

Ethics Alarms

SEPTEMBER 11, 2017 · 7:59 AM

Morning Ethics Warm-Up, 9/11/17: Irma and Climate Change Hype; Democrats And Anti-Catholic Hypocrisy



Good Morning!

1 I'm in Boston to address a group of new admittees to the Massachusetts bar today.

2. Broadcast journalists were surprisingly restrained with Harvey, but the second major hurricane in less than two weeks is apparently too much for them, as it is for other climate change skills on social media and elsewhere (I'm looking at YOU, Jennifer Lawrence...which, I admit, isn't all that unpleasant...)

Thus I am hearing (and reading) more and more claims that Hurricane Irma on top of Hurricane Harvey is the result of the nation's failure to aggressively limit carbon emissions...as if two (or more) big storms in hurricane season is unprecedented, and didn't, in fact, occur far more frequently when Al Gore was knee-

high to a grasshopper. What does the cynical use of the 2017 storms as propaganda for the gullible and weak-minded tell us?

It tells us that the journalists don't know beans about climate, weather and the science of global warming. It shows us that they are willing to mislead the public out of dishonesty, bias or incompetence, by spreading what amounts to junk science regarding an important policy issue. It tells us that they can't resist using their position as reporters to boost what is for them a political agenda, for not one of them has first hand knowledge or genuine expertise regarding whether the earth is warming, how much, for how long, to what effect, and what will actually slow it down, and very, very few of them could explain a climate change model if their lives depended on it.

Finally, it tells us they are *stupid*. Every time it becomes obvious that the news media, elected officials and others are hyping this issue by using weather as an argument that climate change is occurring, they make skeptics more skeptical, and justly so. When advocates and activists resort to phony arguments and fake facts, it is fair to assume that they don't have sufficiently persuasive actual facts, and that they cannot be trusted not to cheat to get their way.

2. It did not get the publicity and coverage it should have—*Now don't be suspicious and attribute this to conscious news manipulation; there was a lot going on last week, like the announcement of the new cast for "Dancing With The Stars"...* which is one reason I missed it, but the confirmation hearing for Notre Dame Law School Professor Amy Coney Barrett, a nominee to federal appeals court seat, demonstrated that progressive activists and some prominent Democrats are beginning to try to erode Freedom of Religion as well as the Freedom of Speech.

Barrett is a Roman Catholic, and a coalition of groups, including the Alliance for Justice (AFJ), have pushed Democrats to oppose her nomination because a good Catholic can't be trusted to uphold abortion rights.

During the hearing, Sen. Dianne Feinstein of California, the ranking Democrat on the panel, [weilded a Marquette Law Review article](#) that Barrett wrote in 1998 entitled "[Catholic Judges in Capital Cases](#)." In the article, Barrett argued that a Catholic trial judge who is a conscientious objector to the death penalty should recuse himself if asked to enter an order of execution against a convict.

"The conclusion one draws is that the dogma lives loudly within you," Feinstein said of Barrett's writings regarding the professional obligations of Catholic judges. "And that's of concern when you come to big issues that large numbers of people have fought for years in this country."

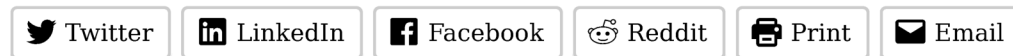
Translation: Abortion advocates will now argue that being a devout Catholic disqualifies a citizen for certain positions in law and government, because abortion rights are more important than the First Amendment's guarantee of religious rights.

I must point out, as Barrett did, that the article in question was written when she was a law student, before she passed the bar, before she had professional experience, and before, practically speaking, she knew her ass from her elbow. In addition to that, law review articles are written to be provocative and prompt debate. That's two reasons why Feinstein's attack is unethical. Another is that the Senator either doesn't

know, has forgotten, or is intentionally pretending she doesn't understand what legal ethics requires. It requires lawyers to put subordinate their personal views to the professional duties, and the duty of judges is to interpret what the law is, not what they wish it was. Feinstein's argument means that Catholics and other religious legal professionals can't or won't perform their duties ethically. She is making, in essence, the same anti-Catholic accusation that the United States was supposed to have left in the ash heap of its history when John F. Kennedy confronted it in 1960.

Someone should also whisper in Feinstein's ear that she and her party cannot argue that Catholics can't be trusted to be dispassionate and objective judges while they shout "Bigot!" at those who wonder aloud how those who follow the Koran can become loyal, trustworthy, loyal Americans.

