

## The blessings of Thanksgiving

*For the blessings of family, friends and God, I give thanks*

By Scott Walker

**T**urkey, stuffing, sweet potatoes, mashed potatoes, cranberries and pumpkin pie. Like so many other families, this is the menu for our Thanksgiving meal each year. In addition to eating beyond our bodies' ability to naturally digest food, the day typically includes football and a fun family movie.

When my grandmother was alive, we loved watching "National Lampoon's Christmas Vacation" (still do). My sons, Matt and Alex, would turn and watch my grandmother and my mother as Clark Griswold slid down the hill on his sled. The boys knew their great-grandmother and grandmother would laugh so hard they nearly fell out of their chairs. It was a wonderful family tradition.

We share the things we are thankful for at this family gathering. This came naturally for our sons. When they were young, Tonette read a book that encouraged parents to have their children tell at least one thing they were thankful for before they went to bed each night.

It is a wonderful tradition. No matter how worked up our kids were about what happened that particular day, they still had to remember at least one thing to be thankful for. Sometimes it took a while, but we waited and, eventually, something

would always come up.

The exercise was an excellent reminder of the blessings given to us by God, even on the days that they took it for granted. Thanksgiving is a good time to remember the many blessings in our lives and to remember to be thankful for them all throughout the year. It is also a good time to remind us to thank the people in our lives who provide those blessings. So let me try to do it myself.

First, I thank God for His abundant grace. No matter what the circumstances, God's grace has always been more than enough for me. Thank you.

Second, I thank my parents, Llewelyn and Pat Walker, for not only bringing me into this world but serving as remarkable role models for how to live a Christ-centered life that seeks to serve others. Dad went home to be with the Lord last year and we miss him. Mom is still busy and continues to send notes of encouragement to so many others while sharing many of her amazing chocolate chip cookies. Thanks for the unconditional love.

My brother, David, and I grew up without much money but we had amazing parents and we had each other. Since growing up and having families of our own, my brother continues to be a constant source of support. Thanks, David.

The moment I met Tonette in the spring of 1992, I knew that I would marry her. It was God's calling. Through more than a quarter-century together, she has been a constant rock for me. She tells it like it is. We are a super team. Thanks for your love and support, Tonette.

