprised last year when Trump cracked a joke about Warren's ancestry at the most inappropriate time. It was supposed to be a ceremony honoring a small group of Navajo code talkers at the White House. But Trump couldn't resist.

"I just want to thank you because you're very, very special people," he said. "You were here long before any of us were here. Although we have a representative in Congress who, they say, was here a long time ago. They call her Pocahontas."

Since then, Trump has continued to use the nickname at political rallies, though it is widely considered to be offensive. During a rally in July, Trump offered to donate \$1 million to a charity of Warren's choice if she took a DNA test and "it shows you're an Indian."

For whatever reason, be it political or personal, Warren took the bait. She enlisted Stanford University professor Carlos Bustamante, an expert in the field of DNA, to do an analysis. The results were less than shocking. Six to 10 generations back, it turns out, a Native American likely was part of her family.

If that's the case, I might even be more Native American than Warren is. I haven't had a DNA

test, but like Warren, my family has passed stories of our ancestry down through generations, too.

My great-grandmother was half Creek, the daughter of a slave and a Native American who owned a plantation along the Chattahoochee River in Heard County, Ga. If the story is true, that would make me three generations removed from Native American heritage. I have a framed picture of my grandma Sarah Jones in my hallway, along with photographs of other relatives.

But I don't claim to be Native American. I am African American. Warren is a white American.

Back in the 1990s, when she was a professor at Harvard University, she listed herself as a minority in an Association of American Law Schools directory. She insists that she never benefited from it, and that she did it in hopes of networking with others who have Native American roots.

There are lots of people out there who would try to use a minority status if they thought it could help them get a job, win a contract or get some other advantage.

For Native Americans, though, race is not just about leveling the playing field. It is about preserving a fading presence on American soil. It is about recognizing a heritage that represents fortitude, bravery and allegiance.

There is nothing we can do that would make up for the terrible way we've treated Native Americans over time and continue to dismiss them today. The least we can do is stop trying to get a piece of the little they have left of this country.

Trump has no intention of donating that \$1 million to the National Indigenous Women's Resource Center as Warren suggested.

As much as I dislike his politics, Trump doesn't owe her a dime. However, it would be a wonderful gesture if he made a donation to the program that protects Native American women from violence anyway.

But Elizabeth Warren is not Native American. If anything, the DNA test proved nothing. Shame on her for continuing to insist that she is.

Arkansas Democrat  
Established 1878

Arkansas  Gazette  
Established 1819

Lynn Hamilton  
President  
Scott Stine  
V.P. Advertising  
& Marketing  
Larry Graham  
V.P. Circulation  
Kathy Faver  
Controller  
Nick Elliott  
Production Director

Arkansas Democrat  Gazette

Arkansas' Newspaper

Walter E. Hussman, Jr., Publisher

David Bailey  
Managing Editor

David Barham  
Editorial Page Editor

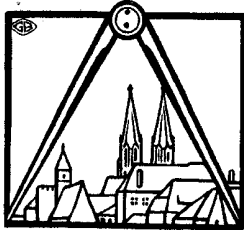
EDITORIALS

## Progress! Progress!

*Shout it from the rooftops!*

**T**HIS WEEK, the head of a teachers' union in Little Rock described her members as disappointed, concerned and angry. And brother, they aren't the only ones.

Disappointed, concerned and angry describes a lot of people in Little Rock, especially after seeing the grades at some of Little Rock's public schools. For three years, the state has run the school district, with the state's education commissioner acting as a one-man school board. Why? Because several schools have been chronically bad at, well, being schools. In 2015, as allowed under state law, the state dismissed the school board and took over.



politicians beholden to them—spoke to reporters. Before putting on their solemn faces for the meeting, they complained that many teachers won't want to work at schools where these waivers are available. Our considered editorial opinion: Good! Maybe a cleaning-out would be best for these schools anyway.

