



Life Matters Journal

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THIS ISSUE'S THEME:

Politics Kills

LETTER FROM THE EDITOR

Dear Readers,

Thank you for picking up this issue of *Life Matters Journal*. If you don't know me, hello! My name is Herb Geraghty and I have recently been appointed as the Executive Director of Rehumanize International, which means I now oversee the publication of this magazine. Over the past month, I have been adjusting to the new role and working with the team to ensure that the transition between the former Executive Director and myself goes as smoothly as possible.



At the same time, our nation has been adjusting to the transition of power between former President Trump and the newly inaugurated President Biden. As a nonpartisan organization, there are areas where our mission aligns with both administrations, and unfortunately, many more where we diverge. Part of the work of being a Consistent Life Ethic advocate is to challenge the people and institutions responsible for enacting and enabling systemic violence; and so, I anticipate that the next four years, like the last four, will require quite a bit of this work. At the same time, we must always remember to resist the too-common urge to dehumanize our so-called enemy. We know that to create a genuine culture of life, we will need everyone on board — regardless of party affiliation. So whoever you voted for, I invite you to spend these next four years working with us to ensure that the right to life of all human beings is protected.

With that in mind, this issue of *LMJ* focuses on the upcoming challenges our movement will face from the incoming administration and also delves deeper into the violence that marred the final days of the Trump presidency — including a piece from Vanesa Zuleta Goldberg that details the fear and rage she experienced as a woman of color watching the events of January 6th, 2021. I appreciate the work of all of our team members who were willing to share their talents with us and with all of you to create this collection, and I am proud to present Volume 9, Issue 1 of *Life Matters Journal*.

In peace,

Herb Geraghty

Executive Director of Rehumanize International

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Life Matters Journal

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REHUMANIZEINTL.ORG

This journal is dedicated to the aborted, the bombed, the executed, the euthanized, the abused, the raped, and all other victims of violence, whether that violence is legal or illegal.

We have been told by our society and our culture wars that those of us who oppose these acts of violence must be divided. We have been told to take a lukewarm, halfway attitude toward the victims of violence. We have been told to embrace some with love while endorsing the killing of others.

We reject that conventional attitude, whether it's called Left or Right, and instead embrace a consistent ethic of life toward all victims of violence. We are *Life Matters Journal*, and we are here because politics kills.

Disclaimer

The views presented in this journal do not necessarily represent the views of all members, contributors, or donors. We exist to present a forum for discussion within the Consistent Life Ethic, to promote discourse and present an opportunity for peer-review and dialogue.



The Trump Administration's Killing Spree

By Katherine Noble

Though the Biden-Harris administration has now taken on the task of running the American government, our country will not soon recover from the lasting effects of the Trump administration. As Trump's final days in office inched by, they were marked by one gruesome thing in particular: the Trump administration's killing spree.

This past July, the federal government resumed executions, ending a seventeen-year moratorium on the federal death penalty. Between July and September, seven death row inmates were executed by lethal injection, already setting a record for the most inmates executed by a president in a single year.¹

The death penalty is ineffective at deterring crime. Indeed, states without the death penalty see no increase in murder rates.² The death penalty is also unfairly levied against people of color, particularly Black people. Black Americans make up just 13% of the United States population, but they consist of 42% of death row prisoners.³ This is not because Black Americans are more likely to commit violent crimes. Studies show that Black Americans have the same likelihood of committing crimes as their white counterparts.⁴ However, Black Americans tend to be sentenced more harshly due to racism in our criminal justice systems.⁵

Americans' support of the death penalty is lower than it has been in nearly five decades.⁶ In fact, a majority of Americans (60%) favor life imprisonment to the death penalty as a punishment for murder.⁷ Trump's vicious series of executions seems to have been fueled only by political motivation and a twisted idea of revenge.

