

## Standard online reader survey



**Q: As we pause to celebrate Independence Day, would you say America is moving more in the right direction or wrong direction?**

**RIGHT direction 48%**  
**WRONG direction 52%**

## GUEST EDITORIAL

### First lady shows she cares about children

The first lady may have found her White House calling. Melania Trump recently returned to the border to speak with officials at a U.S. Border Patrol facility in Tucson, Ariz., where she held a roundtable discussion with those on the front lines of the immigration crisis.

"I'm here to support you and give my help, whatever I can," said Mrs. Trump.

It's her second trip to the border, and she seems laser-focused on the issues there affecting children. "She cares about children deeply and when the news started to hit I think she was very concerned and wanted to make sure the kids are being well taken care of," said her spokeswoman Stephanie Grisham.

"She doesn't like to see parents and kids separated," she told The Associated Press.

Melania Trump has not had an easy go of it since becoming first

**Boston Herald**

lady. She and other family members have been the target of late-night talk shows, and social media has been cruel to Melania. Being married to the president of the United States can be daunting to anyone but it is fair to say that her husband has drawn more ire from all sides than most.

We applaud Melania Trump and her efforts to understand the situation on the border and use her position to improve it. She is a smart and accomplished woman and has the unique circumstance of being an immigrant herself.

She is becoming more high-profile in her current role and that can be a powerful thing as we've seen with some of her predecessors.

Border security is important but so is empathy, and this first lady is certainly exhibiting it.



### Centrists must take stand

It's time for the centrists in the Senate to take center stage. As President Trump prepares to name a replacement for retiring Justice Anthony Kennedy, *The Washington Post* issued this challenge: "If the centrists stick together, they can force the selection of a reasonable, mainstream judge in the mold of Mr. Kennedy or Justice Sandra Day O'Connor, who were both appointed by President Ronald Reagan. If the senators fail to use their leverage now, the result will be more politicization of the bench and a more extreme court for a generation."

This is a worthy and winnable goal. Trump has 2-1/2 years left in his term, and blocking all his nominees to the court — even if Democrats regain a majority in the Senate next fall — is totally unrealistic.

But the centrists have a chance to deter a sharp lurch to the right by the court, which could undermine basic safeguards: for women seeking abortions, gay couples yearning to marry, minorities wanting to vote and attend elite colleges. They would also be protecting the credibility of the court itself, which was designed to mitigate swings toward the ideological edges, not amplify them.

The real question is whether the centrists, few as they are, have the fortitude to defy Trump if he picks a justice outside the "reasonable mainstream" model of Kennedy and O'Connor.

The numbers give them some leverage. Republicans control only 51 Senate seats — and John McCain, gravely ill with brain cancer, is unlikely to vote. So if all 49 Democrats stick

together, a very big "if," one Republican defection could doom Trump's choice.

The odds are stacked strongly against the centrists, however. The steady polarization of the last generation has produced something close to a European model in this country: two parties defined by ideological orthodoxy. Moderates in both parties have been severely weakened, especially Republicans, who have long played a critical role in thwarting the more extreme judicial nominations made by GOP presidents.

So far, the only centrist to warn Trump against picking a hardliner is Sen. Susan Collins of Maine. "I would not support a nominee that demonstrated hostility to *Roe v. Wade*, because that would

mean to me that their judicial philosophy did not include respect for established decisions, established law," she said on CNN.

Collins has been pretty lonely in her resistance. Lisa Murkowski of Alaska, the only other pro-choice Republican senator, says she will consider many issues, not just abortion. Two outspoken Trump critics who are not running again, Jeff Flake of Arizona and Bob Corker of Tennessee, remain timidly silent.

The key lies with a handful of Republican centrists, decimated by years of polarization and defeat. Their forebears defied Nixon and Reagan, and helped save the country from Haynsworth, Carswell and Bork. Can Collins and her allies summon the courage to stand up to Trump?

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STEVE & COKIE ROBERTS



### Change what's south of border

One of the insights a foreign correspondent like me gains quickly from history is that, strangely enough, the big problems in foreign policy often have their roots in small places.

It was in little-known Sarajevo that World War I started — and thus, arguably, the Second World War. Later, irrelevant Vietnam was America's nemesis, not the big guys like Russia and China.

Today, although most Americans could not even locate it on a map, it is little Honduras, an understandably modest country, that demands our attention — and threatens us, not with marching boots and guns, but with bare feet and a mental map to El Norte.

