



Are You Enough?

BY KATHLEEN PARKER

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WASHINGTON — Enough with this “enough” business.

Latest to the question of whether a person is sufficiently identifiable as belonging to a particular demographic is Ted Cruz — the conservative Texas senator who happens to be of Hispanic descent.

But is he Hispanic enough? For what, his family taco recipe? Before you send in the sensitivity police, permit me to finish, *por favor*.

The suggestion that Cruz might not qualify as a representative Hispanic comes from a fellow Hispanic, former U.N. Ambassador and New Mexico Gov. Bill Richardson.

Richardson was asked whether Cruz, who opposes immigration reform as currently proposed, represents most Hispanics with his views. Richardson replied:

“Almost every Hispanic in the country wants to see immigration reform. No, I don’t think he should be defined as a Hispanic.”

Translation: If you disagree with the consensus of the demographic to which you belong, whether black, female, gay, Hispanic or whatever, then you are essentially not part of the conversation. At least not the one that matters — the vote-organizing constituency.

President Obama suffered similarly from a not-black-enough trope that began circulating when he first emerged as the potential Democratic candidate. His truly African-American bona fides aside, his civil rights resume was lacking and his ancestors hadn’t been slaves. What could the son of a Kenyan know about being a black American?

Leading this charge was Jesse Jackson, who also led the movement to popularize the term African-American in the 1980s and insisted on its mainstream adoption. To Jackson, who marched with Martin Luther King, Obama was a neophyte pretender.

Obama obviously succeeded in convincing African-Americans, including Jackson, that he was qualified to bear the mantle of his demographic. Once elected, he strategically identified with blacks in public ways. He stepped up to the plate in defense of Harvard professor Henry Louis Gates Jr. when a white cop insisted that he prove ownership of the house he occupied. The iconic beer summit followed. And Obama identified Trayvon Martin, the black teen fatally shot by a neighborhood vigilante, as someone who could have been his son.

Others have been hauled before the court of identity politics, especially pro-life women. The official women’s position is “pro-choice,” and any who have



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sincere moral objections to the destruction of life in the womb are considered outliers to the cause of liberation.

Likewise, those who lament the tragic consequences of the dissolution of the traditional family, meaning a mother and a father, are quickly marginalized as bigots with a gay problem. The *ipso facto*, zero sum-ness of our so-called discourse produces a quagmire of absolutism where truth is the ultimate victim.

Thus, we come to Cruz.

Cruz is one of those politicians whom people love or hate. Nearly everyone has a Cruz story — *suddenly!* — because to not have a Cruz story is to *not* be in the know. He’s the flavor du jour and, therefore, is variously subject to elevation and denigration as dictated by that barometer of relevance, trending on social media.

Given our litmus politics, Cruz is necessarily being scrutinized for his stance on immigration. As a Hispanic, he must be in favor of amnesty, or a “path to citizenship,” if you prefer.

For the record, I personally favor such a path. Realistically, I see no humane way to export 11 million souls, many of whom, not incidentally, constitute a significant wedge of our economic pie. Get rid of farm laborers only if you prefer a \$5 orange.

But Cruz is also a conservative, former law professor and solicitor general of Texas with deep qualms about pretending that laws don’t matter. This does not mean he’s anti-immigrant, the preferred invective for any who oppose giving special status to people who came here without permission. In a quirk of the new, diverse Republican Party, the immigration reform legislation Cruz opposes was created in part by fellow Hispanic superstar, Marco Rubio.

Rather than insist that Cruz fall in line, shouldn’t we be celebrating a clear victory for true diversity? That is, diversity of thought. Here we have two conservative Republicans of Hispanic origin who have different views on an important issue. Wasn’t this always the point of our grand American experiment?

Freedom means, foremost, freedom to speak without fear of impeachment or censure. And a diverse society succeeds only insofar as diverse ideas are welcomed. Cruz is no more bound by his heritage to fall in line with “almost every Hispanic” than Obama was required to place alms at the feet of those who, by their own analysis, considered themselves blacker than he.

Basta, already. Enough.

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Let’s Not Overwork Our Nurses

BY SUZANNE GORDON

MCT Information Services

National Nurses Week is from May 6 to May 12, and we should honor the work that nurses do, and insist that they get their long hours reduced.

The hours worked by registered nurses — the largest profession in health care — have actually increased over the past several decades.

The average hospital nurse now works a 12-hour shift. Studies on nursing hours have documented that most nurses do not leave after 12 hours but actually work 13 or 14 hours. (In some hospitals, nurses are required to work mandatory overtime, which could mean an additional eight to 12 hours at work.) When combined with commute times, nurses may be spending 16 or even 17 hours at work and getting to work. This significantly limits the time they have to rest between shifts.