The "lame-duck" period is the transitional time between administrations, usually serving as a period for the administrations to come together to ease the transfer of power. The Trump administration is the first administration in over 130 years to carry out federal executions during the lame-duck period. To make matters worse, they introduced a new rule allowing the federal government the execution options of electrocution, hanging, gassing, or shooting.

Not only is this out of line with previous administrations, but the Trump administration continued on with this while the vast majority of state governments halted executions due to COVID-19. Executions involve large teams of people, including 40 Bureau of Prison staff members and 200 prison staff. According to data obtained by the ACLU in September,⁸ executions have likely resulted in a spike in COVID-19 cases. Nearly 200 people at Terra Haute (the penitentiary that houses federal death row inmates) have contracted the virus, and at least three people have died as a result.

Human lives are paying the price for Trump's wounded pride.

Government should never have the power to determine which lives are of value and which are not. All human life has inherent value and dignity.

Here is a list of all the human beings executed by the Trump administration:

Daniel Lewis Lee

Daniel Lewis Lee was executed on July 14th, 2020, after a divided supreme court (5-4) overturned a judge's order that had halted his execution. Lee's final words were "I didn't do it. I've made a lot of mistakes in my life, but I'm not a murderer. You're killing an innocent man."

Wesley Ira Purkey

Wesley Ira Purkey was executed on July 16th, 2020. Purkey was 68 years old and suffered from dementia and Alzheimer's. His last words were "I deeply regret the pain and suffering I caused to Jennifer's family. I am deeply sorry. I deeply regret the pain I caused to my daughter, who I love so very much. This sanitized murder really does not serve no purpose whatsoever."

Dustin Lee Honken

Dustin Lee Honken was killed on July 17th, 2020. For his last words, he recited "Heaven-Heaven," a poem by Gerard Manley Hopkins. "I have desired to go, where springs not fail, to fields where flies no sharp and sided hail, and a few lilies blow. And I have asked to be, where no storms come, where the green swell is in the havens dumb, and out of the swing of the sea."

Lezmond Charles Mitchell

Lezmond Charles Mitchell, the only Native American on federal death row, was executed on August 26th, 2020. The Navajo Nation repeatedly objected to the federal government taking over the case. When asked if he had any last words, Mitchell simply said "No, I'm good."

Keith Dwayne Nelson

Keith Dwayne Nelson was executed on August 28th, 2020. He did not offer up any last words.

William Emmett LeCroy

William Emmet LeCroy was killed on September 22nd, 2020. His last words were "Sister Battista [his spiritual advisor] is about to receive in the postal service my last statement." Sister Battista

shared some of the letter, which quoted philosophers and authors throughout. “As Arnaud Desjardins put it, the law commands us to do what we would do naturally if we only had love. The way consist of finding that love, which becomes the law. That is our goal, my goal, my final destination.”

Christopher Andre Vialva

Christopher Andre Vialva was executed on September 24th, 2020. With his last words, he offered apologies and prayers for his victims. “I have been incarcerated for over 20 years, but those years were not idle time. I have been on a journey of growth and repentance. On that journey, I have often thought of the Bagleys. I know they were special people and I deeply regret my actions. I took your loved ones away from you. Their words are what started me on a path to faith. At the end of the path I found salvation, and the Messiah has now guided my life for over a decade. I have the Bagleys to thank for that. The Bagleys are heroes, and we should rejoice in their heroism. They lived their faith and their faith was an inspiration. To the family of the Bagleys: I apologize for taking two shining lights away from you. I know you love them dearly, and you may feel that what I did was unforgivable. I wouldn’t dare ask for forgiveness. That is too big of a request. However, I am sorry nonetheless, and if ending my life brings you peace then I am glad to end it. I pray the Father blesses your family with His Shalom.”

Orlando Cordia Hall

Orlando Cordia Hall was killed on November 19th, 2020. Hall, a Black man, was convicted on the recommendation of an all-white jury, and his was the first lame-duck federal execution in over a century. His last words were “Take care of yourselves. Tell my kids I love them.”