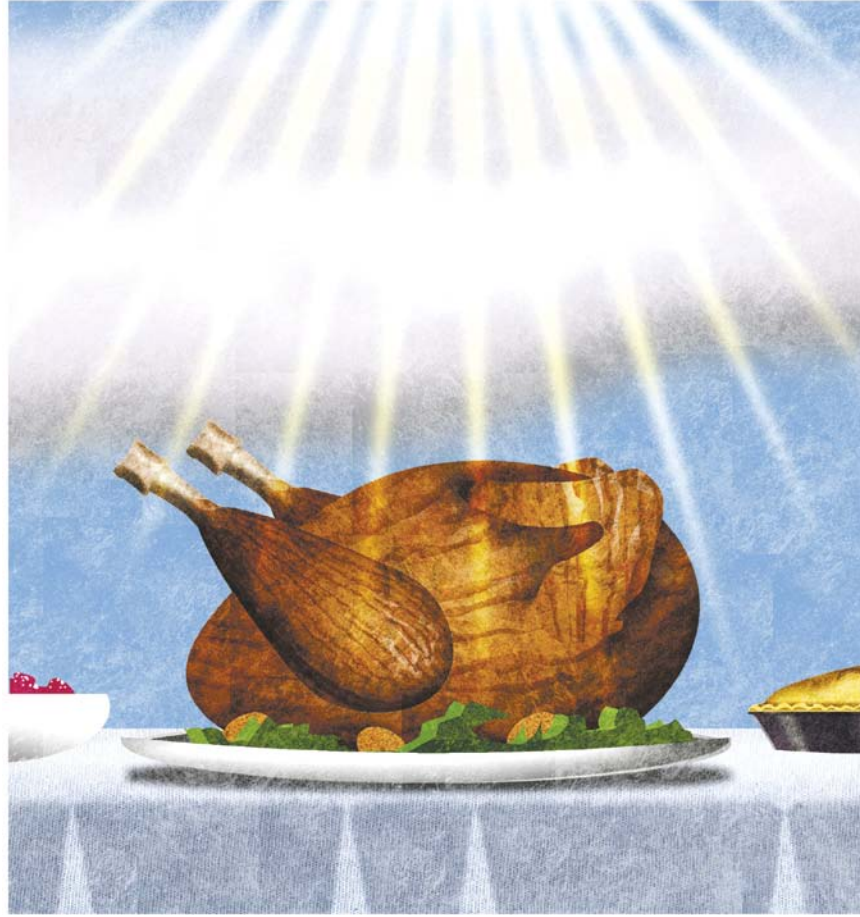


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Of all the things we've done together, our very best work would be our sons, Matt and Alex. We are so proud of the fine young men that they have become over the past few years. Matt and three others run a digital marketing firm. Alex is the campaign manager for a member of Congress. Both of them are great communicators, excellent friends and

supportive family members. Thanks for making us proud.

Tonette and I have also been blessed with some amazing friends. From my time growing up in Delavan, to school at Marquette University, to jobs at IBM and the American Red Cross to raising our kids in Wauwatosa to our friends in politics and government and from church; we are truly

blessed to have some amazing friends.

At each of my events on election night over the years, I have always said that win or lose, God's grace is more than enough.

It is so true. The last year is another excellent example.

So many people have reached out to ask me to be a part of some amazing projects. Balancing the budget was a big deal to me in state and county government, so working to pass a Balanced Budget Amendment is natural.

Countering the false narrative of Eric Holder on redistricting is important work. With fairly drawn districts, commonsense conservative candidates can win.

Helping protect the taxpayers at the federal level is critical to the future of our great country. Expanding that opportunity to the state level is equally as critical.

Ensuring that our positive reforms stay in Wisconsin is a labor of love. Plus, it is important for others to see that these reforms can outlast any one person in office.

Preparing to help the next generation embrace positive conservative views is like planting seeds in the field of the future. I look forward to the challenge and opportunity.

And writing a column each week is a great deal of fun. I am excited about sharing even more positive thoughts on the future of the conservative movement.

For each of these and the blessings of amazing friends, family and most importantly, an awe-inspiring God, I give thanks.

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Scott Walker was the 45th governor of Wisconsin. You can contact him at [swalker@washingtontimes.com](mailto:swalker@washingtontimes.com) or follow him @ScottWalker.

## How tribalism corrupts democracy

*Nearly 90 percent of Republicans are happy with the economy as it is now*



By Peter Morici

**M**y grandfather, a buttonhole maker, had three loyalties — family, his union and the Democratic Party. He believed a man's first calling is to be a provider, his union enabled that role and the party of Al Smith and Franklin Roosevelt was the working-man's champion.

He could not give great thought to New Deal policies — the efficacy of Fair Trade Laws that made his appliances more expensive or Secretary of State Hull's freer trade agenda that ultimately decimated his apparel industry. The details were beyond the grasp of someone with a grade-school education.

His politics were tribal, and he embraced politicians who often worked against his interests.

My father, a high school graduate who spent most of his career on the first rung of management supervising salesmen in the now-defunct door-to-door life insurance business — put first family, his company and the party of Dwight Eisenhower and Richard Nixon, because he wanted to identify with the class of his superiors at corporate headquarters.

He was anti-union, for low taxes and strict curbs on government spending, because that was in line with the views of the managerial class and GOP agenda.

Ironically, three of his children owe

By Paul Davis

**L**ike George Orwell's "newspeak" from his brilliant novel "Nineteen Eighty-Four," the left has exchanged words and phrases they use in the public debate. They hope the euphemistic changes will better sell their ideas than the tired old ones. For example, liberals became progressives, global warming became climate change, quid pro quo became bribery, and gun control became gun safety.

And with every horrific shooting incident, the left clamors for what they now call euphemistically gun safety, as gun control sounds too authoritarian, which of course it certainly is. Gun safety means passing new legislation that further restricts the gun rights of legal gun owners. That most shootings are committed by criminals who obtained the firearms illegally, or by mentally ill individuals, has not stopped the left's clarion call for new strict gun control laws.

Laws to stem gun violence already exist and the Trump administration is seeking to greater enforce those existing laws.

Attorney General William P. Barr announced a new federal initiative to combat violent crime and gun violence, called Project Guardian, on Nov. 13th in Memphis, Tennessee.

