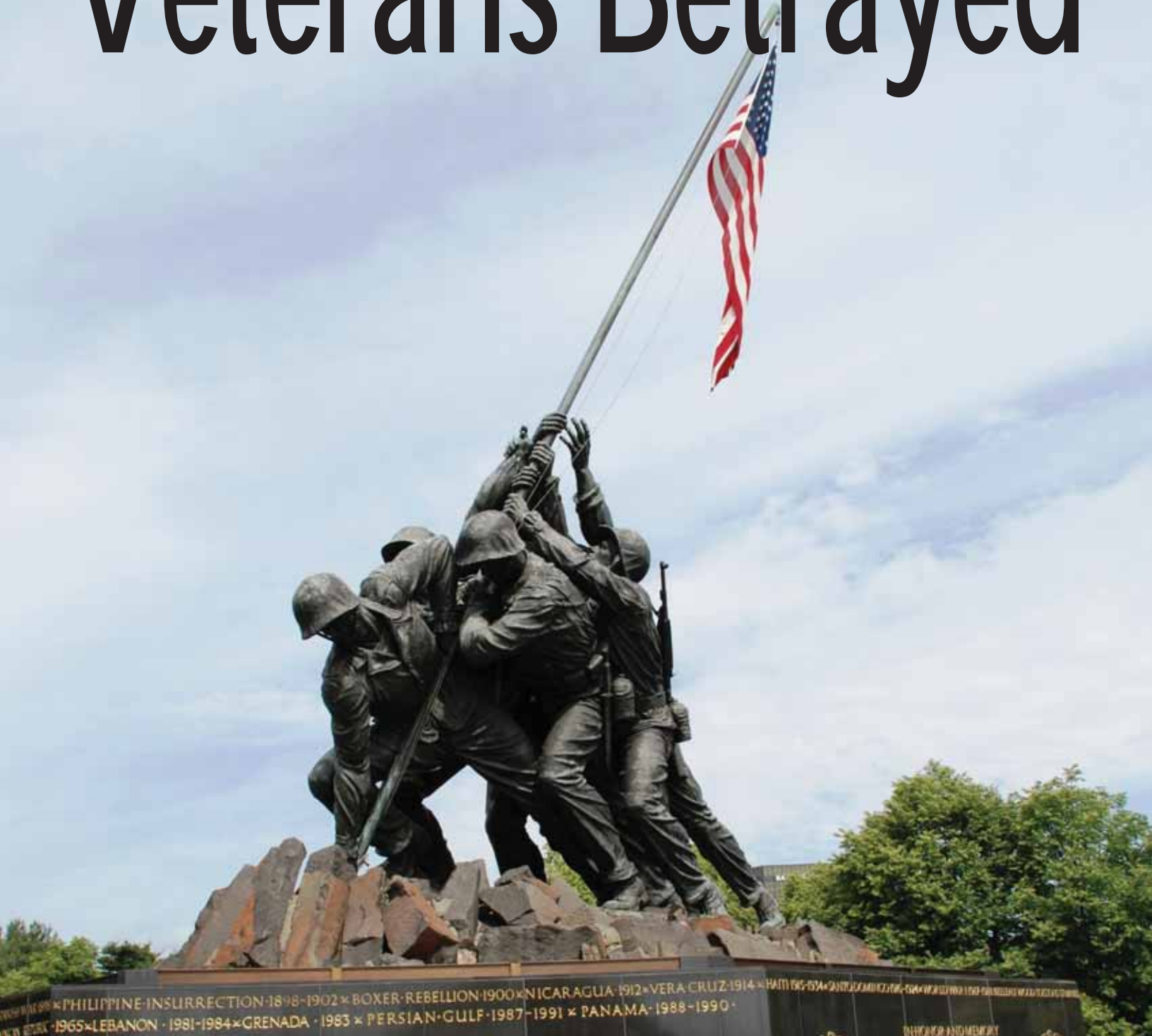


# Veterans Betrayed



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The conservative movement is in crisis. Modern conservatism was born in 1955 with the founding of *National Review*. Its editor, William F. Buckley Jr., said the publication's mission was to "stand athwart history, yelling stop!" But history has kept rolling along, smashing every traditional institution in its path. Family, faith, capitalism, our constitutional republic—they have all been shattered by modern liberalism. In the face of this ideological juggernaut, conservatives have offered sporadic and weak resistance. Their ideas have become stale. Too many prefer power to principles. The movement has become corrupt, lazy and ineffective. Having come to Washington to confront the political rot and moral decay, conservatives have become part of the establishment. In other words, they have become part of the problem.

The mission of *Reflections Magazine* is to launch a conservative moral and intellectual revival. We will bring together the finest minds and writers to defend the eternal principles of God, country and family. We seek to forge a reinvigorated conservative movement for the 21st century—one that champions a new nationalism, rooted in a culture of life, small government, a restoration of federalism and victory over Islamist terrorism. Capitol BuildingThe time has come for a one-nation conservatism that reaches out to minorities and women, the unborn and the poor, workers and students. The movement must go beyond its traditional base or else suffer a slow, agonizing death. Our goal is unabashedly counter-revolutionary: to roll back the forces of progressivism. Since the 1960s, a destructive liberal revolution has swept across our land. Characterized by radical secular humanism, sexual permissiveness and milk-toast socialism, it is transforming America into something our Founding Fathers would not only find unrecognizable but repugnant. We stand for the real America, the historic America, the eternal America—an America based on moral traditionalism, an America of limited government, self-reliance and entrepreneurship, an America that won its independence from imperial British rule, triumphed over Nazi Germany and Communist Russia, and has shed precious blood and treasure to liberate hundreds of millions of people around the world, and an America that champions human rights and freedom, in which every individual—regardless of race, color, gender or religion—possesses innate dignity and equal value in the eyes of our creator. We ask like-minded Americans to join us in this struggle for the heart and soul of America.

Edmund Burke, the great philosopher and godfather of Western conservatism, once said: "All that's necessary for the forces of evil to win in the world is for enough good men to do nothing." We refuse to do nothing. We will fight for what is right, true and good. This is the rock upon which we take our stand.