Brandon Bernard

Brandon Bernard was killed on December 10th, 2020. His last words were “I wish I could take it all back, but I can’t. I’m sorry. That’s the only words that I can say that completely capture how I feel now and how I felt that day.”

Alfred Bourgeois

Alfred Bourgeois was executed on December 11th, 2020. Bourgeois was intellectually disabled, with an IQ purportedly around 70-75. His last words were “I ask God to forgive all those who plotted and schemed against me, and planted false evidence. I did not commit this crime.”

Lisa Montgomery

Lisa Montgomery, the only woman on federal death row, was killed January 12th, 2021. Montgomer was a victim of rape and child sex trafficking, and suffered severe mental illness. When asked if she had any last words, Montgomery quietly said “No.”

Cory Johnson

Cory Johnson was executed on January 14th, 2021. Johnson was mentally disabled and abused throughout his childhood in the foster care system. When asked if he had any last words, Johnson said “No. I’m okay. Love you.”

Dustin John Higgs

Dustin John Higgs was the last inmate executed by the Trump administration on January 15th, 2021. Higgs’ co-defendant was the sole shooter in the case, and was given life in prison without parole. While complicit, Higgs did not commit murder. His last words were “I’d like to say I am an innocent man. I did not order the murders.”

Of course, we also remember the victims of those killed by the death penalty. The convicted committed terrible crimes against them, and none of them deserved to lose their lives. Their names are William Mueller, Nancy Mueller, Sarah Powell, Jennifer Long, Greg Nicholson, Lori Ann Duncan, Kandace Duncan, Amber Duncan, Terry DeGeus, Alyce Slim, Tiffany Lee, Pamela Butler, Joann Lee Tiesler, Todd Bagley, Stacie Bagley, Lisa Rene, JG, Bobbie Jo Stinnett and her unborn child, Louis Johnson, Bobby Long, Anthony Carter, Dorothy Armstrong, Curtis Thorne, Linwood Chiles, Peyton Johnson, Tamika Black, Tanji Jackson, and Mishann Chinn.

We remember those killed by the death penalty. They were not innocent, but they were human beings. No one has the right to take away anyone else’s life, regardless of guilt, innocence, age, race, class, gender, sexuality — or anything else.

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The Attack on the U.S. Capitol

By Vanesa Zuleta Goldberg

Yesterday we witnessed a domestic terrorist attack on our nation's capital. A mob of Trump supporters attacked the nation's Capitol with relatively little pushback from the DC police or the National Guard.¹ What we witnessed on the afternoon of January 6th, 2021, will forever leave a mark on this nation and serve as a reminder that the evils of racism and white supremacy allowed for such a terrorist insurrection to occur.

Many are astonished at the realities of January 6th, but this is not a surprise to many of us BIPOC (Black, Indigenous, and People of Color) who have been communicating for months — if not years — now that if we did not face the evil realities of the foundation of our nation, terrorist attacks like this would only be the beginning of a reckoning to unfold throughout the United States of America. What the nation and the entire world witnessed yesterday was white supremacy in all its glory: it ran rampant through the Chambers of our nation's Capitol, it hung nooses outside of government buildings, it used religion as a disguise for its ability to run riot through the streets of DC with less than 100 reported arrests as of today.^{2,3} Men and women with MAGA gear, Trump flags, Nazi regalia, the pro-slavery Confederate Battle Flag, and rage on their face broke the windows of government buildings, stole pieces of federal property from these buildings, and put government workers' lives in harm's way. President Trump instigated these actions through months of public interaction blatantly in denial of the election results; finally, at the rally yesterday he told the crowds:

“After this, we're going to walk down — and I'll be there with you — we're going to walk down, we're going to walk down to the Capitol, and we're going to cheer on our brave senators and congressmen and women, and we're probably

not going to be cheering so much for some of them. Because you'll never take back our country with weakness. You have to show strength and you have to be strong.”⁴

