

April 14, 2014

**Charles Krauthammer** writes on the left's totalitarian efforts to find and purge the "deniers" in our midst.

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**Mark Steyn** posts on Brandeis' disinclination of Ayaan Hirsi Ali.

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has displayed. And ultimately, as I said re Brandon Eich, such a land will be [bloody boring - and a society in decline](#). ...

**Ross Douthat** writes on the similarities between Brandeis and Mozilla.

*... What both cases illustrate, with their fuzzy rhetoric masking ideological pressure, is a serious moral defect at the heart of elite culture in America.*

*The defect, crucially, is not this culture's bias against social conservatives, or its discomfort with stinging attacks on non-Western religions. Rather, it's the refusal to admit — to others, and to itself — that these biases fundamentally trump the commitment to “free expression” or “diversity” affirmed in mission statements and news releases.*

*This refusal, this self-deception, means that we have far too many powerful communities (corporate, academic, journalistic) that are simultaneously dogmatic and dishonest about it — that promise diversity but only as the left defines it, that fill their ranks with ideologues and then claim to stand athwart bias and misinformation, ...*

*... And with the pretense, increasingly, comes a dismissive attitude toward those institutions — mostly religious — that do acknowledge their own dogmas and commitments, and ask for the freedom to embody them and live them out.*

*It would be a far, far better thing if Harvard and Brandeis and Mozilla would simply say, explicitly, that they are as ideologically progressive as Notre Dame is Catholic or B. Y.U. is Mormon or Chick-fil-A is evangelical, and that they intend to run their institution according to those lights.*

*I can live with the progressivism. It's the lying that gets toxic.*

**Matthew Continetti** uses divorce proceedings to write on what he calls "Washington's rotten core."

*I see lobbying,” Tony Podesta has said, “as getting information in the hands of people who are making decisions so they can make more informed decisions.” Last week the information Tony Podesta was giving was the divorce complaint he had filed in D.C. Court against his wife, Heather. The hands receiving that information belonged to a gossip columnist for the Washington Post, who made the “informed decision” to report on it. Later in the day Heather, who is also a lobbyist, gave the Post the text of her counter-suit. It published a follow-up.*

*The documents, which you can read below, did not become available to the rest of us until yesterday. They tell stories not only of a May–December romance gone sour but of how obscene wealth can be amassed through rent-seeking and influence-peddling in Washington, D.C., and of the hoary means by which the princelings of the capital and their consorts maintain and grow that wealth. They tell stories not only of an ugly divorce but of the power of lobbying, of how one family maneuvered to the center of the nation's dominant political party, of the transactional relationships, gargantuan self-regard, and empty posturing that insulate, asbestos-like, the D.C. bubble.*

*That the broken couple now uses the tools of their trade — the phone call to a friend, the selective leaking of documents, the hiring of attorneys, the launch of a public-relations campaign — against one another is more than ironic. It is fitting. Tony and Heather Podesta reached the pinnacle of wealth and influence in Barack Obama's Washington. Now they, like he, are in eclipse. ...*

An **Instapundit** reader with an interesting discourse on Swiss and American education. ... *My opinion: the United States has a high structural unemployment rate (including a low 'labor participation rate') due to a seriously flawed educational model beginning with Kindergarten. You are losing an understanding of the founding principles of your country, such as what is the Natural Law. The role of parents in your system is no longer understood or deemed important. Study the Swiss model. It has practical answers that serve a free people and a free society based on private enterprise. There is no occupational or religious coercion. But, there is a well defined Judeo-Christian societal role of parents; of teachers, advisors, testing authorities and of course the students. There is no "Common Core". Our cantons are all somewhat different in their academic curricula for the primary and secondary levels because the cantons are different. But they are united in the objective that as young men and women approach maturity, they complete rational paths that yield life skills having value within the society, and for which their remuneration is based on "the market".*

*I would be pleased to try to answer any questions you might have. I love the United States, and it pains me to see a problem there that could be fixed, but requires a sustained effort to change attitudes toward trades, and the important role of parentage. ...*

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## **Washington Post** **[Thought police on patrol](#)**

by Charles Krauthammer

Two months ago, [a petition bearing more than 110,000 signatures](#) was delivered to The Post, demanding a ban on any article questioning global warming. The petition arrived the day before publication of my column, which consisted of precisely that heresy.

The column ran as usual. But I was gratified by the show of intolerance because it [perfectly illustrated my argument](#) that the left is entering a new phase of ideological agitation — no longer trying to win the debate but stopping debate altogether, banishing from public discourse any and all opposition.