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## Mission:

The Edmund Burke Institute for American Renewal was founded in June, 2005 in the nation's capital, Washington, D.C. We are a non-partisan, non-profit, education and outreach organization which aspires to engage and mobilize the millions of African Americans, Hispanics, women and other minorities in this country who share conservative values. We will inform conservative leaders about the needs and aspirations of minorities in order to make the latter feel welcome amongst us. Also, we want minorities to appreciate fully how conservatism is congruent with their values and goals. In short, we will build a steadfast alliance between conservative leaders and minority groups. We hope to preserve all those elements in the American republic that render us a strong and vibrant nation. Simultaneously, we are open to new ideas that will allow more citizens to enjoy the blessings of freedom, prosperity and moral renewal.



## How We Differ From Other Conservative Organizations:

1. We seek to update conservative thought. We want to find original ideas on how to bolster timeless principles.
2. We are attentive to the needs of women and minorities. These are not peripheral but are a primary focus of our institute. We want the conservative movement to make adjustments in order to accommodate the unique aspirations of previously marginalized groups. We also want minorities to learn how the conservative movement can benefit them.
3. We are devoted to cultural issues, not just politics. The main battle of our time is to seize the initiative in the cultural arena.
4. We hope to foster a broad alliance with those who adhere to traditional moral principles. We seek to build brigades with individuals of all faiths in order to combat assaults on human dignity.
5. We write policy initiatives, opinion articles and monographs as well as organize symposiums and conferences that appeal to our audience. Hence we do not just think and write: we take action!
6. We do not focus exclusively on one group or on one issue. There are excellent minority conservative organizations across the United States that are currently working in isolation from one another. Instead, we bring these groups together on a variety of issues in order to find common ground and, thus, to be effective in achieving political and cultural change.

## Veterans Betrayed

By Grace Vuoto

Something is rotten at the Veterans Administration. Neurologist Robert Van Boven has been waging a one-man campaign for more than two years against waste, fraud and abuse of power at the VA.

In January, 2009 he was ousted as physician-Director of Veterans Affairs' Brain Imaging and Recovery Laboratory (BIRL) for traumatic brain injury (TBI) research in Austin, Texas. The neurologist has since continued to provide care for wounded warriors, but remains dismayed and outraged by what he saw and experienced: Millions in public funds designated for brain imaging research which could help troops suffering from blast-related head injuries were shamelessly and brazenly squandered. Not a single veteran was seen at the BIRL in more than three years, despite the expenditure of almost \$3 million. Moreover, when he sounded the alarm bells up the chain of command, he was retaliated against repeatedly. Ultimately, he was dismissed—despite the fact that he had never received a negative job evaluation. These events are now under investigation by the Office of Special Counsel, a federal investigative unit tasked with protecting federal employees from reprisals for whistleblowing. The VA refuses to comment on Dr. Van Boven's case, stating it does not discuss personnel matters.

Such is the sad result of what began as a project full of hope and promise. In 2006, the Department of Veterans Affairs opened a new lab in Austin, allocating \$6.3 million to conduct research into blast-related head injuries afflicting more than 300,000 soldiers returning from Iraq and Afghanistan. When Dr. Van Boven assumed his position as program director in July 2007 he was proud and enthusiastic. Yet, he soon concluded that a vast fraud was being perpetrated on American taxpayers: More than half of the money had been spent in what he regarded as a suspicious manner. A July 2008 report by the VA Office of Inspector General (OIG) confirmed that the facility had spent \$2.1 million without treating a single soldier. "The allegation of waste and mismanagement in BIRL expenditures is substantiated," said the report.



In the summer of 2009, shortly after the scandal came to public attention, the VA announced it would close the lab in Austin and promised to reopen it at a hospital in Waco, Texas; the plan was to combine the research center established in Austin with a Post-traumatic Stress Disorder Unit. VA representatives claimed this was justified in order to avoid duplication, make use of better MRI machines and place the lab in an ideal location. Nearly one year later, no TBI brain imaging research has occurred. Dr. Van Boven insists that the move is simply another smokescreen to obscure the misallocation of funds and to protect the wrongdoers. In his view, the VA has been working steadfastly to protect their bureaucrats, cover up the gross mismanagement he discovered and to discredit and silence a whistleblower.

Dr. Van Boven has stumbled on a pattern that appears to pervade the VA. A March 2 report in the Washington Times titled, “Party time at Veterans Affairs” provides more evidence of waste and mismanagement. “Some bureaucrats are using their positions to enrich themselves,” said the editorial. In April, the VA inspector general reported that Diane Hartmann, the VA’s director of national programs and special events, used her worktime to market her friend’s new business, compelled subordinates to help her and also spent thousands in travel funds for her own personal pleasure and interests. In one case, for example, Ms. Hartmann traveled to view a project that “did not physically exist,” according to the investigation. She also gave herself hundreds of hours of time off—all on the taxpayers’ dime.

Most shocking of all, it appears that she was alerted by her colleagues and superiors of an impending investigation against her and she dispensed of key evidence with their consent. Despite the revelations, Ms. Hartmann continues at her post, at which she earns \$155,500 per year. She will face only “administrative sanction” and be forced to pay \$26,704.48 for her misconduct. In sum, she will receive a little slap on the wrist for actions that would result in dismissal or even criminal prosecution had they occurred in the private sector.

Such laxity in dealing with waste and abuse of funds appears to confirm many of Dr. Van Boven’s allegations against the VA. Moreover, internal investigations are usually a means of retaliating against those who blow the whistle on the corruption within

the bureaucracy. Dr. Van Boven is calling for both a full redress of his personal grievances and also for legal reform. “It is imperative to protect federal employee whistleblowers,” he said. He is convinced that the VA misuses internal investigations as a “retaliatory device for whistle-blowing.” In other words, the bureaucracy cannot police itself.