If we are ever to dream of beginning to soothe, much less solve, this primary problem of our times, we are going to have to halt the foolish, cruel and utterly useless policies we now impose south of our border. It is way past time for the U.S. to hammer out a humane but tough-minded policy to transform these miserable little Central American states into countries that do not hemorrhage humans.

Let's start with one small example. On the beautiful tourist island of Roatan in the Honduran Bay Islands, a prominent local pastor, Tristan Monterroso, president of the Institute 4 Excellence and sponsor of virtual job fairs, is impassioned beginning to train hundreds of citizens to enter the emerging online marketplace for jobs — right at home. To become, as he puts it, "financially independent freelancers via online job opportunities."

It is not a new idea in the world of development, and it has worked from

Hong Kong to India to Oman. Monterroso estimates that freelancers in Honduras could have access to more than 50,000 online coding jobs weekly. Plus, the Roatan group has an invaluable advantage in having a European co-sponsor in CodersTrust, a Danish firm that provides online platforms for the virtual marketplace.

Since JFK's Alliance for Progress, which was working, Washington has virtually ignored Central America. Oh, Vice President Joe Biden made a pretty decent try in the "Iron Triangle" of Honduras, Guatemala and El Salvador. He visited the area three times in the last

year of the Obama administration and inspired Congress to give \$750 million in aid for reforms — to clean up the police, to increase tax collection, to fight corruption and create opportunities to keep potential emigrants safely at home.

Today Central Americans live with the highest homicide rates in the world, vicious gangs number in the tens of thousands of young men, unemployment is high and the Spanish-heritage "leadership" is almost unbelievably corrupt and cruel.

The tragedy is we KNOW how to develop countries today. There are brilliant, trained developmental thinkers all over the world. A street-smart American administration would study past successes like Chile, Singapore, Oman, Kazakhstan, Botswana and Costa Rica and use those examples to adopt effective policies. Then we might see some true change — and hope — for everyone on the border.

*Georgie Anne Geyer has been a foreign correspondent for more than 40 years.*



GEORGIE ANNE GEYER

## THE SCOOP

JAMES CLARK



### Nothing says 4th like crying babies

When it comes to Fourth of July baby pageants, there are always several constants.

For starters, you can count on it being blisteringly hot. If spectators aren't fanning themselves with some sort of flat object, it shouldn't be considered an official baby show.

You can also count on there being plenty of crying, screaming and foot stomping. And that's just from me.

Joking aside, baby pageants have become one of my favorite Fourth of July traditions. I've covered the baby show in downtown McMinnville and I've had the pleasure of traveling as far away as Midway to see babies paraded on stage in front of a panel of judges.

Most recently, I've settled into the routine of taking pictures of the Fourth of July baby show in Morrison, an event unparalleled for its level of cuteness. Winning the baby show in Morrison is a springboard to much larger stages, like the baby show at the Warren County A&L Fair.

For all the volunteer service I've done over the years, I'm thankful to have never been asked to judge a baby show. It's a great way to make one family, the winning family, as happy as an ice cream cone. It's also a way to make all the other families, the ones without a first-place trophy, madder than a hornet.

If there's one truth we hold to be self-evident in America, it's not that all men are created equal. I'm convinced that belief is pretty much a fallacy. The truth we hold to be self-evident is that our baby is the cutest of them all.

I know this as a proud father of two boys who, it should be noted, were the two most handsome babies in Warren County. I know this because everywhere we went people would say, "My, just look at that baby! He's so adorable."

What I didn't realize at the time is this is what people say about all babies, not just mine. It's convenient small talk and almost an obligation of sorts. If you see someone with a baby, it's your civic duty to walk up and say, "Just look ... how cute!"

So it was with perhaps misguided optimism that we viewed our first entry into a baby show as a foregone conclusion. It wasn't a matter of if we would win first place. The only questions were how many offers we'd receive for baby commercials and if we'd be willing to fly to Hollywood on a regular basis.

Unfortunately, it's with a sad heart, I'm here to report some 17 years later that we did not win the baby show, but at no fault of our own. It was the fault of those lousy judges, who had clearly been bribed or were part of some even greater level of corruption to prevent deserving babies from winning blue ribbons.

The reason I mention all this now is to help me work through the emotional trauma that still lingers. Perhaps some day that pain will recede.

That's why I say the best way to view a baby show is as an innocent bystander with no stake in the outcome. I'd say the worst way to view one would be as a judge.

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