The proper word for that attitude is totalitarian. It declares certain controversies over and visits serious consequences — from social ostracism to vocational defenestration — upon those who refuse to be silenced.

Sometimes the word comes from on high, as when the [president of the United States declares the science of global warming](#) to be “settled.” Anyone who disagrees is then branded “anti-science.” And better still, a “denier” — a brilliantly chosen calumny meant to impute to the climate skeptic the opprobrium normally reserved for the hatemongers and crackpots who deny the Holocaust.

Then last week, another outbreak. The newest closing of the leftist mind is on gay marriage. Just as the science of global warming is settled, so, it seems, are the moral and philosophical merits of gay marriage.

To oppose it is nothing but bigotry, akin to racism. Opponents are to be similarly marginalized and shunned, destroyed personally and professionally.

Like the [CEO of Mozilla who resigned under pressure](#) just [10 days into his job](#) when it was disclosed that six years earlier he had donated to California’s Proposition 8, which [defined marriage as between a man and a woman](#).

But why stop with Brendan Eich, the victim of this high-tech lynching? [Prop 8 passed by half a million votes](#). Six million Californians joined Eich in the crime of “privileging” traditional marriage. [So did Barack Obama](#). In that same year, he declared that his Christian beliefs made him oppose gay marriage.

Yet under the new dispensation, this is outright bigotry. By that logic, the man whom the left so ecstatically carried to the White House in 2008 was equally a bigot.

The whole thing is so stupid as to be unworthy of exegesis. There is no logic. What’s at play is sheer ideological prejudice — and the enforcement of the new totalitarian norm that declares, unilaterally, certain issues to be closed.

Closed to debate. Open only to intimidated acquiescence.

To this magic circle of forced conformity, the left would like to add certain other policies, resistance to which is deemed a [“war on women.”](#) It’s a colorful synonym for sexism. Leveling the charge is a crude way to cut off debate.

Thus, to oppose late-term abortion is to make war on women’s “reproductive health.” Similarly, to question Obamacare’s mandate of free contraception for all.

Some oppose the regulation because of its [impingement on the free exercise of religion](#). Others on the simpler (nontheological) grounds of a skewed hierarchy of values. Under the new law, everything is covered, but a few choice things are given away free. To what does contraception owe its exalted status? Why should it rank above, say, antibiotics for a sick child, for which that same mother must co-pay?

Say that, however, and you are accused of denying women “access to contraception.”

Or try objecting to the new so-called [Paycheck Fairness Act for women](#), which is little more than a full-employment act for trial lawyers. Sex discrimination is already illegal. What these new laws do is relieve the plaintiffs of proving intentional discrimination. To bring suit, they need only to show that [women make less in that workplace](#) .

Like the [White House, where women make 88 cents](#) to the men's dollar?

That's called "disparate impact." Does anyone really think Obama consciously discriminates against female employees, rather than the disparity being a reflection of experience, work history, etc.? But just to raise such questions is to betray heretical tendencies.

The good news is that the "war on women" charge is mostly cynicism, fodder for campaign-year demagoguery. But the trend is growing. Oppose the current consensus and you're a denier, a bigot, a homophobe, a sexist, an enemy of the people.

Long a staple of academia, the totalitarian impulse is spreading. What to do? Defend the dissenters, even if — perhaps, especially if — you disagree with their policy. It is — it was? — the American way.

### SteynOnLine [Degrees of Separation](#) by Mark Steyn



Today, Brandeis University announced that it was reversing its decision to award an honorary degree to Ayaan Hirsi Ali, following complaints from faculty, an online petition, and pressure from the Council on American-Islamic Relations, which represents nobody but is flush with Saudi cash. The biases of the academy are well known: Robert Spencer is in no danger of getting an honorary degree any time soon, nor Douglas Murray. Nevertheless, in this instance, Brandeis University is stiffing someone who's a black feminist atheist from Somalia. Which makes their decision the most explicit recognition yet that, in the hierarchy of identity-group politics, Islam trumps everything, including race, gender and secularism.