After the insurrectionists broke into the Capitol in an attempt to halt election proceedings (and maybe abduct or kill members of Congress or the media, according to sources present)⁵, Trump said on video: “Go home, we love you, you're very special.”⁶

The police brutality that Black Lives Matter protestors suffered this past spring is still fresh within my mind. The tear gas, rubber bullets, the beatings, the countless arrests of peaceful activists, the brutal pepper-spray attack on the violin players who played in honor of Elijah McClain;⁷ all these memories are still fresh within the minds of BIPOCs in America. We know the terror of police brutality and we also know what it looks like for militarized police to establish any form of “law and order.” The reality of yesterday's actions cannot even be reasonably compared to the racial justice protests of last spring. The harsh reality of yesterday's events is that they were not a protest for justice, for equality, for the liberation of bodies that have been oppressed for hundreds of years. No, it was a declaration of terrorism simply because their presidential candidate was — legitimately — not elected to be the next President of the United States of America. This does not compare to the marches, which were reported and proven to be peaceful in majority, that we witnessed for the Black Lives Matter Movement.⁸ What we saw yesterday was a direct attack on the American democratic republic on American soil by Americans themselves. Yet, the very system that we have been told would prevent and protect against violent insurrection like this opened the gates for them to stampede into the nation's capital. That is the brutal reality of yesterday's actions:

there are two radically different systems of justice within this nation, and whether you will face leniency or violence from it is solely based on the color of your skin. We aren't asking for an increase in police brutality — no. What we are asking for is a long, hard reckoning of the double-standards, bias, racism, and white supremacy in this nation, particularly when it comes to law enforcement. We want equitable consequences for breaking just laws, and that prosecution to be applied consistently across race. Anything less is a violation of our shared human dignity.

Many of us BIPOC have woken up today to messages that attempt to remind us to be hopeful, but the nature of these messages themselves are still tied to a mentality rooted in white privilege. As a Brown Latina I look at the events that occurred yesterday and I am not hopeful. I am not looking forward to the future. I am angry, scared, feeling completely unsafe in the very country I was born in. I am living and breathing in a country where I am more likely to face police brutality (for merely existing as a brown woman) than the white terrorists who committed acts of treason on our nation's Capitol yesterday. If Black and Brown people had stormed the Capitol yesterday and attempted a coup as these white terrorists did, we would have seen the deaths of many under the guise of "national security." That is America. That was the narrative of America yesterday, today, and if we do not create space for serious reckoning with our white supremacist history and racial reconciliation it will be our future tomorrow. The reality is that America was not better before this event; we have always been this way, and because of this systemic injustice, we create spaces where domestic terrorist attacks by white people at this scale can occur and Americans have the audacity to act shocked. America has created the facade that we are great, but yesterday we proved to the entire world how far we are from such greatness for all Americans.

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A Brief Overview of Foster Care Reform

By Stephanie Hauer

The foster care system has great intentions, but the lived experiences of the children placed in its care often do not measure up to the goals the system is intended to meet. The system is struggling. It is overwhelmed, facing a limited capacity in the face of great need, and a myriad of other challenges. The foster care system as it stands today is in need of reform; activists and advocates have been working hard for years to enact positive changes.

A great deal of that effort contributed to an executive order signed by President Trump in 2020.¹ This order seeks to improve the child welfare system across the country. The changes being implemented can be grouped into four main categories of goals.

Strengthen partnerships between state agencies and other foster care or adoption agencies, such as private organizations, so that overall capacity can increase.

Gather more comprehensive data, so that we can develop community-based services and identify potential foster and adoptive families more effectively.

Provide better resources for children and families in the foster care system, including financial help through funding and grants, trauma-informed training, support for kinship care where possible, and better options for young people who are exiting the foster care system.

Improve oversight by the federal government of child welfare requirements. This includes facilitating the use of federal funds to provide quality legal representation for both children and parents.

Some concerns have been raised about the strategies included in the executive order; there are also concerns that the order opens the door to discrimination by partnered organizations. But many of the goals, such as recruiting more families as foster families, and offering more trauma-informed training, are steps in the right direction.