■ The union tried to brush off the failing scores at these schools by blaming principals. We will allow that principals make the biggest difference at schools. But if principals are not able to replace teachers—in some cases, they aren't allowed to *talk*

to teachers about job performance without union representatives in the room—then how effective can principals be? We have heard stories, anecdotal of course, that suggest principals would love to replace some teachers at these schools, but cannot.

Until now, perhaps.

Still... We count more than 20 schools in the district, half of them, that have either D or F grades, as based on a formula using test scores, improvement, graduation rates, etc. How many generations of kids have to be told to wait while the school system figures out a way to do the job of educating them?

It appears that now, real movement is in the works. And families all over the city, especially in the most challenging parts of the city, are shouting hallelujah.

Johnny Key, may his tribe increase, has called for a waiver—allowed under state law—that will make it easier to replace teachers in these failing schools. Mr. Key, the education commissioner, will take the idea to the Education Board in a couple of weeks.

Imagine! Imagine being able to replace somebody who's not doing the job. Actually, we suspicion that Gentle Reader doesn't have to imagine that at all. It's likely a part of everyday life for most people. Most people don't have tenure rules that might allow them to sleep-walk to retirement.

Commissioner Key rejected the same-old, same-old teacher contract before him and told the superintendent of schools to take it back to the negotiating table and reach an agreement with the union to waive "cumbersome" teacher dismissal rules for all those schools not making the grade(s).

At first blush, as the ink from yesterday morning's paper is still drying, we note the following:

■ If the teachers' unions are disappointed, concerned and angry, they've got nothing on parents who miss out on the selection for charter schools, can't afford private schools, can't move out of certain Little Rock ZIP codes, and have to send their kids to a school in which no education is happening. Here's another way to describe them: dispirited, anxious and terrified.

■ Before Johnny Key spoke about his decision on Tuesday, the usual suspects—union representatives and those

**N**OW LET us praise the state government, the governor, and the Arkansas General Assembly. For last year, the government gave schools this waiver option with Act 930. According to the papers, that act finally provided waivers in these all-too-unyielding teacher employment rules. That is, waivers in failing schools.

Which can't be emphasized enough. *We're talking about failing schools here.*

If you live in Sherwood, and you like your child's elementary school teacher, this isn't going to affect your life or your family's. Folks living in the most affluent ZIP codes in Little Rock, or who can move to Chenal or Indian Hills, or who are already sending their kids to schools with A, B or C ratings, will see no changes in the classroom.

This waiver from the teacher dismissal law will only happen for schools in Little Rock that aren't meeting basic requirements. But even bad teachers pay union dues, so expect them and the recipients of their political donations to squeal loudest. Even if that means putting them on the wrong side of education—and our children's futures.

It'll take key acts, such as this waiver law, to make real changes in this entrenched education system.

It'll take key acts to force bad teachers from the classroom.

It'll take key acts to take the handcuffs off principals and let them run their schools like any CEO.

It'll take key acts. Thankfully, Key has acted. Commissioner Key.

Onward. Progress. Advance. Our kids are worth it.

Maybe we should shout that last sentence, just to be heard over the union bosses.

OTHERS SAY

## And from the other side?

BLOOMBERG VIEW

**B**y one estimate, a caravan of some 7,000 migrants from Central America is marching north through Mexico, heading for the U.S. border. A collision seems imminent. Thoughtful solutions are scarce.

Principles first. The U.S. border and the immigration laws that defend it are necessary pillars of U.S. sovereignty. Marching on the U.S. border is misguided and dangerous; those who attempt it should understand that it does not result in automatic admission or asylum. Entry into the U.S. is a privilege, not a right.

In response to the march, President Donald Trump has tweeted his intention to deploy the U.S. military to "close our Southern border." He's also threatened to halt U.S. aid to the governments concerned as punishment for failing to block the caravan.

And in response to the president? Well, Democrats have been ominously silent. This is a mistake—and an abdication of responsibility. Democrats, who are trying to make the case for their ascension in the midterm elections, need to make clear that they agree with Trump on the need for a secure border

and that they are prepared to work with him to ensure that it remains so.