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I wrote about Ayaan a couple of years ago in [Maclean's](#):

*She lives under armed guard and was forced to abandon the Netherlands because quite a lot of people want to kill her. And not in the desultory behead-the-enemies-of-Islam you-will-die-infidel pro forma death-threats-R-us way that many of us have perforce gotten used to in recent years: her great friend and professional collaborator was murdered in the streets of Amsterdam by a man who shot him eight times, attempted to decapitate him, and then drove into his chest two knives, pinning to what was left of him a five-page note pledging to do the same to her.*

*What would you do in those circumstances? Ayaan and I had repaired to that third-rate bar after a day-long conference on Islam, jihad, free speech and whatnot. That's usually where I run into her, whether in Malibu or at the Carlton Club in London or at a less illustrious venue. Would you be doing that with a price on your head? Or would you duck out of sight, lie low, change your name, move to New Zealand, and hope one day to get your life back? After the threats against the Comedy Central show South Park the other week, Ms. Hirsi Ali turned up on CNN to say that the best defence against Islamic intimidation is for us all to stand together and thereby "share the risk." But, around the world, every single translator of her books has insisted on total anonymity. When push comes to shove, very few are willing to share the risk.*

In London, the historian Andrew Roberts calls her "the bravest woman I know". I agree. There's nothing hypothetical about the danger she lives with. She and Theo van Gogh made a movie called *Submission*: He's dead, and the fellows who did it would like to kill her, too. But some tenured navel-gazing hacks and the prissy little trusty-fundy twerps they pretend to teach think she's the threat?

As for Brandeis president Frederick Lawrence and the others who took this decision, nobody's asking them to be as brave as Ayaan Hirsi Ali. They will never know what it's like to have their associates murdered and to be forced into living under armed guard. They will never have to "share the risk" that Ms Hirsi Ali faces every day of her life. All that was required of President Lawrence & Co was that they not be total craven, jelly-spined squishes who fold like a cheap Bedouin tent at the first hint of pressure.

But Lawrence couldn't even do that. Ayaan Hirsi Ali campaigns against female genital mutilation - that's to say, the barbarous practice by which Muslim men deny women sexual pleasure by having their clitorises cut off. Lawrence and the other fellows who run Brandeis are in no danger of any equivalent procedure since it seems clear they've nothing down there to chop off anyway. The eunuchs of the American academy are the beneficiaries of western liberty, of the spirit of openness and inquiry that is the principal difference between us and the intellectually stagnant Muslim world. But they will not lift a finger to defend that tradition.

So getting an honorary degree at Brandeis, like serving on the board at Mozilla, is open only to those who make sure they never cross the Conformity Enforcers. And apostates to Islam, as Ayaan is regarded, must accept that they are apostates to American campus conformity, too, and be prepared to lead a life without the consolations of honorary degrees. Accepting the loss of A-list commencement gigs doesn't take a lot of courage, but it still takes more than Frederick Lawrence has displayed. And ultimately, as I said re Brandon Eich, such a land will be [bloody boring - and a society in decline](#).

~Miss Hirsi Ali's response to Brandeis is [here](#). You can read more on the strange alliance between Islam and the multiculti left in my free-speech book *Lights Out*, [personally autographed copies](#) of which are [exclusively available](#) from SteynOnline. Profits go to fund my legal campaign against [serial litigant Michael E Mann](#).



NY Times

Diversity and Dishonesty

by Ross Douthat

EARLIER this year, a [column](#) by a Harvard undergraduate named Sandra Y. L. Korn briefly achieved escape velocity from the Ivy League bubble, thanks to its daring view of how universities should approach academic freedom.

Korn proposed that such freedom was dated and destructive, and that a doctrine of “academic justice” should prevail instead. No more, she wrote, should Harvard permit its faculty to engage in “research promoting or justifying oppression” or produce work tainted by “racism, sexism, and heterosexism.” Instead, academic culture should conform to left-wing ideas of the good, beautiful and true, and decline as a matter of principle “to put up with research that counters our goals.”

No higher-up at Harvard endorsed her argument, of course. But its honesty of purpose made an instructive contrast to the institutional statements put out in the immediate aftermath of two recent controversies — the resignation of the Mozilla Foundation’s C.E.O., Brendan Eich, and the withdrawal, by Brandeis University, of the honorary degree it had promised to the human rights activist Ayaan Hirsi Ali.

In both cases, Mozilla and Brandeis, there was a striking difference between the clarity of what had actually happened and the evasiveness of the official responses to the events. Eich stepped down rather than recant his past support for the view that one man and one woman makes a marriage; Hirsi Ali’s invitation was withdrawn because of her sweeping criticisms of Islamic culture. But neither the phrase “marriage” nor the word “Islam” appeared in the initial statements Mozilla and Brandeis released.

Instead, the Mozilla statement rambled in the language of inclusion: “Our organizational culture reflects diversity and inclusiveness. ... Our culture of openness extends to encouraging staff and community to share their beliefs and opinions. ...”