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6 responses to “*Morning Ethics Warm-Up, 9/11/17: Irma and Climate Change Hype; Democrats And Anti-Catholic Hypocrisy*”

Steve-O-in-NJ

September 11, 2017 at 9:13 am



Bernie Sanders made a similar attack on Russell Vought, an outspoken Christian Trump appointee and opponent of Islam, saying he could worship as he chose, but didn't belong in government with those beliefs. Ironically, it could once credibly be said that the Catholic Church was the Democratic Party at prayer, before the Democratic Party decided it could get more votes with abortion.

The fact of the matter is that the political left really doesn't stand for any principle beyond getting in power and staying in power, but they are willing to use whatever principle they can grab onto to do that. No political figure will admit it, but yes, a large portion of the Democratic Party's constituents do in fact believe that abortion is the most important right of all and certainly more important than the First Amendment's guarantee of religious freedom. Anyone who's seen the signs and slogans "keep your rosaries off my ovaries" and others more vulgar should be able to see that.

Feinstein is a career politician with an undergraduate degree in history, not a lawyer, and Bernie Sanders is also a career politician (after spending the first 40 years of his life as a layabout) who is not a lawyer. Both have spent most of their lives gauging which principles will keep them in power, and doing a damn good job of it, given their lengthy tenures (although the fact that both represent uber-liberal areas of uber-liberal states didn't hurt). Legal ethics isn't something they have had to live or understand or work within. That said, both are in a position to hire the best kind of legislative counsel or get it from their party organization, and, if they were actually interested in doing the right thing on substance, they would avail themselves of those resources so they could go into these hearings fully armed with facts and principles. They aren't. They are interested in #1. defeating any appointee from the other side, by fair means or foul, and #2. raising their own profiles by generating sound bites for NPR, MSNBC, and like-minded outlets that like-minded people will hear and applaud.

That they are trading on prejudice means nothing to them, anti-Catholic prejudice is considered the "good" prejudice against that fogey old church where the priests diddle the altar boys and the members just need to go out and get laid more often. It's precisely because this is the good kind of prejudice that they can spew it in one breath and in the very next call those who wonder aloud at how a young man who got here in a skullcap, clutching a Koran, speaking only Arabic, with a lot of ties to a huge and poor family in some small village with no prospects, is going to be an asset to this country a bigot, and say how dare you even think that.

This motto is becoming my delenda est Carthago, but I'll say it again: if it were not for double standards, the left would have no standards at all.

[Reply](#)

Rob Palmer

September 11, 2017 at 9:39 am



Well said.

[Reply](#)

Steve-O-in-NJ

September 11, 2017 at 9:50 am

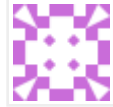


Thanks.

[Reply](#)

Humble Talent

September 11, 2017 at 10:04 am



2. My social media feeds are inundated with pictures of the hurricanes with captions that are variations of “Remember when you vote, only one party believes in science” and I always roll my eyes.

Yes, the climate is changing, and it’s fairly certain that at some level, human activity is effecting it, but what that means is really open to discussion. If the doomsaying of progressive voices over the last 20 years was based more in science and truth than politics and hyperbole, we’d be dead 10 times over.

But we aren’t. Go figure. But I get it, there are Republicans who genuinely believe that there is no such thing as climate change, and that’s not a scientifically sound position. And the religious right also has some huge hangups on evolution that they just can’t seem to get past.

But... I just can’t give it to Democrats. Something like 70% of America believes in angels, and as progressives are so eager to tell me, Hillary won the popular vote. The Democratic Party is the party that believes hurricanes are increasing in occurrence because of global warming... despite a trending decrease in raw numbers over the last 20 years, there’s a contingent that believes there’s over 9000 genders. They’re the party of anti-nuclear activism, which keeps up burning coal, anti-vaxxers, which is thinning out our herd immunity and they’re notoriously ignorant about statistics on the issues they purport to care deeply about.

I’m not saying Republicans ARE the party of science, I’m just saying Democrats sure as hell aren’t.

[Reply](#)

charlesgreen

September 11, 2017 at 10:13 am



[I am hearing] “more and more claims that Hurricane Irma on top of Hurricane Harvey is the result of the nation’s failure to aggressively limit carbon emissions.”

Can you cite one, as an example?

Most of the journalism I’ve seen says it’s impossible to make a causal link, but that the severity of this year’s storms can be linked to warmer oceans, which in turn, etc. etc. etc.

Far from the same thing.

[Reply](#)

charlesgreen

September 11, 2017 at 10:16 am



Even Slate, a pretty left-leaning institution, says, “even though laypeople are willing to connect the events to the assumed cause, it is hard to show direct causation between a single hurricane (or two) and climate change.”

[Reply](#)