The first step ought to be straightforward. Democrats should call on the marchers to turn back, far and away the best solution. In this, they ought not to shrink from saying they agree with the president.

Democrats can also underscore the importance of looking beyond the political moment and toward actual remedies. U.S. aid can help stabilize Central American countries, giving people fewer reasons to flee. U.S. leadership can call out feckless leaders, who have profited from corruption, stolen elections, and been unwilling to provide for their citizens. From this perspective, the Trump administration has failed—by cutting foreign aid and by looking the other way during Honduras' flawed 2017 vote and Guatemala's attempts to stymie corruption investigations.

Democrats are right to demand compassion for the migrants. But they will be failing the test of leadership if they seem to say the border doesn't matter or if they cede the governing to Trump. The caravan is coming, and they've given no sign that they know what to do.



COLUMNISTS

## The backfire?



**Victor Davis Hanson**

**F**or progressives, the looming midterm elections apparently should not hinge on a booming economy, a near record-low unemployment rate, a strong stock market and unprecedented energy production. Instead, progressives hope that race and gender questions overshadow pocketbook issues.

The media is fixated on another caravan of foreign nationals flowing toward the United States from Central America. More than 5,000 mostly Honduran migrants say they will cross through Mexico. Then they plan to crash the American border, enter the U.S. illegally, claim refugee status and demand asylum. Once inside the United States, the newcomers will count on a variety of ways to avoid deportation.

This gambit appears mysteriously timed to arrive right before the U.S. midterms—apparently to create empathy and sway voters toward progressive candidates supporting a more relaxed immigration policy.

Open-borders advocates and progressives assume that if border-security officials are forced to detain the intruders and separate parents who broke the law from their children, it will make President Trump and Republican candidates appear cold-hearted and callous.

Earlier this year, a similar border melodrama became sensationalized in the media and almost certainly dropped Trump's approval ratings. But this time around, the optics may be different.

The new caravan appears strangely well organized. The marchers, many of them young men, do not appear destitute. They do not seem to fit the profile of desperate refugees whose lives were in immediate danger in their homeland.

For many Americans, the would-be refugees may seem presumptuous in assuming that they have the right to barge into someone else's country. Most Americans realize that if an organized caravan of foreigners can simply announce in advance plans to crash into the U.S. illegally, then the concepts of a border, citizenship, sovereignty or even a country itself no longer exist.

A number of other events on the eve of the midterm elections also may have the opposite of the intended effect on voters.

The Supreme Court nomination hearings for Brett Kavanaugh ended up as scripted melodrama. Protestors disrupted the Senate on cue. They screamed from the gallery. Democratic senators staged a walkout. They filibustered and interrupted the proceedings.

Their collective aim was to show America that male Republican senators were insensitive to the feelings and charges of Christine Blasey Ford, and therefore callous and sexist.

Many Americans finally concluded that there was no reason to deny Kavanaugh's nomination to the court. To find Kavanaugh guilty of Ford's charges, Americans were asked to suspend the very ideas of due process and Western jurisprudence.



The furious demonstrations that followed Kavanaugh's confirmation only made the optics worse.

Republican senators were confronted at their offices and on elevators. Protestors broke through police cordons and beat and scratched at the Supreme Court doors, apparently in vain efforts to break in and disrupt the swearing-in ceremonies.

Liberal icons such as Hillary Clinton, former Attorney General Eric Holder and Sen. Cory Booker seemed to encourage the incivility and disruptions.

Did the ongoing chaos work to change public opinion in their direction?

Perhaps not. Most Americans do not want frenzied shriekers scratching at doors on Capitol Hill. They are turned off by shouters popping up in Senate galleries. Few are comfortable with efforts to bully or intimidate senators rather than to persuade them.

**I**n yet another misreading of the public, Sen. Elizabeth Warren produced the results of a DNA test to prove she had properly claimed advantageous minority status on the basis of her alleged Native American family history.