The work toward foster care reform is not yet over. Even as these new federal requirements are being implemented, other problems pervade the foster care system. There are plenty of bills being considered in various states that seek to remedy some of those problems.² For example, in California, a bill that is up for a vote

would require two weeks' advance notice before changing a child's placement. It would also extend the limit on foster care from 21 years of age up to 25. Similarly, in New Mexico, a bill has been proposed that would provide financial aid opportunities to foster youth between the ages of 18 and 21. And in Kentucky, a new bill may require caseworkers to go to school with the foster parents and child on their first day, to help ensure that the child gets access to whatever academic programs or assistance they may need.

Several nonprofits continue to advocate on behalf of the children in the welfare system and the families, both biological and foster, who care for them. For instance, Children's Rights³ is an organization dedicated to protecting the rights of children, including those in the foster care system. They focus on investigation, advocacy, and legal action to hold governments accountable on every level. Meanwhile, CHAMPS⁴ is a national campaign that draws on the knowledge and experience of a wide variety of stakeholders to improve policy and provide quality care to children in foster placements.

Foster care has the ability to do meaningful good for the families who need it. By enacting policy reform where needed, we can strengthen the system and equip the people involved to provide stability, healing, and opportunities for everyone.

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Justice in the Biden-Harris Administration

By Katherine Noble

Our nation spent the better part of this summer in upheaval. Protests became a daily part of life as people took to the streets in response to police killings of unarmed Black people. As a new president and vice president, Joe Biden and Kamala Harris, enter office, many are hoping to see the Biden-Harris team take action to address these historic injustices and protect innocent lives. However, Biden and Harris' political pasts and Biden's new choices for top governmental positions do not bode well for those on the side of life and justice.

A point of concern brought up in early presidential debates has been Biden's political past regarding criminal justice. Biden's infamous 1994 crime bill¹ resulted in higher mass incarceration, juvenile incarceration, and prison expansion, all issues disproportionately impacting Black people and people of color.² It also created sixty new death penalty offenses for crimes related to terrorism, murder of law enforcement officers, and civil rights murders, and it offered grants for building and expanding prisons in states that enforced mandatory sentencing for 85% of an offender's sentence.

Kamala Harris has quite the history herself. Harris began her career working in the Alameda County District Attorney's Office before becoming the District Attorney for San Francisco. Harris then became the first Black woman to be elected Attorney General of California, a position she held until she took her seat in the Senate.

As District Attorney, she promised to never utilize the death penalty, and she held true to that promise. However, she also prosecuted parents of truant students with hefty fines and jail time, defended mandatory minimums, and continued to pursue harsh sentencing for minor drug offenses.

As Biden and Harris take office, Biden's choices for the Department of Justice (DOJ) will hold significant weight on the potential for real systemic impact.

Merrick Garland has been selected as Attorney General, the highest role in the DOJ. Garland is seen as an aggressively bland centrist figure, described by his political allies as a "Boy Scout."³ But in a political climate where both parties hold numerous anti-life policies, being a "Boy Scout" is not necessarily a good thing. Garland may not do anything actively awful during his term, but he likely will not do much good, either. There's a quote from Archbishop Desmond Tutu I often think of when someone is praised for "neutrality" or balance. "If you are neutral in situations of injustice, you have chosen the side of the oppressor. If an elephant has its foot on the tail of a mouse and you say that you are neutral, the mouse will not appreciate your neutrality." It is not admirable to be neutral when human beings lose their lives every day to violent systems and practices.

In the position below Garland, Lisa Monaco has been appointed as Deputy Attorney General of the Department of Justice. Monaco is a former homeland security adviser. During the Obama administration, Monaco ran the "day-to-day" of Guantanamo Bay.⁴ For

those unfamiliar, Guantanamo Bay is famous for its utilization of horrific methods of torture that were used to develop the CIA's torture program.