Mr. Barr noted that the Trump administration, working with state and local authorities, pushed crime rates down in 2017 and 2018. In 2018, violent crime went down nearly 4 percent nationwide. But as crime remains far too high in cities and rural areas, the attorney general announced that the Justice Department will revive the triggerlock program, which he stated was not followed faithfully during the Obama years. Project Triggerlock targeted violent felons who illegally possessed guns. The program used strong federal gun laws to place the violent gut-toting criminals in prison.

"What we are trying to do is take those Triggerlock principles that were successful in the past and revamp this program, resuscitate it, and double down on it nationwide," Mr. Barr stated in Memphis. "This is a national program. It will be in every district. The idea is to use our existing gun laws to incapacitate the most dangerous and violent offenders. As most of you know, with Project Safe Neighborhoods, which is one of the flagship programs of the Department of Justice, we do go after the armed felons.

## Project Guardian will enforce current gun laws to combat gun crime

*Strict enforcement of gun laws that punish criminals is the way to go*

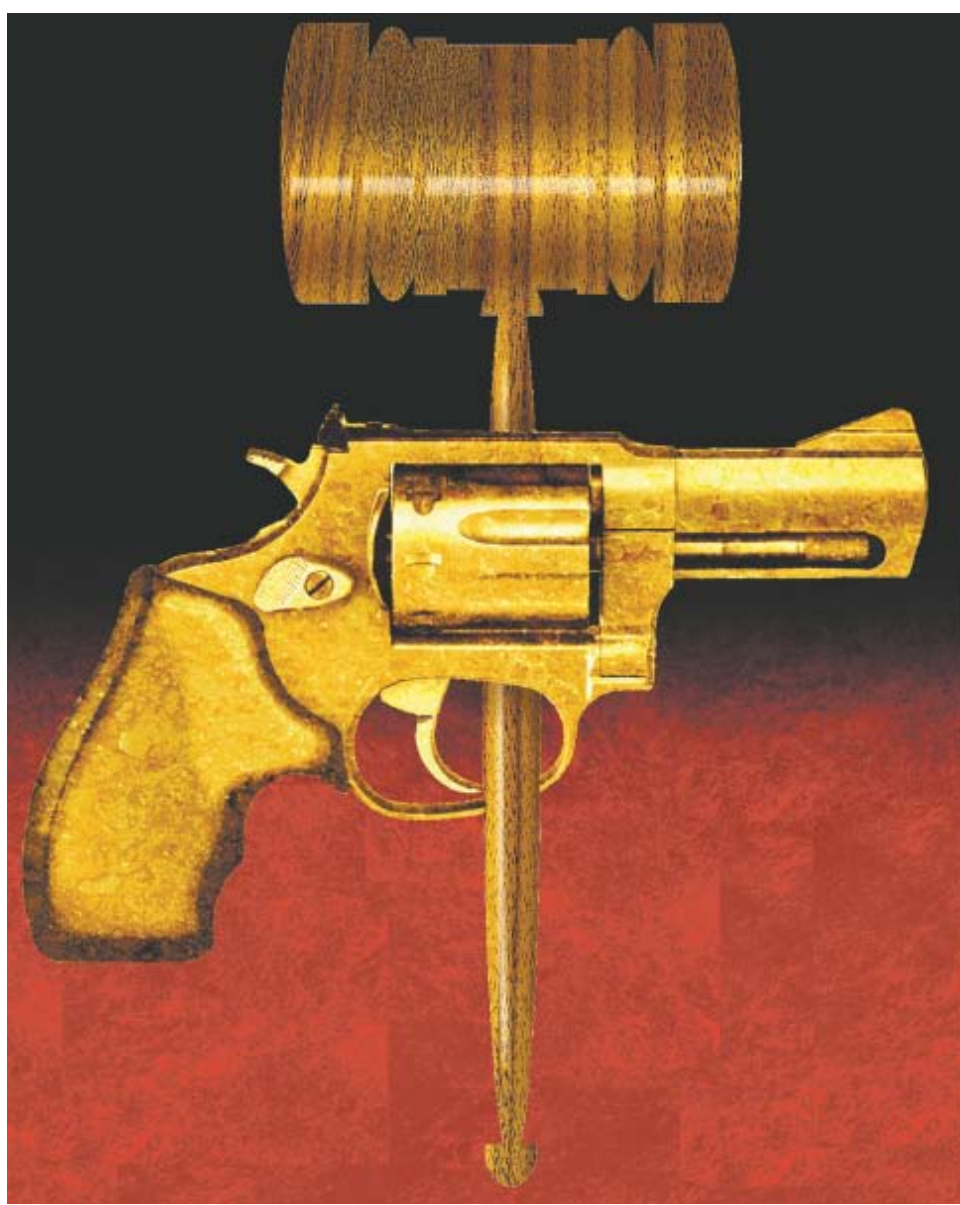


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But that program is regionally based; we go after particular areas."