The Government Accountability Project (GAP), the nation’s leading whistleblower protection organization, has filed a complaint on behalf of Dr. Van Boven for violations of The Whistleblower Protection Act. The WPA was passed in 1989 to protect federal employees who report agency misconduct. “The process used to terminate Dr. Van Boven perfects the gold standard for conflicts of interest,” said the complaint. “The VA did not comply with any minimum standards for due process or its own policies,” states the GAP complaint, along with a review of the evidence. “Its tactics ranged from witness tampering to reconvening despite an ongoing OIG and ORO investigation, from assigning officers junior to the investigation’s targets to serve on the board to stripping all charges relating to wrongdoing by anyone other than Dr. Van Boven himself.”

“Such illegal conduct is a disservice to our nation’s wounded warriors with traumatic brain injury and military veterans,” said Dr. Van Boven in an interview. “Our hope is that our story may result in strengthened case law to shield whistleblowers from corrupt retaliatory investigations—an all too common tool of reprisal used by the VA and other agencies.”

Dr. Van Boven is casting a spotlight on the rampant corruption within a major branch of the government. In this instance, the victims are individual professionals such as Dr. Van Boven who cannot fulfill their mission, taxpayers whose money is being wasted, and most of all, our ill veterans who are in dire need of research to alleviate their pain. Our veterans are being betrayed by the bureaucracy that is established in the people’s name to help them. Reform of the VA is required immediately, especially for the sake of all our warriors who suffer daily from their wounds.

*-Dr. Grace Vuoto is the Executive Director of the Edmund Burke Institute for American Renewal.*

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## A gangster regime

*By Jeffrey T. Kuhner*

President Obama is presiding over one of the most corrupt administrations in American history.

Mr. Obama continues to try to pass government-run health care against increasing resistance in Congress and in opposition to the wishes of the overwhelming majority of Americans. Many Democrats, especially the more fiscally conservative Blue Dogs, are revolting against Obamacare. House Speaker Nancy Pelosi, California Democrat, lacks the votes - so far - to ram the bill through Congress.

The White House has told Democrats it will do anything to pass the legislation - mostly because this would be a boon to Mr. Obama's legacy. No other progressive president - Franklin D. Roosevelt, Harry Truman, John F. Kennedy, Lyndon B. Johnson, Jimmy Carter or Bill Clinton - was able to achieve the seminal goal of liberal governance: nationalized health care.

Yet Mr. Obama's overweening ambition is driving his administration toward rampant corruption, criminality and abuse of power. The accusations by former Rep. Eric Massa, New York Democrat, provide a window into the thuggish atmosphere pervading the administration.

Mr. Massa is an unscrupulous politician and a pervert. What else can one say about a man who admits to sexually propositioning a male staffer at a wedding party after his wife leaves, sick with the flu? He has admitted to "tickling" other male staff members. Press reports state that Mr. Massa's aides have complained about being groped by the former congressman. The House Ethics Committee is investigating the scandal. Mr. Massa has resigned his seat.

The issue, however, is not Mr. Massa's conduct - deplorable and bizarre as it was. He is gone, and his 15 minutes of fame are over. But the Chicago political machine remains. Mr. Massa's charges against White House Chief of Staff Rahm Emanuel threaten the very basis of Mr. Obama's regime. This is why the liberal media are deter-



mined to destroy the former congressman's credibility. They are hoping enough leaks about sexual harassment and homosexual conduct will divert public attention away from Mr. Emanuel's conduct.

Mr. Massa has accused Mr. Emanuel of confronting him naked in the House gym showers, berating the then-congressman for voting against Mr. Obama's budget. Mr. Massa also claims that union leaders - backed by the White House - approached him and threatened to deny him campaign funding if he opposed Obamacare. If true, that is bribery and intimidation - and also extremely vulgar. Mr. Emanuel is at the heart of a cynical White House effort to buy votes and institutionalize bribery in order to ram through a deeply unpopular bill.

The entire health care "reform" process has been marked by scandal and massive corruption - the "Louisiana Purchase," the \$300 million in extra Medicaid funds to acquire the vote of Sen. Mary L. Landrieu, Louisiana Democrat; the "Cornhusker Kickback," the \$100 million offered to pick up the costs of Medicaid expansion for Nebraska to get Democratic Sen. Ben Nelson's support; the \$5 billion set-aside to pay for Florida's Medicare exemption to win over Democratic Sen. Bill Nelson; and the special deals given to influential labor unions on high-cost, so-called "Cadillac" insurance plans.

The administration is now targeting key House Democrats. It is practicing the "Chicago way": First use bribery, and if that fails, then try bullying.

Rep. Jim Matheson of Utah, who previously voted against the health care bill, was made an offer he couldn't refuse: His brother Scott has been nominated to a federal judgeship. This is a blatant quid pro quo.

Rep. Alan B. Mollohan of West Virginia, a fence-sitter who is not sure how he will vote, has been given a real incentive to support Obamacare. The Justice Department has just announced it has called off its ethics investigation of the troubled congressman - a remarkable coincidence.

Rep. Bart Stupak of Michigan, a pro-life Democrat who opposes the bill's federal funding of abortion, is suddenly facing a possible ethics investigation over the use of a low-rent apartment in the District supplied by a Christian group. Democratic congressional leaders were aware of Mr. Stupak's living ar-

rangements before; it has only now become an issue of concern. It is the proverbial gun to the head.

Mr. Obama's abuse of power goes beyond health care reform. Rep. Joe Sestak, Pennsylvania Democrat, has accused the administration of offering him a high-ranking government job in exchange for not running against Sen. Arlen Specter in the Democratic primary. If that is true, the White House committed a serious crime. It is illegal to use the power of the federal government to directly interfere with or determine the outcome of an election.

This is why Rep. Darrell Issa, California Republican and ranking member of the House Oversight and Government Reform Committee, is calling for an official investigation into the matter.

"While the White House may think this is politics as usual, what is spectacularly unusual is when a candidate - a U.S. congressman, no less - freely acknowledges such a proposal," Mr. Issa said. "Almost always, candidates keep quiet about such deals, and for good reason - they are against the law."