The [statement on Hirsi Ali](#) was slightly more direct, saying that “her past statements ... are inconsistent with Brandeis University’s core values.” But it never specified what those statements or those values might be — and then it fell back, too, on pieties about diversity: “In the spirit of free expression that has defined Brandeis University throughout its history, Ms. Hirsi Ali is welcome to join us on campus in the future to engage in a dialogue about these important issues.”

What both cases illustrate, with their fuzzy rhetoric masking ideological pressure, is a serious moral defect at the heart of elite culture in America.

The defect, crucially, is not this culture’s bias against social conservatives, or its discomfort with stinging attacks on non-Western religions. Rather, it’s the refusal to admit — to others, and to itself — that these biases fundamentally trump the commitment to “free expression” or “diversity” affirmed in mission statements and news releases.

This refusal, this self-deception, means that we have far too many powerful communities (corporate, academic, journalistic) that are simultaneously dogmatic and dishonest about it — that

promise diversity but only as the left defines it, that fill their ranks with ideologues and then claim to stand athwart bias and misinformation, that speak the language of pluralism while presiding over communities that resemble the beau ideal of Sandra Y. L. Korn.

Harvard itself is a perfect example of this pattern: As Patrick Deneen of Notre Dame [pointed out](#) when the column was making waves, Korn could only come up with *one* contemporary example of a Harvardian voice that ought to be silenced — “a single conservative octogenarian,” the political philosophy professor Harvey Mansfield. Her call for censorship, Deneen concluded, “is at this point almost wholly unnecessary, since there are nearly no conservatives to be found at Harvard.”

I am (or try to be) a partisan of pluralism, which requires respecting Mozilla’s right to have a C.E.O. whose politics fit the climate of Silicon Valley, and Brandeis’s right to rescind degrees as it sees fit, and Harvard’s freedom to be essentially a two-worldview community, with a campus shared uneasily by progressives and corporate neoliberals, and a small corner reserved for token reactionary cranks.

But this respect is difficult to maintain when these institutions *will not admit that this is what is going on*. Instead, we have the pretense of universality — the insistence that the post-Eich Mozilla is open to all ideas, the invocations of the “spirit of free expression” from a school that’s kicking a controversial speaker off the stage.

And with the pretense, increasingly, comes a dismissive attitude toward those institutions — mostly religious — that *do* acknowledge their own dogmas and commitments, and ask for the freedom to embody them and live them out.

It would be a far, far better thing if Harvard and Brandeis and Mozilla would simply say, explicitly, that they are as ideologically progressive as Notre Dame is Catholic or B. Y.U. is Mormon or Chick-fil-A is evangelical, and that they intend to run their institution according to those lights.

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## National Review

### [Washington’s Rotten Core](#)

***The Podestas’ breakup offers a window onto a political culture of pettiness and greed.***

by Matthew Continetti

I see lobbying,” Tony Podesta has said, “as getting information in the hands of people who are making decisions so they can make more informed decisions.” Last week the information Tony Podesta was giving was the divorce complaint he had filed in D.C. Court against his wife, Heather. The hands receiving that information belonged to a gossip columnist for the *Washington Post*, who made the “informed decision” to report on it. Later in the day Heather, who is also a lobbyist, gave the *Post* the text of her counter-suit. It published a follow-up.





Tony and Heather Podesta

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That the broken couple now uses the tools of their trade — the phone call to a friend, the selective leaking of documents, the hiring of attorneys, the launch of a public-relations campaign — against one another is more than ironic. It is fitting. Tony and Heather Podesta reached the pinnacle of wealth and influence in Barack Obama’s Washington. Now they, like he, are in eclipse.

The stories begin in the fall of 2001. She was in her early thirties, working at a trade association, and on the rebound. Her second marriage had just ended. A friend, Dorothy Robyn, a Democratic policy wonk, suggested she meet Tony Podesta. Tony was decades older than she and had been married once before, but he was young at heart. He took her to the opera for their first date. On the way, the story goes, they stopped by one of his homes to pick up a car. She noticed his art collection. “I don’t know why it is,” Tony said, “but I have artworks where the women have no heads.” The next day she sent him a note. It was signed, “Woman with a head.”

The woman with a head was Heather Miller, and soon she and Tony were in love. They moved in together. When they married, in April of 2003, Tony was 59, and Heather was 33. Nancy Pelosi witnessed their vows, as did Patrick Leahy, and Ed Markey, and Bill Richardson, and countless other Democratic bigwigs. According to the *Post*, which has chronicled the ups and downs of the Podestas’ relationships and careers, the noted D.C. chefs and restaurateurs Roberto Donna and Kaz Okuchi “personally cooked for the guests.” This was no ordinary wedding.