Project Guardian, according to the attorney general, is a national initiative to comprehensively attack gun violence through the aggressive enforcement of existing gun laws.

"This will be implemented nationwide in

every federal district. We are going to apply pressure with vigor where gun violence is the highest in places like Memphis. Local agencies will be involved, but ATF will be leading this effort. It will involve all federal law enforcement agencies working closely with our state and local colleagues."

According to Mr. Barr, Project Guardian will offer coordinated prosecutions. The Justice Department will team up with state and local law enforcement to target dangerous criminals who use guns, and crackdown on those who evade gun laws and background checks, such as "lie-and-try," "lie-and-buy" and straw purchases. The Justice Department will also coordinate a response to mental health denials to purchase a firearm. The Justice Department will work with state and local authorities to ascertain if there is a mental health response and interdict efforts by those people who obtain guns.

Lastly, the Justice Department and its partners will work toward ensuring the effective use of ATF's Crime Gun Intelligence Centers and maximize modern-intelligence tools and technology.

Mr. Barr stated that the ATF and U.S. attorneys will fight gun crime using the power of federal agencies, federal law and the federal courts.

In my years of covering crime, I've seen a good number of shooting victims while accompanying police officers out on the street. From mob hits to armed robbery and street gang warfare, I've witnessed the carnage that a criminal with an illegal gun can do.

But a legally-owned gun in the right hands can save lives. Cops have told me that crooks are more afraid of armed shopkeepers and average citizens than they are of police officers. Criminals much prefer victims who don't shoot back.

Gun control advocates call for more laws and limits on purchasing firearms. Their true desire, it seems to me, is to totally remove guns from private ownership. Some have, in a moment of rare candor, admitted as much.

I'm against gun control that restricts or denies law-abiding citizens from purchasing and owning guns, and I'm for strict and tough enforcement of laws that prohibit and punish criminals who use guns in the commission of a crime.

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Paul Davis covers crime, espionage and terrorism.

# When online platforms make policy changes

*With online content, the baby must not be thrown out with the bathwater*

By Robert Winterton

When Twitter announced its recent ban on political advertising, the Trump campaign leveled heavy criticism at the platform, suggesting in an official statement that walking away from “hundreds of millions of dollars of potential revenue” was “a dumb decision for their stockholders.” And when Facebook recently rejected a blanket ban on political ads, actor Sacha Baron Cohen made headlines for proclaiming that the platform would have agreed to run ads for the Nazis (something a look at Facebook’s community standards quickly proves wrong).

When platforms make policy changes on political advertising, it tends to cause quite a stir. But it merely means that competing online platforms are experimenting with how to best remove harmful content from their services.

It’s important that Congress continues to allow social media businesses to innovate in this way on content moderation, like with political advertising. That means maintaining the current legal structure that these platforms rely on, including Section 230 of the Communications Decency Act. Changes to that structure risk the unimaginable benefits of future competition and innovation in the name of nixing bad online content.

The national conversation on content moderation is sharply divided. Many have demanded that it be stricter, while others have called for a more relaxed approach. These complaints echo within the halls



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of Congress, too. At a recent House Energy and Commerce hearing on social media, the main criticisms of mainstream content moderation practices were on full display.

Gretchen Peters, executive director of the Alliance to Counter Online Crime, claimed that online platforms are doing

next to nothing to prevent the spread of crime online. On the other hand, Rep. Greg Gianforte, Montana Republican, berated social media representatives for blocking an ad about hunting, claiming that content moderation practices are too heavyhanded.

Dissatisfied parties on both sides

are calling for platforms to be punished through regulation if their demands aren’t met. Perhaps most alarming of all are the cries for Section 230 to be fundamentally changed.

But that’s a really bad idea, because content moderation is far from simple. In reality, it’s infinitely more difficult and nuanced than many legislators and commentators realize. Criminal activity is often difficult to distinguish from legitimate activity, especially online. A picture of a naked minor could be child pornography or just an innocent family photo. Criminals who camouflage their activity

make finding the line even more difficult. A gun case listed at an above-market rate could be a legitimate listing or an illegal black-market gun sale intentionally camouflaged. Without actually buying the gun case, it would be very hard to know which is which.