Every successful socialist revolutionary has had a right-hand man to do his dirty work, someone not afraid to crack heads and get into the gutter, while the leader - supposedly standing above the fray - articulates a vision of economic justice and social harmony. Vladimir Lenin had Josef Stalin. Fidel Castro had his brother, Raul. Mr. Obama has Mr. Emanuel.

The central lesson of the 20th century is that utopianism leads to gangsterism. Mr. Obama is trying desperately to impose his progressive-socialist revolution. The more resistance he meets, the more determined he becomes - and the more he needs to rely on political thugs such as Mr. Emanuel. Mr. Obama, who promised to reform Washington, is instead leading more like a gangster than a statesman.

*-Jeffrey T. Kuhner is a columnist at The Washington Times and president of the Edmund Burke Institute, a Washington think tank. He is the daily radio host of "The Kuhner Show" on WTNT 570-AM (www.talk570.com) from noon until 3 p.m.*

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## Debunking stereotypes of conservatives

*By Joe Vigliotti*

The drive for a return to America's founding principles is in full swing. The populist tea party trend has renewed the debate on the nature of American conservatism. Is conservatism for the elite few or for the many? The stereotype is all too familiar: Conservatives are members of the elite upper echelon of American society, wealthy and content, powerful and controlling, generally discriminatory and exclusivist. But the stereotype is wrong.

Far too often, conservative misperception has marred true conservatism. It has been masked in popularized misconceptions, limited by fringe elements, and publicly defined by its enemies. It has been harangued by anti-Christians, secularists, intellectuals and modern liberal proponents. Yet, it survived and remains relevant; ushered in by Edmund Burke, Thomas Jefferson, and James Madison, seized upon by William F. Buckley, Barry Goldwater, advanced under Ronald Reagan, and ultimately embodied in the center-right nation that is the United States. It is a mantle that is currently carried and sustained by working and middle-class grassroots movements and the populist rejection of the policies that arose from the election of President Barack Obama.

If there ever was truly a movement of the people, it is American conservatism. Its core principles are predicated upon constitutionally-limited government, Judeo-Christian values, and ultimately, God-given human freedom. A very basic and simple fact drives American conservatism: there are inalienable rights endowed to man by God, and among these are life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness. Human freedom is indispensable to conservatism. That is why, from the very roots of conservatism, the charg-

es leveled against it are fallacious.

American conservatism is a natural and transcendental political philosophy. It recognizes no classes, no social divisions. It recognizes no race, no ethnicity. It recognizes no privileges, no special interests. American conservatism is predicated upon the individual, upon the family, upon society as a whole. It



seeks the advancement of all individuals, regardless of class, race, religion and any other superficially-manifested and socially-constructed division. While differences among people do exist, such as those biological in nature, true American conservatism transcends these differences because it looks upon humankind as a collection of human individuals. It looks upon men and women as just that: men and women. Conservatism is value-driven and principle-defined. It is not commandeered by any one particular group, since its causes, founded around the individual, call all individuals to its standard.

# Politics

Believing in God-given human freedom transcends division. Believing in life transcends division. Believing in family transcends division. Believing in voluntarily lending a helping hand transcends division. Believing in constitutionally-limited government transcends division. Believing in free enterprise transcends division. Believing in a strong national defense transcends division. Believing in the cause of advancing human freedom and liberty transcends division. Believing that individuals are unique and worthy gifts by God to society transcends division. Indeed, believing in American Conservatism transcends division.

What is more, believing in the principles set forth in the Declaration of Independence, and in the laws established in the United States Constitution, not just transcends division, but willingly and daringly defies it. Conservatism believes in the ultimate wisdom of the people, since ultimate power is vested in the hands of the people in universal suffrage. If the representatives we elect to govern do not govern in the best interests of society, then we will replace them. Indeed, ultimately, the wisdom of the people will prevail. Poor choices and mistakes can be counteracted. Improvement and success can be perpetuated. The power ultimately rests in the hands of the people.

That is the beauty of American conservatism. Its transcendental universal values apply to all mankind.

The rising conservatism has been visible in the anger over illegal alien amnesty policies; it was seen in the tea party protests over spending; it was seen in the grassroots campaigns against healthcare reform; it was manifested in the gubernatorial races in Virginia and New Jersey; it was seen in the special senatorial election in Massachusetts; and it is being seen in the opposition to transferring terrorists from military to civilian jurisdiction. The people will defer to the wisdom of their elected representatives until they see their interests are no longer being served. Then, the people will speak, and the people will act according to their rights protected under law.

Contrary to liberal propaganda, American conservatism does not serve special interest groups, demography or voting blocs. It does not attempt to exploit differences. It does not define itself according to partisan politics or political convenience. The conservative movement espouses values that are ultimately beneficial to all American citizens.

*-Joe Vigliotti is a writer and essayist residing in Maryland. His work can be found at: [www.traditiontomorrow.blogspot.com](http://www.traditiontomorrow.blogspot.com).*

## Getting tough on Iran

By Anthony Rainone

On February 11, 2010, the Islamic Republic of Iran celebrated 31 years of the establishment of an Islamic theocracy. Since the 1979 revolution, freedom and liberty have been destroyed and poverty rates have skyrocketed. The United States can no longer afford to be idle and simply denounce Iran as “a military dictatorship.” We must boldly act to nurture and grow the opposition in Iran. A regime change in that nation is the only way to avert a nuclear disaster in the region—one that is specifically directed against Israel.

The June presidential and parliamentary elections were marked with serious voting irregularities that provided victory to incumbent President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad over reform challenger Mir-Hossein Mousavi. Mr. Mousavi’s followers took to the streets to protest the election outcome but were viciously attacked by elements of the Iranian Revolutionary Guards Force (IRGF) and the Basij paramilitaries, street thugs that are supported by the (IRGF).

Over the last eight months, opposition protests have continued but at great costs. Many followers of Mr. Mousavi have been imprisoned, tortured and even killed. Family members of Mr. Mousavi have been threatened and killed for simply voicing different opinions than those of the tyrannical regime which rules Iran with an iron fist.