And Tony Podesta was no ordinary man. A longtime Democratic aide, a counselor to Teddy Kennedy, Tony had been one of the capital’s most powerful lobbyists for some time. As his lawyers would later put it, “‘Podesta’ was a widely recognized and well-respected name in the lobbying industry at the time of the marriage.” The lobbying firm he had established in 1987 was powerfully

connected. His younger brother, John, was President Clinton's chief of staff. Tony Podesta owned art and wine and real estate in Italy, in Australia, in northern Virginia, and in D.C. He was a major Democratic donor, a force to be reckoned with, and a cut-up, a character who wore loud neckties and red Prada shoes. "The Pope wears Prada," he is known to say, "and so do I."

Heather changed her name — something she had not done in her previous marriages — to Heather Miller Podesta. She emulated her spouse, developing, in the words of the *Post*, "a penchant for flamboyantly patterned dresses." She joined the company, began lobbying. She picked up Tony's art habit, and together they amassed a collection of more than 1,300 pieces. She set to work, renovating their six-bedroom, six-and-a-half bathroom home in Northwest D.C. off Massachusetts Avenue, overlooking the Rock Creek Parkway.

She wanted, her lawyers would say later, "to create a uniquely beautiful architectural space for the dual purposes of having a wonderful home in which to live and promote their shared interests, both professional and personal." The renovation took three years and cost millions of dollars. The "marital residence," where they promoted their shared interests in holding parties and fundraisers for Democratic politicians, and housed immense wine and art collections, is estimated to be worth some \$5.6 million. Concerned about income inequality? The Podestas are the 1 Percent.

They would visit their apartment in Venice, Italy, up to a dozen times a year, hosting Janet Napolitano, entertaining passersby such as Representatives Shelley Berkley and Eliot Engel, "even," the *Post* once breathlessly intoned, "Teddy Kennedy." They'd open their homes to tours so people could enjoy the art, could witness the spectacle of their wealth. One story they liked to tell took place in 2004, when the guests at their northern-Virginia home, near Lake Barcroft, walked into a bedroom festooned with the works of Katy Grannan, "a photographer known for documentary-style pictures of naked teenagers in their parents' suburban homes." The guests were shocked. But oh, how Tony and Heather laughed.

In 2007 Podesta Matoon became the Podesta Group. Heather formed Heather Podesta + Partners, establishing two prongs of the Podesta-family empire. The third prong was the Center for American Progress, founded in 2003 by John Podesta, who would oversee President Obama's transition team in 2009 and join the Obama administration as a senior adviser in 2014. The Podestas had become the most important non-elected family in the Democratic party.

In 2009, with the inauguration of Obama and the dawn of unified Democratic control of Washington, business boomed. Revenues at Tony's firm close to doubled, and revenues at Heather's firm increased by 50 percent. The money has continued to roll in. The Podesta Group had some \$13 million in lobbying income in 2013, sporting clients such as Lockheed Martin, Wells Fargo, U.S. Airways, Walmart, and the National Biodiesel Board. Heather Podesta + Partners made some \$4 million, lobbying on behalf of health companies, the American Beverage Association, Brookfield Power, DeVry University, and others. A portion of that money was recycled, contributed to Democratic campaigns and opening up avenues of influence: Tony gave some \$45,500 in 2013, all to Democrats; Heather, some \$95,798 to Democrats, Democratic committees, and liberal groups.

As government expands, extending its reach to every aspect of business, every sector of the economy, private citizens and corporations require sherpas to lead them through the mountains of regulations and tax provisions, to discover exemptions and special favors and other forms of relief or favoritism to improve the bottom line. And who better to act as sherpas than the relatives of the Democrats who impose the regulations and tax provisions in the first place, who better than the

lively proprietors of a family business operating in the luxurious and morally uncomplicated world of the caste of limousine liberals who dominate politics, culture, news, and finance?

Corporations give to Democratic politicians, avoiding the scrutiny of liberal attack dogs in the media and nonprofit sectors, and enjoying the ego boost that comes with being on the “right side of history.” Then those corporations hire the Podestas to get them out of the Rube Goldberg traps the Democrats have enacted into law. John’s innovation was to establish a corporate-funded think tank where the burdensome policies would be concocted, and whose staff would go on to man the regulatory agencies that put their wool-headed ideas into practice. And to whom do the corporations turn when they find themselves on the receiving end of all this uplift, all this do-goodery, all this progress, hope, and change? Why, to the man in the red Prada loafers, and to his flamboyantly patterned wife.