Despite this hurdle, though, platforms are getting significantly better at moderating content. For instance, the Big Three social media networks — Facebook, Twitter and YouTube — removed more than 5 billion posts and accounts in the last six months of 2018. With progress in AI and more investments in content moderation, the numbers for this year are likely to be even higher. That translates into objective goods like fighting against white supremacist content.

Members of the tech industry have tried to demonstrate how difficult enforcing speech rules on their websites are, but many inside and outside of Congress have refused to listen. During the House Energy and Commerce hearing, Gretchen

Peters said, “If they can keep genitalia off of these platforms, they can keep drugs off these platforms.” She added that Section 230 should be substantially reformed to force platforms to improve, but never specified how.

A reform suggested by fellow hearing panelist Danielle Citron included tacking on a “duty of care” requirement to Section 230. This would force platforms to have “reasonable” content moderation practices if they wish to access the benefits of Section 230. But this rather unclear reform would have devastating effects. Rather than improve processes, requiring “reasonable” content moderation creates an unclear standard and an unpredictable environment for content moderators and online platforms, likely forcing platforms to over-police content so as to avoid costly legal battles.

Through their updated political advertising policies, online platforms have demonstrated they are diligently utilizing the freedom granted in current content moderation law to improve their practices. Yet, according to Ms. Peters and Mr. Baron Cohen, if they don’t reach perfection soon, they should lose their ability to host and moderate user-created content altogether.

By ignoring the enormous efforts already taken by online platforms to filter out the bad stuff, the debate over moderation on social media threatens to undermine the very structure on which current content moderation and responsible social media sites rely. In demanding perfection, Congress will soon make an enemy of a better, well-moderated Internet.

Robert Winterton is the director of communications for NetChoice and a Tech Policy Fellow for Young Voices.

## YOUNG VOICES

# Trump’s new tariffs obstructed by Obama holdovers

Protecting business is too important to be stymied by partisan bureaucrats

By Terry Thomson

President Trump’s promise to level the playing field for international trade is being fulfilled but not without substantial pushback and interference. British Prime Minister Boris Johnson, who is up for re-election, is urging Mr. Trump to lift the billions worth of tariffs he imposed on the European Union in October, particularly the ones on its alcoholic products.

If Mr. Johnson and his fellow EU leaders would drop their tariffs on U.S. bourbon and eliminate the millions they provide in anti-competitive subsidies against the U.S., the president would probably follow suit. Unfortunately, they have taken that possibility off the table — at least for now, until they feel the impact of the new U.S. tariffs for an extended period and have no choice but to negotiate.

Even though the long-range prospect for the president’s tariff strategy is good, its full effect may never be realized, because Washington’s left-wing deep state bureaucrats are determined to undercut it. If the anti-Trump, over-zealous regulatory agenda of these Obama holdovers is not stopped soon, foreign nationals will get another one over on U.S. workers and producers.

Much of the tariff disruption threat is coming from the Alcohol and Tobacco Tax and Trade Bureau (TTB) — a little heard of bureau within the Treasury Department that approves and regulates alcohol labeling in the United States.

TTB’s provisional head administrators, Mary Ryan and Daniel Riordan, despite the president’s order that stipulates they must cut two regulations for every new one created. To stealthily evade this requirement, the bureau is publicizing Notice No. 176, a massive new rule currently on the table, posing it as an effort to lessen the compliance burdens associated with alcohol labeling and advertising. Conservatives see through this sham, though. A letter to President Trump from 17 conservative groups stated, “Although cloaking it as a deregulatory effort, No. 176 would add two and a half times the number of regulations governing the distilled spirits industry.” Those regulations include pages upon pages of costly new mandates from whiskey barrel sizes to relabeling requirements.

TTB’s new rule would increase compliance costs by hundreds of millions of dollars on American alcohol producers. The unprecedented amount of

mandates would prevent much of the president’s tariff price levelling from being realized and greatly reduce U.S. producers’ competitiveness in the domestic and global markets.

While disappointing, this degree of obstruction to the president’s agenda should be expected from TTB. The bureau is a historically left-wing institution. Its leaders have frequently donated money to Democrat causes, including the Hillary Clinton campaign. They employ differing sets of standards based on their desired political outcomes.