The current Obama administration has been timid in its condemnation of human rights in Iran. In 1979, America followed the same course as a loyal ally, the Shah, was deposed by this virulent, radical movement. American and Western policy makers should emulate former President Ronald Reagan, who in 1981, openly supported the Solidarity movement in Poland and warned the Soviet Union that America firmly supported Solidarity in its quest for freedom and liberty against Soviet communist domination.

The bold support for Solidarity by Reagan, along with Pope John Paul II and British Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher, helped to ensure the defeat of one of the most murderous and barbarous forms of government in human history. By contrast, America and her allies have been weak in their response in Iran, while patriotic Iranians are



being slaughtered in the streets. The Obama administration needs to fund the opposition and publicly confront the regime.

Furthermore, Washington needs to impose crippling economic sanctions that starve the regime of much-needed hard currency. We must also demand that Russia and China support these tough new sanctions or face political and economic consequences. For too long, both Republican and Democratic administrations have been afraid to antagonize Russia and China. But time is running out; the irresponsible Iranian regime is forcing the free world into a deadly game of nuclear cat and mouse.

America needs to demonstrate its commitment to the region with strong, tangible actions that reassure our allies. America and her allies, especially the Gulf States, need to bolster their defenses in the region, particularly naval forces. The critical Strait of Hormuz needs a permanent American naval presence in order to deter the growing Iranian military threat. During the Cold War, America made specific security guarantees to friends of freedom around the world; we must do so again by ensuring the free flow of commerce in the Strait of Hormuz against Iranian aggression.

The United States and the West must now demand enforcement of strong counter weapons and nuclear proliferation regimes in order to stop Iran from obtaining nuclear technology and conventional weapons. The recent seizure of a North Korean transport aircraft laden with weapons destined for Iran graphically illustrates the proliferation threat. Rogue regimes such as North Korea, Syria and Venezuela need to be held accountable for their military collaboration and adventurism with Iran. We must send a message that nations that support Iran and its clients such as Hezbollah and Hamas will pay a heavy price.

The battered and beleaguered opposition in Iran looks to America for assistance and inspiration for their noble cause, but so far we have failed to stand boldly and bravely for freedom. America and her allies have a narrow window of opportunity to act in order to support a growing and robust democratic opposition before a desperate, unstable and despotic regime resorts to full-scale military force, killing more and more innocent citizens in order to preserve a dying dictatorship.

*-Anthony Rainone is currently in Haiti assisting with the relief efforts. He is an analyst for the U.S. Department of Defense.*

## The spiritual dimensions of nationhood

*By Herbert London*

The threats that the United States face from a fanatical Islamic foe are made possible by our devotion to positions that undermine our heritage, accomplishments and founding.

It is not coincidental that I'm reminded of this condition by the passing of Howard Zinn, author of *A People's History of The United States*. This bestselling book, memorialized by the pseudo intellectual rants of the actor, Matt Damon is among the most influential textbooks ever published. Bob Herbert of the *New York Times* wrote a saccharine eulogy which suggested Zinn was a "national treasure." If so, it was a treasure of fool's gold.

Zinn was not a historian in any real sense, but an ideologue who would envision only the blemishes in America's past. For him, the American experiment was predicated on colonialism, imperial aims, exploitation and enslavement. But the curious matter is that Zinn's brand of contemptuous nihilism, his anti-American posture and hatred of capitalism, have

caught on among American elites.

Is it any wonder that a multi-cultural stance that denigrates our national experience and superordinates the goals of other nations is now the prevailing orthodoxy in our schools and colleges? If the United States is the world's exploiter, the despoiler of the environment and the hegemon that restrains the impulse for liberation, why should it be admired? Alas, in many universities, the United States is the enemy. This condition cannot be laid at the doorstep of Zinn solely, albeit he is a central contributor. However, the drumbeat of criticism has taken its toll. Students very often can tell you that Thomas Jefferson was a slaveholder, but know nothing about his framing of the Virginia Constitution. According to many, Christopher Columbus came to the New World in order to dominate and exploit the indigenous population.

That the United States has been the beacon of hope for mankind, that it has afforded its citizens an

# Foreign Affairs

unprecedented degree of liberty and that its openness has yielded technical breakthroughs that have enhanced people across the globe, are conditions that students of an earlier time imbibed as if mother's milk.

That has changed. The pseudo sophisticated cynics have come to dominate the academy. American history has been put through the cauldron of political correctness. At best, the United States is merely one of 192 nations with its own history that is neither special nor exceptional; it is simply unique. At worst, American history is a steamy tale of conflict: workers versus bosses, plantation owners and slaves, guardians of the status quo and change agents.

Invariably many of those who are force-fed these arguments ask logically, "Why should I defend this nation?" If the United States is an outlier whose history infers struggle, the spirit necessary to sustain the nation may not be evident.

The belief that our time, our glory has passed, at least in some part, explains why radical Islamic ideas have gained traction in this nation. How do those who have lost confidence in the national heritage defend against a fanatical faith that has precise goals and direction?

The relentless critics of the nation may not have anticipated this result, but our homegrown radicals invariably express despair with what America stands

for, or rather, what they think America stands for.

Of course, not every American shares this anti-American sentiment, but it appears that a large segment of elitist opinion embraces it. The manifest form it takes varies. There are the cultural warriors who see America as depraved. There are the academics who win plaudits for nihilistic expression (vide: Howard Zinn). There are the radicals ready to leap into anarchy. And there are jihadists—homegrown jihadists—who have been radicalized by a faith that preaches triumphalism and a justification for violent behavior.

Our vulnerability does not stem from a lack of resources or even inept leadership, but rather from a void that emanates from not knowing what we believe. Our real enemy is a lack of confidence, of not believing in our own national achievements. Arnold Toyabee argued that civilizations die as a result of suicide, not murder. There is no doubt that America is at risk because of a loss of self confidence. What ails us internally is at least as threatening as the forces found externally.