It was in 2009 that the *Washington Post* dubbed Heather Podesta the “It Girl in a new generation of young, highly connected, built-for-the-Obama-era lobbyists.” The appellation was bestowed in a lengthy and fawning “Style” profile, which acted as a sort of advertisement for her lobbying firm. Heather Podesta lamented in the piece that the onrush of business, the peals from health-insurance and green-energy companies looking for special treatment under the new Democratic dispensation, had interfered with her and her husband’s international travel. Whereas they used to visit Venice up to a dozen times annually, Podesta said, “Now we only maybe get there six times a year.” The poor dears.

The next year, Washington gadfly Tammy Haddad reported on Heather’s fortieth birthday for *Politico*. “Attending a Tony Podesta party is a pretty good way to start a new year,” Haddad wrote, “but a party to celebrate his wife Heather’s 40th birthday at their new showcase home is a great way to start a new decade.” It was downhill from there. Like Elvis, with whom she shares a birthday, Heather Podesta, Haddad said, had “become a rock star in the Washington power scene as a top lobbyist.” There were red-velvet cupcakes. An Elvis impersonator gyrated for guests. Democratic congressman John Larson and “Terry Lierman, chief of staff to House Majority Leader Steny Hoyer, took a tour of the provocative and sometimes whimsical artwork with Jane Oates, John O’Leary, Conrad Cafritz, and Hilary Rosen.” Also there was Jonathan Silver, “the Energy Department’s new money man,” who gave the American taxpayer Solyndra, and who coordinated strategy with John Podesta’s Center for American Progress.

Those winsome days have passed, however. The couple separated a month before Obama’s reelection. Their marriage’s denouement, as related in their divorce filings, is like a retelling of the War of the Roses. He says that in March 2013, months after they had separated, she asked for money to “purchase a multi-million dollar residence for herself,” and he agreed to pay half of the down payment. What he did not know at the time was that she was seeing another man. She says he’s prevented her from accessing the database that keeps track of the art collection. He says she changed the locks on the Venetian flat. She says he’s trying to get rid of the art before the court divides it between them. He says she forced the “cancelation of a scheduled exhibition at the Australian embassy.” She wants the Kalorama house, half the art, and “an equitable division of the parties’ other marital property, including the value of each party’s lobbying firm, retirement accounts, securities, business assets, tangible personal property, including jewelry, wine collection, and all other marital property.” He just wants to be rid of her.

If Heather Podesta has a flaw in the eyes of Washington it is that she is entirely too honest about the mechanics of lobbying. When she launched her independent company in 2007 it was with the slogan “We know people.” Dianne Feinstein once canceled a fundraiser organized by the

Podestas, the *Post* reported years ago, after she got wind that the invitation read as follows: “The prix fixe includes the Select Committee on Intelligence for the first course followed by your choice of Appropriations, Judiciary, or Rules Committees.”

Heather Podesta’s court filing is just as direct. “As a married couple who both lobbied,” it reads, “they strategically cultivated their public image, and worked to build the ‘Heather and Tony Podesta’ brand for the success of their shared enterprise.” Now that shared enterprise is no more, the Heather and Tony Podesta brand is damaged, and all the years of strategic cultivation are in danger of coming undone. This “married couple who both lobbied” is sundered, revealing a political culture of pettiness and greed, and reminding us that there are few things as revolting, intellectually, morally, and ethically, as the “Washington power scene.”

Divorce documents [here](#).

*Matthew Continetti is the editor-in-chief of the [Washington Free Beacon](#), where this column first appeared.*

## **Instapundit**

### **[A SWISS READER EMAILS about my Cato Podcast talk on education:](#)**

It was interesting for me to hear your talk given to Cato this past week, broadcast yesterday. As a Swiss, I support what you are saying.

I am a citizen of both Switzerland and the United States. I attended university in the US at the Univ. of Texas and the Univ. of Pennsylvania, and have BSChE and MBA degrees from those schools dating 1965 and 1967 respectively. I am retired. I live in Switzerland, but I travel in the US to visit some family and to attend symposiums, like that for example at Hillsdale College this past January. While Manager of Engineering at Bechtel Corporation’s office in Kingsport TN, I recruited often at your campus in Knoxville during the years 1987 through 1991. At that time, your university was unique in visiting and asking companies like Bechtel, Tennessee Eastman, Mead and others in the East Tennessee area simple but profound questions on a more or less annual basis. For example, “What should our graduates know and know how to do to be of greater immediate worth to your organizations?” In other words, “value added” questions. It will not surprise you to know that I hired young men, and a few young women, as engineering graduates from UT-Knoxville. Their strengths outside of academics: apprenticeship experience and an early appreciation of our challenges as private companies.