Vanita Gupta has been nominated as associate attorney general. Gupta led the civil rights division at the DOJ under President Obama. Gupta began her career at the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP) Legal Defense and Educational Fund, where she successfully campaigned to overturn thirty-eight wrongful drug convictions in Texas. In her next position at the American Civil Liberties Union, she led the Smart Justice Campaign, a campaign aimed at ending mass incarceration. Throughout her career, she has kept civil rights at the heart of her work, and she seems a promising pick for this position.

Kristen Clarke has been chosen as head of the civil rights division of the Department of Justice. Clarke has been decried by right-wing media outlets for a letter written to the Harvard Crimson in 1992. In this letter, Clarke asserted that "Melanin endows Blacks with greater mental, physical and spiritual abilities — something which cannot be measured based on Eurocentric standards." Such race-based pseudoscience as this has historically served as the basis for eugenics and racial discrimination and is thoroughly bunk, as well as deeply harmful.

Though they are truly a mixed bag, all of these DOJ appointees served under Obama's presidency, something that does not bode well for decreased militarization and harsh penal systems. While Obama's administration made some decent strides regarding prisons, with the incarceration rate falling by 5%,⁵ the administration also denied investigations into and punishment for government-sanctioned torture,⁶ and they continued to bomb middle eastern countries, including countless hospitals, schools, and innocent human beings of all ages.⁷

Throughout his presidential campaign, Biden made grand promises for the criminal justice system, claiming he will end private prisons, cash bail, mandatory minimums, and the death penalty. However, with the worrisome political histories of both President and Vice President and these dubious DOJ picks, whether or not he will hold true to these promises remains to be seen.

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The Biden-Harris Administration on War: Problematic Implications

By Rana Irby

The Biden-Harris administration has only just begun. What will this mean for U.S. policy regarding war? Some problematic implications can be found in President Biden's time as Vice President, VP Harris's record in Senate and on the campaign trail, and some of Biden's picks for staff. It seems we may expect to see more of the same American militarism, despite some steps that on face value seem more amenable to a less militaristic strategy. This is concerning for the fight for a consistent life ethic.

As Vice President, Biden served as part of an administration that continued the status quo in terms of militarism and war. As Stephen Wertheim notes in *The Guardian*,¹ while the Obama administration struck a nuclear deal with Iran and thawed relations with Cuba, it also utilized drones and special forces in the Middle East. In addition, the administration involved our military in Libya and Syria to tragic results. Furthermore, during his campaign, Biden failed to distinguish his policy in this area from that of the Obama administration. Such an approach can be seen as being bolstered by Vice President Kamala Harris, who, Alex Ward notes in *Vox*, was chosen as VP because of her shared vision with Biden.

Just over a year ago, Harris co-sponsored the No War Against Iran Act, which would prohibit federal funds from going toward unsanctioned military aggression against Iran. In her interview with the Council on Foreign Relations as a candidate for the presidency, she focused on building partnerships in responding to such situations as North Korean denuclearization, Russian aggression in the Ukraine, Venezuela and the war in Yemen. The question remains how this will play out in terms of U.S. military presence abroad. Unfortunately, Wertheim notes that Harris also "voted against cutting the \$740bn annual military budget by a mere 10%, though she said she supported reductions as a goal." Whether she will make a positive impact in the Biden administration in regards to foreign policy remains to be seen.

Even more worrying are some of the staff picks for the new administration.

Former BlackRock employees Brian Deese and Adewale

Adeyemo were chosen as head of the National Economic Council and Deputy Treasury Secretary, respectively. BlackRock has substantial investments in weapons companies, including General Dynamics and Lockheed Martin, and according to Code Pink,³ Deese and Adeyemo have never spoken out against this. Peace activists are understandably wary of having members of the Biden-Harris administration with ties to companies with stakes in war.