To make matters worse, there are no regulations limiting the amount of back-to-back 12-plus-hour shifts a RN works. As a result, many RNs suffer from chronic sleep deprivation.

Nursing unions have been adamant that banning mandatory overtime is critical, since working extra hours is unsafe to both nurses and patients. The Massachusetts Nurses Association, for instance, has successfully lobbied for legislation banning mandatory overtime in the Commonwealth.

But bans on mandatory overtime, while certainly necessary, do not address the safety issues inherent in 12-plus-hour shifts. Errors that lead to patient harm increase after eight hours and rise dramatically after 12 hours, particularly when a nurse suffers from chronic sleep deprivation.

Plus, the harm to nurses themselves is significant. Fatigue increases the chance of a needlestick injury, makes concentration on complex tasks more difficult, and creates the kind of irritability that makes it hard for RNs to be empathic or function effectively.

What’s more, numerous nurses suffer from injuries sustained while driving home when fatigued. Ideally, nurses should go back to the eight-hour shift that so many working people fought for over the last 150 years. Until that happens, 12-hour shifts should be banned at least for those working in critical care areas — intensive care units, emergency rooms, and labor and delivery.

Similarly, working more than three back-to-back 12-hour shifts should not be permitted. Airline pilots aren’t allowed to fly for more than eight hours, and truck drivers aren’t allowed to drive for more than 11. Both professions have minimum rest periods between their shifts. So how can we countenance 12-plus hour shifts for the RNs upon whose skill, alertness and judgment so many patients’ lives depend?

Suzanne Gordon is the author of “Beyond the Checklist: What Else Health Care Can Learn from Aviation Teamwork and Safety” and is co-editor of the *Culture and Politics of Health Care Work Series* at Cornell University Press. She wrote this for *Progressive Media Project*, a source of liberal commentary on domestic and international issues; it is affiliated with *The Progressive magazine*. Readers may write to the author at: *Progressive Media Project*, 409 East Main Street, Madison, Wis. 53703; email: pmproj@progressive.org; Web site: www.progressive.org. For information on PMP’s funding, visit <http://www.progressive.org/pmpabout.html#anchorsupport>.

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OPINION | OTHER THOUGHTS

China Is Not Our Biggest Creditor

DECATUR (Ala.) DAILY (May 6): Populist politicians are much too eager to jump on the bogeyman bandwagon.

They seem not to care or notice that the bumps and jolts under their wheels are the facts being run over beneath them.

Consider the popularly held belief that China “owns” the United States because it holds the majority of our debt.

Despite what many politicians and fringe groups would scare us into believing, China is not the United States’ biggest creditor. That title goes to America itself.

China holds slightly more than 7 percent of the total U.S. debt, according to The Associated Press. And despite what you might hear, China has been cutting its holdings, down from about 10 percent a few years ago.

In fact, China is having its own debt problems, with economic recovery proving slow and the nation actually suffering through a rare trade deficit in March.

Yes, the United States has a huge debt problem, as evidenced by the \$16.8 trillion deficit that is growing by the second. That debt is hindering everything from economic rebound to government-funded services and infrastructure improvements.

But Americans hold the bulk of the debt through the Federal Reserve, Social Security system, pension plans for civil service workers and military personnel, U.S. banks, mutual funds, private pension plans, insurance companies and individual investors. ...

It is one matter for U.S. politicians to zero in on real concerns, such as human rights, counterfeiting of U.S. products, trade policies, currency manipulation or computer hacking.

It is quite another matter for them to demonize China for controlling our destiny by owning the majority of our debt, when it is not true.

Rather than creating and blaming a fictitious bogeyman, we need to accept responsibility for the actions that led to the deficit and implement sensible solutions.

THE VIEWS PAGE

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TODAY IN HISTORY

By The Associated Press

Today is Thursday, May 9, the 129th day of 2013. There are 236 days left in the year.

Today’s Highlight in History: On May 9, 1754, a political cartoon in Benjamin Franklin’s Pennsylvania Gazette depicted a snake cut into eight pieces, each section representing a part of the American colonies; the caption read, “JOIN, or DIE.”

On this date: In 1712, the Carolina Colony was officially divided into two entities: North Carolina and South Carolina.

In 1883, Spanish philosopher Jose Ortega y Gasset was born in Madrid.

In 1936, Italy annexed Ethiopia.

In 1945, U.S. officials announced that a midnight entertainment curfew was being lifted immediately.

In 1951, the U.S. conducted its first thermonuclear experiment as part of Operation Greenhouse by detonating a 225-kiloton device on Enewetak Atoll in the Pacific nicknamed “George.”

In 1958, “Vertigo,” Alfred Hitchcock’s eerie thriller starring James Stewart and Kim Novak, premiered in San Francisco, the movie’s setting.