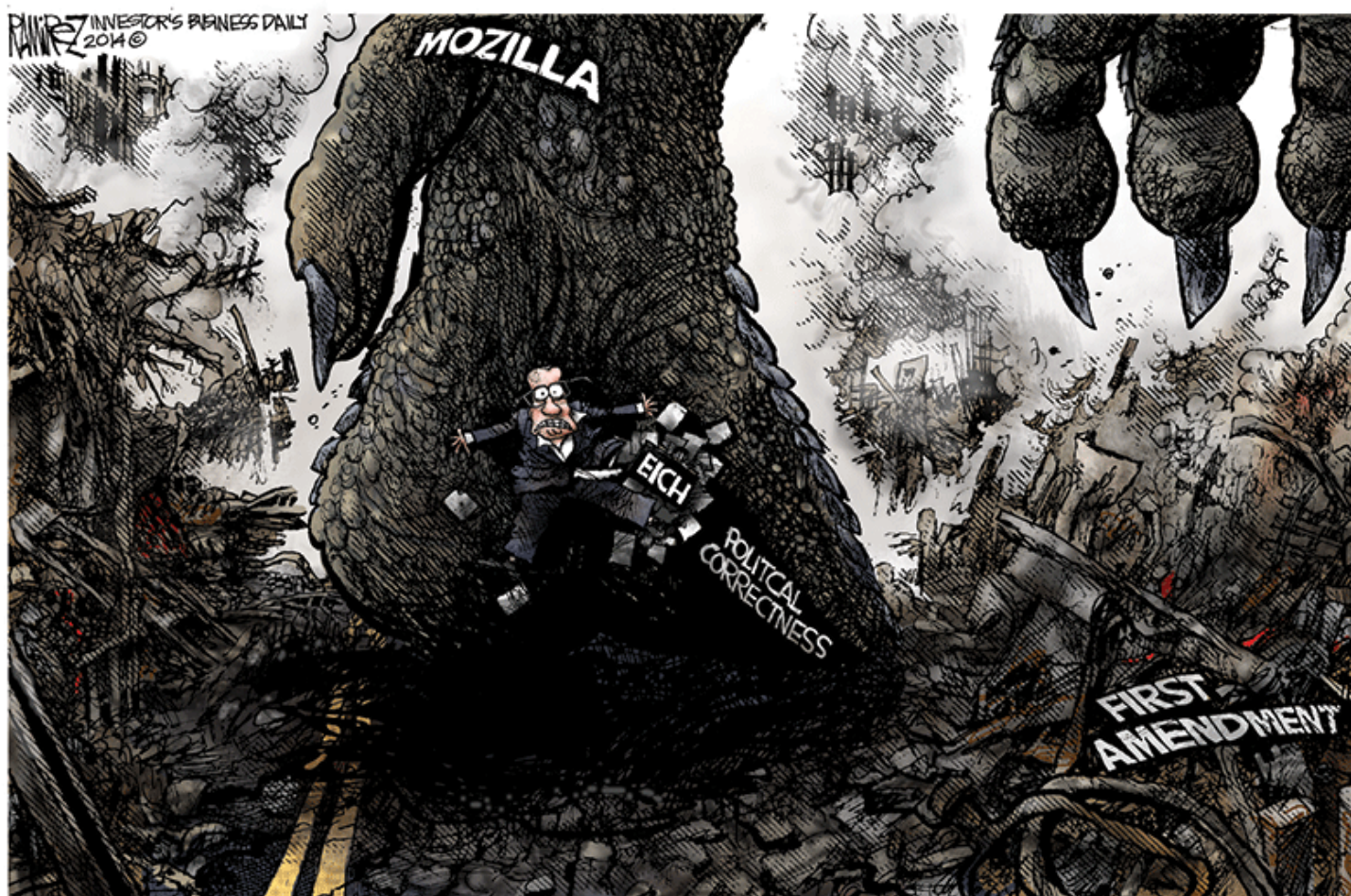
Here is why your short talk was of interest to me. We here in Switzerland have an educational system that bifurcates young students during their early teenage years between those which will pursue higher education as “Akademikers” (engineers, medical doctors, etc.), and those who will attend trade schools and become professional persons favoring more manual skills. As they progress in cantonal secondary schools, all receive sound historical, literature and art appreciation foundations. Students read classic books. All (including the future Akademikers) experience (largely unpaid) apprenticeships. The respect achievers have within the society is largely the same. We have here, in Nidwalden, a 2% unemployment rate. My opinion: the United States has a high structural unemployment rate (including a low ‘labor participation rate’) due to a seriously flawed educational model beginning with Kindergarten. You are losing an understanding of the founding principles of your country, such as what is the Natural Law. The role of parents in your system is