But the test only confirmed that Warren might be 1 percent (or less) Native American, and probably not from a tribe in the continental U.S.

If Warren's video emphasizing her DNA claims was intended to be persuasive, it sadly ended up confirming her farce. Most Americans could claim a similarly minuscule bloodline but would not do so to game the system for careerist advantage.

On the eve of the midterms, progressives believe that these public spectacles showcasing feminist, immigrant and identity issues trump the booming economy and might galvanize independents and fence-sitters to vote for liberal candidates.

Yet the caravan, the Kavanaugh hearings and the Warren fiasco remind voters of the very opposite of what was intended.

Every country requires a border and the rule of law. Due process cannot so easily be thrown out in a moment. There can be no Senate without safety and calm inside its halls. Powerful, privileged Washington officials should be the last to game a system designed to help the underprivileged.

Americans know all that. Strangely, progressive activists don't.

*Victor Davis Hanson is a classicist and historian at the Hoover Institution, Stanford University.*

## Another bad treaty

ELI LAKE  
BLOOMBERG NEWS

**A**ccording to the Russians, President Donald Trump's decision to withdraw from the Intermediate-range Nuclear Forces (INF) Treaty will bring the world closer to the nuclear apocalypse.

The last time the issue of arms control was this dramatic was during the era of the Betamax, Cabbage Patch Kids and Ronald Reagan. But before you sign up for that peace march, you might want to consider the context of Trump's decision.

The INF treaty was supposed to eliminate all missiles with a range of about 300 to 3,500 miles. When Reagan and Soviet leader Mikhail Gorbachev signed that agreement in 1987, they ended a dangerous standoff in Europe, where both sides had deployed hundreds of nuclear-tipped weapons.

For 21 years, it worked. The U.S. stopped producing intermediate-range missiles, and so did the Russians. But in 2008, the same year Russia invaded Georgia, Moscow began to cheat. That's when Russia began testing "a ground-launched cruise missile that flies to ranges banned by the treaty," said Rose Gottemoeller, President Barack Obama's undersecretary of State for arms control and international security. The U.S. began calling out Russia on those tests in 2013, she said, and the two nations have "been butting heads ever since."

Obama administration had done and try to shame the Russians into compliance. He could have sought to renegotiate the INF Treaty to account for the new Russian deployments. Or he could do what he just did and withdraw from a treaty to which only America adhered.

Trump made the right choice. Again, it's worth recalling the lead up to the original INF Treaty. In the early 1980s, Reagan was under enormous pressure from western European allies to hold off on deploying the Pershing II missiles to counter the Soviet SS-20s. He resisted, and the Pershing II missiles were deployed.

That chess move paid off. The deployment was one factor that helped persuade the Soviets to negotiate seriously for the INF Treaty in 1987. The lesson: Some short-term proliferation may be necessary for long-term arms control.

Trump is taking a similar approach today. He has said he is open to a new INF Treaty—one that Russia honors which China joins. (An estimated 95 percent of China's missiles would be prohibited by the INF Treaty, to which China is not currently a party.) As it now stands, the U.S. is the only great power keeping to the terms of the 31-year-old treaty.

For Russia and other Western arms-control enthusiasts, Trump's withdrawal is a dangerous gamble. But it's a gamble worth taking. What's the point of upholding an arms-control treaty that only constrains America? Better to pull out now in the hopes of getting a real treaty later.

Arkansas Democrat  
Established 1878

Arkansas  Gazette  
Established 1819

**Lynn Hamilton**  
President  
**Scott Stine**  
V.P. Advertising  
& Marketing  
**Larry Graham**  
V.P. Circulation  
**Kathy Faver**  
Controller  
**Nick Elliott**  
Production Director

Arkansas Democrat  Gazette  
Arkansas' Newspaper

**Walter E. Hussman, Jr.,** Publisher

**David Bailey**  
Managing Editor

**David Barham**  
Editorial Page Editor