*-Herbert London is president of Hudson Institute and professor emeritus of New York University. He is the author of Decade of Denial (Lanham, Maryland: Lexington Books, 2001) and America's Secular Challenge (Encounter Books).*

## **Avatar bashes American values**

*By Loredana Vuoto*

*Avatar*, the recent blockbuster by acclaimed Director James Cameron, denigrates America, its military, humanity and God—all in the name of environmentalism. This is the latest example of “Hollywood chic.”

Mr. Cameron, who has directed box office megahits such as *Titanic* and *The Terminator*, has truly outdone himself. *Avatar* is the highest grossing film of all-time in North America: it is the first film to net more than \$2 billion. Breaking cinematic ground with new technology, this \$300 million 3-D adventure required the craft and skill of 2,000 people over three years. But the end result may be as breathtaking as it is morally grotesque.

Set in the year 2154, the U.S. Armed Forces is on a mission to destroy another planet called Pandora which has a rich source of mineral that humans on earth desperately need to stave off an energy crisis back home. Pandora harbors a planetary forest inhabited peacefully by the Na’vi, a blue-skinned, golden-eyed race of slender giants. Humans cannot go to Pandora due to the toxic air. Yet they can travel there with the use of an avatar which assumes the shape of a Na’vi.

Paraplegic war veteran, Jake Scully, assumes the avatar originally crafted for his twin brother, now deceased. Jake becomes a Na’vi to infiltrate the alien’s lifestyle and obtain access to the mineral. If his mission is successful, the government promises to give him an expensive surgery to restore the use of his legs. Jake befriends the Na’vi and falls in love with Neytiri, a Na’vi assigned to teach him Na’vi ways. Upon falling in love with Neytiri and the earth-loving Na’vis, Jake goes rogue and forsakes his mission. He joins forces with the Na’vi to fight the invading military intent on destroying the beautiful land of Pandora. Upon defeating the army, Jake relinquishes life on earth as a human and opts to become a Na’vi, living on Pandora with his fellow enlightened creatures.

Only in Hollywood is it chic to be anti-American, anti-military, anti-human and anti-God—and embrace global warming extremism to boot. By contrast, the majority of Americans are proud of their country, their military and their Christian roots.

In *Avatar*, worshipping God is replaced by worshipping nature. Defending and worshipping nature, specifically, a giant tree, becomes the salvo of the Na’vi people. Such tree-loving pantheism makes a mockery of God and religion. This runs contrary to the convictions of the roughly three-quarters of all Americans who are Christians. According to a Gallup poll in 2003, 95 percent of Americans believe in God and 60 percent say religion plays a very important role in their lives. Americans are a religious people with more than half attending church at least once a month.

Moreover, in *Avatar*, Mr. Cameron not so subtly presents the “evil” military invading the peacenik Na’vis as a trope for President George W. Bush’s 2003 invasion of Iraq, especially for what the misguided left and Hollywood believe to be a war waged for oil. Again, Mr. Cameron is detached from majority American sentiment. A USA Today-Gallup Poll, taken prior to the March invasion, indicated that 75 percent of U.S. citizens supported the war in Iraq. Saddam Hussein posed a threat to national security by refusing to abide by U.N. sanctions. Hussein’s demise was a victory for Iraqis and lovers of freedom worldwide. American blood was not shed for oil, but for liberty and democracy at home and abroad.

But Mr. Cameron’s lies don’t stop there. At the Global Green USA’s 7<sup>th</sup> Pre-Oscar Party, Mr. Cameron called for a mobilization to tackle climate change on a scale similar to that of World War II. “We haven’t made as nearly as much progress as we need to. We need to accelerate. We need to mobilize like we did in World War II. And we need to see the threat as that severe to the safety and security of this country and to our children. And it isn’t happening. People need to wake up,” Mr. Cameron said.

However, Americans are starting to believe that the threat of global warming has been overstated. A March Gallup survey found that 48 percent of Americans think that the seriousness of global warming is exaggerated; this is up from 41 percent in 2009 and 31 percent in 1997. Also, more Americans do not believe global warming is happening. Currently, 53 percent of Americans believe global warming is occurring, down from 58 percent in 2009 and 65 percent in 2008. Americans are also less convinced that humans are causing global warming, with 50 percent holding this view, down from 61 percent in 2007 and 58 percent in 2008.

Despite Mr. Cameron's 3-D shock and awe, Amer-

icans are beginning to see the light. At this year's Academy Awards, Mr. Cameron was ousted by his ex-wife, Kathryn Bigelow. She accepted awards for best director and best movie for *The Hurt Locker*, a motion picture highlighting the heroism of our men and women in arms. At last, Hollywood got one right.

Mr. Cameron's anti-God, anti-military and anti-American movie is a national disgrace. Our art should reflect our most cherished values, rather than the destructive ideology of a fringe minority.

*-Loredana Vuoto is President of Eloquence, LLC, a speechwriting and writing services firm in Washington, DC. She is also the Managing Editor of Reflections.*

## The transformation of American feminism

By Kelly Kathryn Llobet

The National Organization for Women (NOW), a leading standard bearer for women's rights and the pro-choice movement, is losing support among American women. NOW has been grappling with declining enrollment and a steady drop in public opinion in favor of abortion. By contrast, the pro-life political action committee Susan B. Anthony List, founded in 1992, is flourishing.

Prior to the 1960s, feminism was mainly concerned with women's suffrage and gaining greater respect for women within marriage. Susan B. Anthony (1820-1906), a leading American suffragist for whom the pro-life organization is named, championed the sovereignty of a woman's body within marriage by using abstinence, not abortion, for unwanted conception. In her weekly journal, *The Revolution*, Miss Anthony called abortion "child murder."

Most Victorian and early 20th century feminists were also strongly pro-life. According to suffragist Alice Paul (1885-1977), the early feminists believed that "abortion is the ultimate exploitation of women." In 1921, Miss Paul authored the original Equal Rights Amendment: "Men and women shall have equal rights throughout the United States and every place subject to its jurisdiction. Congress shall have power to enforce this article by appropriate legislation." In other words, these early 20<sup>th</sup> century activists were fighting for the respect of women while

respecting all life itself.