Recent years have shown us the negative outcomes of endless wars. Countless lives have been lost and trillions of taxpayer dollars have been spent.⁴ Returning to Wertheim, he argues a correlation between the American public viewing war less favorably and strong military funding and presence. Those of us against war must wonder if U.S. policy will continue down this path.

Current American society shows a seeming weariness of war. The new administration has a president and history-making vice president with a shared vision — a vision which includes records of speaking rhetoric against war but perpetuating it in action and incoming administration members who have ties to companies invested in war. For those committed to fighting the perpetuation of endless wars, there is pretext to find this problematic.

Notes

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"Who Built the Cages?": Biden on Immigration

By Mikhayla Stover

Her name was Mariee Juárez.

Mariee and her mother Yazmin were forced to flee Guatemala in 2018. At the time, Mariee was just a little baby. In nearly every picture you can find, she looks at the camera with a cheeky, toothless grin. Yazmin hoped that the United States would be a place where her little girl would grow up with “a better, safer life.” And then, there was Dilley.

Dilley, or the “South Texas Family Residential Center” is the largest internment camp for immigrants in the United States. Every year, it’s used as a base for the incarceration of hundreds of women and their children.

It was at Dilley that Mariee and Yazmin ended up in after a journey of roughly 1,500 miles. Once there, they were packed into a single room of 12 other people. Mariee was sick within a week. Yazmin took her to the camp’s clinic, which gave Mariee some Tylenol and honey for her cough and told Yazmin to follow up in six months. By the next day, Mariee had a fever of 104 degrees, along with vomiting and diarrhea. Within 10 days, she had lost almost 8% of her body weight. Eventually, ICE deigned to process Yazmin and Mariee out of detention so that they could go to Yazmin’s mother in New Jersey. Yazmin immediately sought medical care for Mariee, but her little body had been fighting a viral lung infection almost entirely unassisted for weeks. Mariee died on May 10, 2018 – the day that Guatemalans celebrate Mother’s Day. She wasn’t even two years old.¹

Yazmin and Mariee’s story is one of hundreds from the Trump administration. But what most don’t know is that Trump alone isn’t to blame. You see, Yazmin and Mariee may have been detained in the Trump administration, but Dilley, the internment camp where they were held, was built by the Obama administration, when Joe Biden was Vice President.

At a primary debate in June, when it was pointed out that Obama had deported over three million immigrants, Biden praised Obama’s immigration policies.

“President Obama, I think, did a heck of a job. To compare him to what this guy’s doing is absolutely – I find [it] close to immoral.”²

This, for me, is what defines Joe Biden when it comes to immigration. For him, the best thing he can think to do for immigrants is simply to pretend as if Trump had never happened. It seems as if, in his mind, whatever Obama did was good enough for him.

His pick to lead the Department of Homeland Security, Alejandro Mayorkas, was the deputy Secretary during the Obama years.

His immigration plan itself³ remains woefully short of anything which would meaningfully improve the lives of immigrants. A broken system which gives the government every possible advantage and immigration judges nearly unrestrained power over the lives of those subject to their authority? Let’s add more judges and courts to make it bigger! An internment camp system responsible for mass illness, death, and pain? Ending it is too much, but we can try some alternative case management systems for those we deem worthy of not dying a slow death on the cement floors of their cells. The atrocities committed by ICE and CBP agents are known to anybody who has watched any immigration story over the last four years, but Biden’s plan gives them only a single line, where he promises to ensure that they “abide by professional standards” by giving them yet more funding.

To make matters worse, Biden and his incoming administration have barely been enthusiastic about even these uninspiring and derivative policies. In an interview in December,⁴ Biden said that he wanted to undo Trump policies which have obliterated asylum and legal protections for immigrants, but that it would “take time... probably the next six months.” His reasoning for doing so is that he wants to make sure that America doesn’t end up with “2 million people on our border.” This is Biden’s priority to avoid. The worst thing he can think of is more immigrants at the border.

The night he was elected, President-Elect Biden promised that his administration would be “a time to heal.” But as we head into Inauguration Week, all I can ask myself is how many immigrants will die before he decides that his administration should be a time to grow.