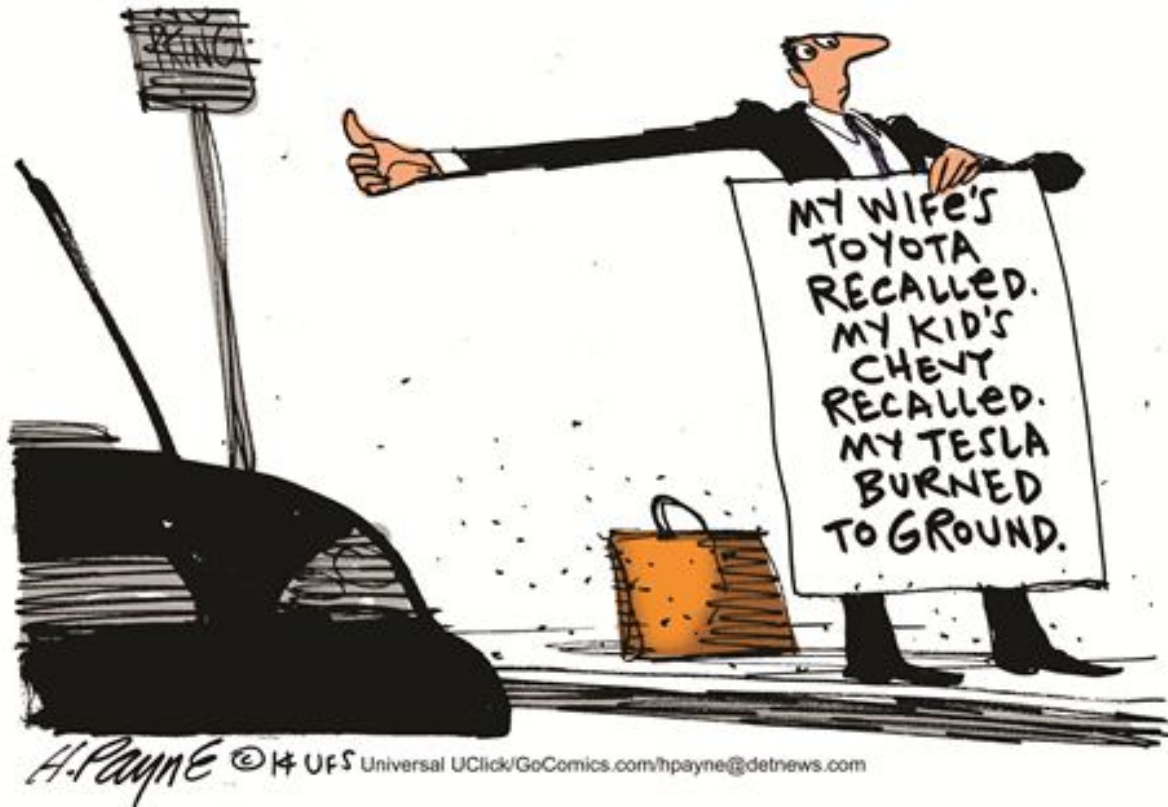
no longer understood or deemed important. Study the Swiss model. It has practical answers that serve a free people and a free society based on private enterprise. There is no occupational or religious coercion. But, there is a well defined Judeo-Christian societal role of parents; of teachers, advisors, testing authorities and of course the students. There is no “Common Core”. Our cantons are all somewhat different in their academic curricula for the primary and secondary levels because the cantons are different. But they are united in the objective that as young men and women approach maturity, they complete rational paths that yield life skills having value within the society, and for which their remuneration is based on “the market”.

I would be pleased to try to answer any questions you might have. I love the United States, and it pains me to see a problem there that could be fixed, but requires a sustained effort to change attitudes toward trades, and the important role of parentage.

Thanks very much. Alas, there are large parts of our *apparatus* that depend on unfavorable attitudes toward trades, and parenting, making change difficult.









A SHOE IS  
THROWN AT  
HILLARY DURING  
A VEGAS SPEECH...



HA! YA MISSED!  
WANNA THROW  
THE OTHER  
SHOE?



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