In 1920, the 19th amendment gave American women the right to vote. Yet, Western culture remained wedded to traditional gender roles: By and large, men worked outside of the home, while women were typically homemakers. Extended families often lived within close proximity, lending support and ensuring the transmission of cultural traditions.

However, three landmark events brought about a radical social transformation.

In 1935 President Franklin Delano Roosevelt passed the Social Security Act, Simone de Beauvoir published *The Second Sex* in 1949 and the Food and Drug Administration made available the oral contraceptive pill in 1961. These three events changed the collective mind, body, and soul of American women.

The Social Security Act established the first national old age pension program which gave financial independence to the elderly. This effectively broke the extended generational familial interdependence and thus eroded the passing of cultural traditions and experience. *The Second Sex* was de Beauvoir's manifesto on the oppression of women which argued that men were considered the "normal" sex and women were considered the inferior "other." The oral contraceptive pill was the miracle pre-antidote to free the

body of unwanted impregnation. These three events formed a cultural petri dish for the 1966 founding of NOW in Washington, DC.

“The purpose of NOW is to take action to bring women into full participation in the mainstream of American society now, exercising all privileges and responsibilities thereof in truly equal partnership with men,” states its Web site. NOW’s priorities are pressing for an amendment to the U.S. Constitution that will guarantee equal rights for women; achieving economic equality for women; championing abortion rights, reproductive freedom and other women’s health issues; supporting civil rights for all and opposing racism; opposing bigotry against lesbians and gays; and ending violence against women. These official priorities extend far beyond NOW’s which are well beyond the cause of the early feminists.

As a response to the perceived attack on the unborn by pro-choice feminists, a counter revolution of feminism has emerged under the pro-life banner. Leading the charge since 1992 is the Susan B. Anthony List (SBA). SBA was founded after the 1992 election resulted in all women in Congress, with the exception of two, being pro-abortion. Marjorie Dannenfelser, an original organizer of the SBA List, is currently the organization’s president and chairman of the board.

The original goal of SBA was to advance the role

of pro-life women in the political process. In 1997, the Susan B. Anthony List evolved into, a 501(c)(4) membership organization with a connected political action committee, the SBA List Candidate Fund. The PAC was formed to provide pro-life political candidates with the skills needed to run a winning campaign. Since then, SBA has grown to 280,000 members and activists; it also has a burgeoning staff. SBA’s five-point mission includes: passing pro-life legislation, training pro-life activists, dispelling abortion myths, mobilizing the pro-life vote and increasing the percentage of pro-life women in Congress.

On January 22, 2010, on the 37th anniversary of Roe vs. Wade, under threat of an ice-storm, more than 350,000 individuals of all ages attended the annual March for Life in Washington D.C. The pro-life message is expanding, resulting even in a landmark prime-time Super Bowl pro-life ad celebrating the life of Heisman Trophy-winning football quarterback Tim Tebow. It appears that many Americans are now hanging up the “child-murder” cleats and switching to the team of life. As NOW dwindles and the pro-life movement soars, the feminist movement is gradually returning to its original design: lift the quality of life of all women while upholding the highest moral standards toward the unborn.

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## Blind allegiance: Blacks and the Democratic Party

*By Kerry and Peggy McCarthy*

Black Americans, like many citizens, are increasingly frustrated, at the sluggish economy and lack of jobs. Yet the growing disappointment has not yet coalesced into anger or a diminished support for President Barack Obama. One of the great ironies of American history lies in the fact that nine of 10 black Americans vote Democrat, in spite of the mostly submerged truth about the party.

In 1860, for instance, the Democrats controlled enough seats in Congress to render the Republican President Abraham Lincoln a failure and a mere footnote in American history. Instead, the nation soon became embroiled in a bloody Civil War. Southern slave holders foresaw that states forming in the North and West would eventually provide enough votes to pass a constitutional amendment outlawing slavery. When a sectional president was elected (Lincoln received no electoral votes in the South), Southern Democrats exaggerated the issue of tariffs, accused Lincoln of dictatorship, then abandoned their congressional seats and destroyed any chance for a united government to solve differences constitutionally. Today, conservatism is strongly associated with small government, but in times of disintegration, it can and should provide strong government, such as Lincoln did.

Secession depended for success on the inability of the North to rally around this inexperienced president. The South fired the first shots, hoping the North would not rally. Southern leaders were mistaken, war came and the dreaded constitutional amendment outlawing slavery finally arrived.

Despite their failure to save their “peculiar institution,” Southern Democrats, who controlled state governments throughout the South at all levels during this time, were able to continue to oppress black people through the repressive Jim Crow laws for nearly 100 years. The atonement and redemption that should have been achieved as a result of the bloodiest war in our history was stillborn.

Thus, in the late 19th century and early 20th century, it was the Republican Party rather than the Democratic Party that championed the rights and interests of blacks.

By the 1960s, amid growing awareness of the injustice black Americans were suffering, the public supported greatly expanded social welfare legislation. These programs produced negative results, including a spike in single parent families and poor job prospects for black youth. Over the next four decades, “white flight” left blacks trapped in crumbling inner cities. Their hopelessness and increased dependence on government was solidified. Blacks, lured away from traditional paths to success, became firmly aligned with Democrats, who continued to offer government involvement as a solution, which in turn fostered a sense of victimhood. This strategy by Democrats paid even greater dividends when Republicans were accused of preventing the realization of these unrealistic promises.

Since 1998, actor and comedian Bill Cosby had been delivering a conservative message to black audiences about responsible parenting. He found himself in a hornet’s nest of criticism in May, 2004 for his outspoken remarks at an NAACP gala marking the 50th anniversary of the landmark *Brown v. Board of Education* decision. Mr. Cosby decried a 50 percent dropout rate among blacks and encouraged black parents to parent; they should insist on proper English from their children, accept responsibility and “take back the neighborhood,” said Mr. Cosby. While defending his position on PBS’ Tavis Smiley’s talk show that same month, Mr. Cosby became uncharacteristically self-protective: “It was the white man who got the word from somebody who was there, who called the white man, who put it in the white paper, which is called the Washington Post.” Mr. Cosby’s atypical race-conscious language is significant. Under duress, he signaled that he was prepared to appease opinion makers.