In 1961, in a speech to the National Association of Broadcasters, Federal Communications Commission Chairman Newton N. Minow decried the majority of television programming as a “vast wasteland.”

In 1962, scientists at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology succeeded in reflecting a laser beam off the surface of the moon.

In 1974, the House Judiciary Committee opened public hearings on whether to recommend the impeachment of President Richard Nixon.

In 1978, the bullet-riddled body of former Italian prime minister Aldo Moro, who’d been abducted by the Red Brigades, was found in an automobile in the center of Rome.

In 1980, 35 people were killed when a freighter rammed the Sunshine Skyway Bridge over Tampa Bay in Florida, causing a 1,400-foot section of the southbound span to collapse.

In 1987, 183 people were killed when a New York-bound Polish jetliner crashed while attempting an emergency return to Warsaw.

Ten years ago: A camouflage-clad gunman fired hundreds of rounds as he roamed the halls of Case Western Reserve University’s business school in Cleveland, killing one person (Biswanath Halder was later convicted and sentenced to life in prison). The United States and its allies

asked the U.N. Security Council to give its stamp of approval to their occupation of Iraq. The Republican-led House approved, 222-203, a \$550 billion tax cut package. Louisiana Democrat Russell B. Long, who’d greatly influenced tax laws during nearly four decades in the Senate, died at age 84.

Five years ago: Democrat Barack Obama picked up the backing of nine superdelegates, all but erasing Hillary Rodham Clinton’s once-imposing lead. Jury selection began in the Chicago trial of R&B superstar R. Kelly, accused of videotaping himself having sex with a girl as young as 13. (Kelly was later acquitted on all counts.) Journalist-feminist Nuala O’Faolain, who’d gained international fame with her outspoken memoir “Are You Somebody?” in 1966, died in Dublin, Ireland, at age 68.

One year ago: President Barack Obama declared his unequivocal support for same-sex marriage in a historic announcement that came three days after Vice President Joe Biden spoke in favor of such unions on NBC’s “Meet the Press.” Hair stylist Vidal Sassoon, 84, died in Los Angeles.

Today’s Birthdays: Actress Geraldine McEwan is 81. Actor-writer Alan Bennett is 79. Rock musician Nokie Edwards (The Ventures) is 78. Actor Albert Finney is 77. Actress-turned-politician Glenda Jackson is 77. Producer-director James L. Brooks is 76. Musician Sonny Curtis (Buddy Holly and the Crickets) is 76. Singer Tommy Roe is 71. Singer-musician Richie Furay (Buffalo Springfield and Poco) is 69. Actress Candice Bergen is 67. Pop singer Clint Holmes is 67. Actor Anthony Higgins is 66. Singer Billy Joel is 64. Blues singer-musician Bob Margolin is 64. Rock singer-musician Tom Petersson (Cheap Trick) is 63. Actress Alley Mills is 62. Actress Amy Hill is 60. Actress Wendy Crewson is 57. Actor John Corbett is 52. Singer Dave Gahan (Depeche Mode) is 51. Actress Sonja Sohn is 49. Rapper Ghostface Killah is 43. Country musician Mike Myerson (Heartland) is 42. Rhythm-and-blues singer Tamia is 38. Rock musician Dan Regan (Reel Big Fish) is 36. Rock singer Pierre Bouvier (Simple Plan) is 34. Actress Rosario Dawson is 34. Rock singer Andrew W.K. is 34. Actress Rachel Boston is 31. TV personality Audrina Patridge is 28.

Thought for Today: “There is nothing to fear except the persistent refusal to find out the truth, the persistent refusal to analyze the causes of happenings.” — Dorothy Thompson, American journalist and author (1894-1961).

FROM THE BIBLE

His name shall be called Wonderful Counselor. Isaiah 9:6. Portals of Prayer, Concordia Publishing House, St. Louis

YOUR LETTERS

HSC Campus Future

Don Lowrie, Yankton

The *Press & Dakotan* is right in pointing out the efforts being made finally to re-develop part of the old HSC campus. Regarding why the State of South Dakota has not pursued this type of effort in previous years can probably be laid at the fact that prior campus administration had a selfish agenda to have a special medical or prison-type treatment facility built there. They refused to listen to any other proposals, nor make any effort to pursue their one and only dream.

The governor should remember that HSC campus belongs to the people of the state, not a governor or administrator!

We provide funding out of our taxes. The State has been derelict in handling the abandoned buildings situation. If they had sold off that portion of the campus to private developers years ago, we would not have this situation.

I remember when the City of Yankton wanted to demolish the Gurney buildings and put a fountain on the site! Fortunately, they listened to private developers and the City continues to receive tax benefits from that property.

Wanting to tear things down and being closed-minded to alternatives that have worked in the past at other facilities benefits no one (except the demolition contractor)!

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