

## INBOX

## The mounting misery of migrant children

**This is a sign of how our values have eroded**

It is timely that June 26 commemorates the date, in 1987, when the Convention Against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman, or Degrading Treatment or Punishment was put into force. The article "Government moves migrant kids after bad treatment is exposed" describes inhumane conditions at the US Customs and Border Protection facility in Clint, Texas, thereby breaking our treaty obligation. One must continue to ask how pervasive this scenario is. To what extent are children at risk for illness, longstanding trauma effects, or, sadly, even death? What would have happened had this situation not been revealed?

The goal of human rights work is to focus light on what is happening in darkness. It is difficult to imagine that our country, which has been a beacon of hope to people around the world, could sidestep its responsibility to the most vulnerable. These children, though not our own, have human rights too. The abominable treatment of these migrant children is symptomatic of the erosion of our moral values and abnegation of our legal responsibilities. This is the true crisis gripping the heart of our country. We must remain vigilant.

DR. LIN PIWOWARCZYK  
Boston

**Look to example of Judge Joseph Tauro, 'voice of the unheard'**

The late Judge Joseph L. Tauro, whose memorial was held at the John Joseph Moakley Courthouse on June 7, would have had little patience for the obscenely inhumane, immoral, and unlawful treatment of migrant children that is now official policy of the Trump regime. When he observed firsthand the intolerable conditions for the residents with intellectual disabilities at Belchertown State School, in May 1973, he acted immediately — putting the state officials in the same room, around the same conference table, and forging a pioneering decree that transformed such care in Massachusetts, and ultimately elsewhere.

Those responsible for the five state institutions knew full well the power of a federal judge to enforce orders with the contempt power. The decree went into effect within six months and remained as a constant monitor of conditions for two decades. Judge Tauro rescued "the most helpless of the helpless," as he would later describe the imprisoned souls in state custody.

Where are such judges today, to rescue the least among us, to become the voice of the unheard?

Where are such people today?  
What will we tell our grandchildren when they ask:  
What did you do to stop this madness?

MARK S. BRODIN  
Newton

*The writer is a professor at Boston College Law School and was Tauro's first law clerk, in 1972. He spoke at the memorial service.*

**We need a human kindness policy — send a grandmother brigade**

More money will not help the children held without care in facilities that might be private prisons. That's because the government is ignoring two hallmarks of a successful democracy: that the government executes the will of the people, and that it oversees critical functions for the common good. Jailing helpless children is not the will of the people. Caring for them is an expression of the common good. I am 72. I know how women my age volunteer and support the common good.

Why not call upon grandmothers to come to the dreadful detention facilities every day with one sandwich, one piece of fruit, and a carton of milk for each child there. They will give sponge baths to the little ones and rock them. They will sing and play games with the older toddlers. They will teach English to the elementary school kids.

They will talk to all of them.  
Invite caterers, restaurants, and food distributors to donate sandwich makings. Invite clothing companies to donate simple cotton pants and T-shirts in all sizes. Invite donations of diapers to keep children out of their own urine.

Show the nation how great this country is, and that it is not a bigoted, narrow-minded place where children are abused by the hundreds.

SUSAN WOZNIAK  
Easthampton

**Wayfair should not be in the business of detention**

Wayfair's decision to engage in the business of child detention is a clear example of how corporate greed can trump common decency.

It's ironic that Wayfair brands itself as a "home goods" distributor: The \$200,000 contract it signed with BCFS will produce furniture for detention facilities that will imprison migrant children. Every piece of furniture Wayfair produces for BCFS will add another brick to a detention system designed to keep 3,000 migrant children from being with their families.

I applaud Wayfair employees' efforts to stop this sad business. I am appalled by the condescending response of management — encouraging workers to engage in the community and in democracy, which is just what they are doing with their walkout. If Wayfair wants to salvage its reputation, it'd be best for it not to continue down this immoral path.

It's not too late for Wayfair to be a model for corporate accountability. The company should start by asking itself one question: Is its reputation worth \$200,000?

THE REV. MARY KATHERINE MORRIS  
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## Census ruling is good for red states, too

By ALI NOORANI

In a complicated ruling Thursday, the Supreme Court rejected the Trump administration's justification for including a citizenship question on the 2020 Census — which many viewed as an intentional means of scaring immigrants away from participating in the process. That view was bolstered by revelations that a top GOP operative discussed the citizenship question with a Census Bureau official.

To be clear, the ruling is not a full rebuke of adding a citizenship question. The court merely said that it does not buy the Trump administration's justification. Practically speaking, that means there probably is not sufficient time to add the controversial question prior to the 2020 Census.

Which, ironically, is a good thing for red states.  
The lack of a citizenship question

immigrant populations had a lot to lose from the inclusion of a citizenship question, especially in terms of the allocation of federal funding.

The census count has immense implications in how federal money is allocated for health care, roads, education, and other assistance programs that are often distributed through funding formulas based on population. Thus, the court's ruling probably means red states will avoid the possibility of being shorted billions in federal dollars in an undercount.

A report from the Census Bureau found that census data affected upwards of 300 programs responsible for allocating more than \$675 billion in federal funds during fiscal 2015. When it comes to apportioning money for programs like the Children's Health Insurance Program, the federal government relies on the Federal Medical Assistance

Percentages, which uses census data to determine the amount of matching funds states receive. Red states hold 17 of the top 20 slots in terms of matching funds. One analysis found that states missed out on \$1,091 for every person not counted in the last census.