Notes

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The Most Pro-Abortion Administration in History: Joe Biden, Kamala Harris, and Xavier Becerra

By Sophie Trist

The incoming Biden-Harris administration is gearing up to be the most unapologetically pro-abortion administration in U.S. history. Whereas the Democratic Party previously embraced a "safe, legal, and rare" mantra, while also fostering a big tent approach toward pro-lifers, the language in the DNC's 2020 platform calls for the codification of *Roe v. Wade* and the repeal of the Hyde Amendment, which prevents federal tax dollars from funding abortions. The administration's new mantra is "on demand, for any reason, at any time, taxpayer-funded."

A detailed summary of President-elect Biden's abortion record can be found in a recent *Harper's Bazaar* article.¹ Biden started out as a pro-life Democrat, but he has gradually come to accept violence against the unborn. In 1981, Biden voted in favor of a constitutional amendment to overturn *Roe v. Wade*. In 2006, Biden voted for increased restrictions on late-term abortion. At the beginning of the latest presidential race, Biden distinguished himself as the only candidate to support the Hyde Amendment. Yet in June of 2019, he reversed his position.² When asked this past fall how he would respond if the Supreme Court overturned *Roe*, Biden said, "The only responsible response to that would be to pass legislation making *Roe* the law of the land. That's what I would do."³ In short, our president-elect may have at one time been uncomfortable with abortion, but he has long since accepted violence against unborn children.

Even more concerning are the records of two key officials in the upcoming administration: Vice-president-elect Kamala Harris and Secretary of Health and Human Services nominee Xavier Becerra,

both of whom have consistently received 100% ratings from pro-choice groups such as NARAL and Planned Parenthood. During her time as California's Attorney General, Kamala Harris authorized a raid on the home of pro-life journalist David Daleiden after he shot undercover videos of Planned Parenthood trafficking in fetal body parts.⁴ Harris was one of the first presidential candidates to challenge Joe Biden's support of the Hyde Amendment, and she supports his plan to codify *Roe v. Wade*. Harris has also co-sponsored two extremely pro-abortion bills:⁵ the Women's Health Protection Act, which would circumvent pro-life laws at the state level, and the Equal Access to Abortion with Health Insurance (EACH Woman) Act, which would force private insurance providers to cover abortion. Harris also proposed that states attempting to restrict abortion should have to receive preclearance from the Justice Department. In short, Kamala Harris is one of the most militantly pro-abortion politicians in America, and her reproductive rights wishlist would drastically expand the killing of unborn children.

Potential Secretary of Health and Human Services Xavier Becerra has followed in the footsteps of Kamala Harris. While in Congress, he voted against the Born-Alive Abortion Survivors Protection Act and the Pain-capable Unborn Child Protection Act,⁶ indicating full support for late-term abortion. He also opposed a law to prevent minors from being transported across state lines for abortions without parental consent. Upon succeeding Harris as California's Attorney General, Becerra zealously prosecuted David Daleiden and his colleague Sandra Merrit, while

minimizing the violence of Planned Parenthood abortionists. Becerra also defended a 2018 California law⁷ that, if not overturned by the Supreme Court, would have required crisis pregnancy centers to advertise for abortion providers. As HHS Secretary, Becerra could eliminate FDA regulations regarding telemedicine abortion and allow abortion pills to be shipped by mail,⁸ reducing the availability of counseling and leaving women more vulnerable to abusive partners looking to kill their unborn children.

The statements and records of these top officials in the incoming Biden administration are alarming to pro-lifers. This is an administration that seems bent on rationalizing the killing of unborn children and making it available on demand. In light of this, our work to humanize the unborn and advocate for their right to life is more important than ever. As always, consistent life ethic organizations like Rehumanize International must stand at the forefront of the fight for human rights for all human beings and work toward a society in which the unborn child is valued just like every other member of our human family.

Notes

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