Americans for Limited Government pointed out that, in 2017, TTB threatened one company with hefty monetary penalties if it didn’t abide by TTB’s permit requests and regulations. However, it allowed Mercer’s Dairy, a New York-based competitor with major ties to Hillary Clinton, to disregard the TTB rulebook. That’s not regulation; that’s corruption. Needless to say, these bureaucrats are content with their new Notice 176 significantly disrupting the executive branch’s national security trade strategy. Above all else, they are partisan operatives determined to supplant the conservative agenda — regardless of the cost to American businesses.

This level of obstruction should be grounds for Republicans in Congress to call for the Treasury Department to replace the bureau’s current leaders, especially since both are only serving in provisional roles. At least Sen. John Kennedy, Louisiana Republican, for one, has been very vocal about the TTB’s practices. The Financial Services and General Government Appropriations Subcommittee, which he chairs, has passed language condemning TTB’s abuse. Hopefully, more conservative legislators will follow his initiative.

At the very least, TTB’s threat posed to the White House tariffs is deserving of a hearing in Congress. Since Mr. Kennedy has taken this mantle, he should increase the momentum by calling TTB’s leaders to testify before the subcommittee.

Protecting American businesses and workers is too important to be stymied by unelected, partisan bureaucrats. The TTB efforts to interfere with President Trump’s international trade initiatives must be stopped. Congress must resolve this issue, and soon.

Terry Thomson was a former professor of economics for John Brown University for 11 years.



**While disappointing, this degree of obstruction to the president’s agenda should be expected from TTB. The bureau is a historically left-wing institution.**



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## Morici

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their educations and considerable prosperity to progressive institutions and policies — the State University of New York and generously subsidized tuition.

These days, we like to think a better-educated citizenry weighs policy prescription and the performance of incumbents on everything from trade and immigration to health care and education, and aligns with candidates and parties based on an earnest appraisal of what they offer. And the combined wisdom of an engaged electorate will prudently steer our government.

In a Democracy for Realists, political scientists Christopher Achen and Larry Bartels offer significant evidence that thinking is wrongheaded. Instead, voters choose political parties and candidates based on social identities and partisan loyalties and then adjust perceptions of facts on the ground and views on public policy to match party loyalties.

Nearly 90 percent of Republicans are happy with the economy as it is now performing but fewer than 40 percent of Democrats do, and presidential approval ratings through both the Obama and Trump years have been little correlated with fluctuations with broader perceptions of economic conditions.

This is hardly surprising. Few voters have time to understand the machinations of economics and government policy and rely on leaders who share their values to be their guide.

The trick to winning elections consistently is to build a big tribe and then win enough of the 15 million swing voters with very expensive high-tech marketing that profiles individuals through surveys, purchases and web-surfing habits, and then bombard them with surgically targeted social media messaging, videos, direct mail and walk and phone contact for registration, persuasion and turnout.

The really interesting elections occur when presidential candidates steal major

segments of the other party’s tribe — Reagan garnering blue collar union votes, Bill Clinton’s inroads with women and Barack Obama’s outsized success with younger voters and college grads — and sometimes keep them for their party permanently.

To build a tribe in an ethnically diverse, gender role-evolving, post-industrial America, parties can’t clutch to binary divisions like workers vs. management but instead pick big villains that can unite fragmented elements of the electorate.

Mr. Trump characterized undocumented immigrants — most recently the DACAs — as criminals, but the statistical evidence indicates they are not more inclined toward crime. The Obama-Clinton-Warren et al. axis practices identity politics and harpoons white male culture for inequality and injustice.

Candidates and public officials can advocate the most irresponsible policies. For example, failing to accept millions more immigrants will smother our economy. The birth rate of native-born Americans is too low to sustain our labor force and support the elderly.

The Green New Deal would make U.S. cities and homes uninhabitable. By 2030 or even 2040, does anyone honestly believe electric vehicles could be competent and plentiful enough to replace all the petroleum-powered trucks that supply Manhattan and other cities with daily necessities or every gas furnace in America could be replaced by heat pumps?

In the absence of reason, voter frustration encourages new demagogues to oust incumbents.

Virtually all Elizabeth Warren’s “plans” are premised on scapegoats — big banks, business and billionaires.

It’s Latin America with ballots for rifles but self-destructive just the same.

If you don’t like Mr. Trump, wait and see what the next man — or woman — on a white horse does.

Peter Morici is an economist and business professor at the University of Maryland, and a national columnist.