Often lost in the heated debate leading up to Thursday's Supreme Court decision is the important role that immigrants play in our economy, in more conservative communities as well as in cities such as Boston. As a result of an aging and stagnating population, in many parts of the country economic growth is outpacing growth in the labor force, producing acute labor shortages.

As this phenomenon continues, small towns and less urbanized areas — which are often red counties in red states — have the most to gain from more immigration. Look at Mount Pleasant, Iowa, where the Immigration and Customs Enforcement agency arrested more

than 30 undocumented workers in 2018 — and where businesses are struggling to fill 300 open positions.

Now that the court has ruled, the impetus is on leaders in all states to do all they can to ensure full and accurate census counts.

In Massachusetts, that means Governor Charlie Baker and local leaders must invest public resources in the education and engagement of the immigrant community. Buttressed by resources from philanthropy and the private sector, the stakes are too high for the Bay State to leave anyone uncounted.

Second, we need to start having a real conversation around how to improve our immigration system so that the United States continues to attract and retain talented engineers and farmworkers who can power our growth and make our communities more vibrant. That means passing sensible legislation that allows more immigrants to come and work here legally while balancing the need for stronger border enforcement and greater collaboration with Central American countries to address the underlying factors driving an increase in asylum seekers. It also means making it safe and secure for immigrants to come out of the shadows. Otherwise, witnesses and victims are afraid to come forward and help law enforcement do its job.

This isn't controversial stuff: According to a recent Gallup poll, 76 percent of Americans described immigration as a good thing. Voters want policy makers to take constructive action on the issue.

Massachusetts, and Boston specifically, appear to have dodged a bullet with the Supreme Court's decision today. Surprising though it may seem, many places in red America did too.

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**The ruling probably means red states will avoid the possibility of being shorted billions in federal dollars.**

would be positive news for Boston, given its large number of immigrants. The city already has one of the lowest census return rates in the country.

An undercount on the census would mean fewer electoral votes in presidential races, and less representation in Congress.

But it's also good news for much redder places. Among the states with the largest percentage increases in immigrants from 2010 to 2016, Trump carried 9 of the top 12, and 17 of the top 26. The goal of lowering census participation in blue cities could have led to lower participation in red states like North Dakota, West Virginia, Nebraska, and Alaska.

Not only Boston, but also red states with disproportionate growth in their

chievous puppet — um, the president — actually did not favor additional gun control measures.

But how the mighty organization has fallen! First, roguish Iran-Contra figure Ollie North, elected NRA president in May 2018, turned on the organization's CEO, Wayne LaPierre, the person perhaps most responsible for turning the NRA into a paranoid, conspiracy-theory-peddling Oz machine. Recall this million-dollar-a-year-man's undirected screed at the 2018 Conservative Political Action Conference: A Democratic Party infiltrated by European-style socialists was scheming to destroy the Second Amendment — and as a means to even more sinister ends!

"Their goal is to eliminate the Second Amendment and our firearms freedoms so they can eliminate all individual freedoms," he thundered.

All of them. Each and every one. Zippo. Gone.

According to LaPierre, North warned him that unless he resigned, damaging information would be released about him. What sort of information? Well, seemingly, that LaPierre had billed more than \$200,000 in wardrobe expenses and \$240,000 in travel, including a variety of foreign trips, to the NRA's incestuously chummy ad firm, Ackerman McQueen, which was later reimbursed by the NRA.

But North had his own lucrative, no-heavy-lifting financial relationships with that firm, and LaPierre used that to sow doubts with the NRA board. Thus it was that, at its April convention, a letter from North was read to the membership announcing that North wouldn't be renominated as president.

Now, with New York Attorney General Letitia James investigating the NRA's spending practices, its nonprofit status perhaps in

jeopardy, one would think LaPierre would be on thin ice himself. After all, a joint probe by The New Yorker and The Trace delivered news that might shock anyone naive enough to believe the NRA is the tireless champion of the average gun owner rather than a self-dealing, C-suite-enriching outfit: "A small group of NRA executives, contractors, and vendors has extracted hundreds of millions of dollars from the nonprofit's budget, through gratuitous payments, sweetheart deals, and opaque financial arrangements."

With its finances apparently in free-fall and its membership plummeting, the NRA announced this week that it is shutting down NRA TV, the purveyor of gun-nutty programming and conservative cultural anger. Still, on Tuesday, LaPierre won another (in)fight, this one with Chris Cox, the NRA vice president who, as its lobbyist, was its liaison to the political world and the Trump camp.

His apparent sin: conspiring with North against LaPierre. So the NRA remains Wayne's world, at least for now. Which is to say, as it supposedly looks to refocus its efforts on its core mission, it might want to adopt as its slogan that old Paul Simon classic, "Still Crazy After All These Years."

Still, one has to wonder: Have the scales dropped from the eyes of the everyday gun guy or gal who really believed the NRA fundraising hysteria about stop-at-nothing gun-grabbers, and so have ponied up to keep this gang of gunmen in big salaries, pricey suits, and fine travel?

And if not, what will it take?

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