“We know Bill Cosby’s not on the right wing. He’s not Clarence Thomas, he’s not Ward Connerly,” said Princeton Professor Cornell West in Mr. Cosby’s defense.

Yet Mr. Connerly, chairman of the American Civil Rights Institute, and Supreme Court Justice Clarence Thomas, who advocate responsibility and authentic achievement, should be Mr. Cosby’s natural allies. However, they have been stigmatized by liberals and the mainstream press. Mr. Thomas came from the same humble background as Mr. Cosby. Mr. Connerly opposes racial and gender preferences in hiring and state university admissions. In an environment free of manipulation, Mr. Cosby would not feel a need to distance himself from these men.

By contrast, many Democrats are exempt from the very standards they uphold. For example, Senate Majority Leader Harry Reid, Nevada Democrat, described then-candidate Obama as a “light-skinned” African American “with no Negro dialect, unless he wanted to have one.” Former President Bill Clinton said to the late Senator Ted Kennedy that “a couple of years ago, [candidate Obama] would have been getting us coffee.”

Senator Robert Byrd, West Virginia Democrat, was an Exalted Cyclops and a Kleagle (recruiter) in the Ku Klux Klan, but he does not appear to be troubled by his past. The fact that in 1964 he led the filibuster against the Civil Rights Act is never mentioned by the mainstream press. His liberal voting record since the 1960s continues to shield him from

scrutiny, even though he occasionally reveals his true racist sentiments. In 2001, for instance, Senator Byrd infamously used the term “white-N-rs” during an interview with the late Tony Snow on Fox News Sunday. His subsequent apology appeared to absolve him; he was not held responsible by the media or fellow Democrats for what the term truly implies. The word “white-N-rs” expresses the idea that the lowest any white person can sink is to join blacks, who Mr. Byrd continues to relegate to the bottom of the social heap.

After the Civil War, hooded night-riders burned crosses, lynched and otherwise terrorized innocent black people. They killed any affection that might have grown in the hearts of a long-suffering people who were finally allowed to become citizens in the land of their birth. It is understandable that some blacks feel estranged from the America that white citizens identify with. Ironically, while the Republicans, the party of the hated Yankees, could not win elections in the South, *they* were tarred as the perpetrators of injustice.

The tangible force previously used to oppress blacks has been replaced by words and opinion: Blacks are still being encouraged to act contrary to their self-interest. By embracing the Democratic Party wholeheartedly, blacks accept ideas and policies that perpetuate their victimhood rather than advance their freedom.

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## Unconstitutional Christian bigotry

*By Robyn Wethington*

On March 1, 2010, The Supreme Court refused to hear a case about a Ten Commandments monument facing removal from Haskell County courthouse grounds in Oklahoma. Since 2004, an 8-foot-tall stone monument of the Ten Commandments has adorned the Haskell County courthouse lawn. On July 30, 2009, the tenth circuit court of appeals ruled that the implied religious endorsement of the Judeo-Christian tribute was unconstitutional. By recently refusing to hear the case, the Supreme Court justices are approving the lower court decision to eradicate

the monument.

So what about the Ten Commandments etched on the Supreme Court doors? The Ten Commandments are engraved on the oak doors of the Supreme Court. Moses, holding the Ten Commandments, is featured among the world’s lawgivers at the top of the Supreme Court building. Inside the courtroom, directly above where the Supreme Court judges sit when hearing cases, the Ten Commandments are on display once again. Bible verses etched in stone sur-

round the federal buildings and monuments in Washington, DC.

The United States was founded on Judeo-Christian principles, in particular, the Ten Commandments. America was built on the conviction that there are unalienable rights that stem from Christian principles, such as the precept that all men are created equal in the eyes of God.

“We have staked the whole of all our political institutions upon the capacity of mankind for self-government, upon the capacity of each and all of us to govern ourselves, to control ourselves, to sustain ourselves according to the Ten Commandments of God,” said James Madison, one of the fathers of our Constitution and the country’s fourth president. The Ten Commandments outlined the most basic differentiation of right and wrong, and Madison among other forefathers, recognized them as fundamental rules to be followed by a free and just country.

Moreover, John Jay, the first Supreme Court Justice, once said, “Americans should select and prefer Christians as their rulers.” Though this may sound extremist to Americans today, it is nonetheless a testimony to how important Christian principles were to the charter members of this country. Religious tolerance was enshrined in the Bill of Rights. Yet, today, it seems any ode to Christianity is perceived as a form of discrimination to those of other faiths.

Yet, deeply religious men and women built this country; others, fleeing religious persecution, followed them here. Christians who first came to this land played a pivotal role in shaping and framing the government we have today. And Christianity is still a vital part of the nation’s government. To this day,

every Congressional session begins with a prayer. Since 1777, taxpayer dollars have paid the selected preacher’s salary. Our currency says “In God we trust.”

Americans are religious people who attend church in greater numbers than their industrialized peers around the world. According to a 2002 Pew Research Center study, six-in-10 (or 59 percent) Americans say religion plays a very important role in their lives. This is roughly twice the percentage of self-avowed religious people in Canada (30 percent), and an even higher proportion when compared with Japan and Western Europe. In a 2008 American Religious Identification Survey at Trinity College, 76 percent of Americans identify themselves as Christian.

The Supreme Court sent the wrong message to the country when the justices let the lower court decision stand over Haskell County’s Ten Commandment monument. This is justified by those who claim that the government must remain neutral when it comes to religion; in their view, even allowing a monument of the Ten Commandments on a courthouse lawn unjustly promotes Christianity in an active manner that translates into superior preference.

Unfortunately, the sad truth is that Christianity—the very religion this country was founded on and that most Americans adhere to—is being discriminated against by radical left-wing zealots. Let us not allow them or the courts to have the final say.

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