

## Election Time: CA-Governor

Michael Sean Winters | Oct. 6, 2010 | Distinctly Catholic

The California gubernatorial contest did not interest me at first.

While examining the California Senate race, I asked why such a large state produced two lousy candidates, but I know why this large state produced such lousy choices for the Governor's race: The job is impossible.

If Arnold the Terminator can't fix Sacramento, it probably can't be fixed.

So, the race appeared boring both in its content and in its outcome and the candidates attracted to the prospect were predictably boring. The Democrats nominated an old government hand and former Governor, Jerry Brown, and the Republicans nominated a zillionaire CEO, Meg Whitman, who has poured more than \$100 million of her own money into the race.

What to say about Jerry Brown?

He entered the Jesuit novitiate as a young man in the 1950s, when his father served as Governor of the state. He left the Jesuits, studied Classics at Berkley and got a law degree from Yale. He was first elected governor of the great state of California in 1974, replacing the man who had beat his Dad in 1966, Ronald Reagan. He served two terms. He went on to be a reasonably successful mayor of Oakland, and is currently the state's Attorney General.

Since leaving the Jesuits, you might say, his life has been spent in politics and, in a year when politicians are about as popular as the plague, it is amazing he even has a chance.

The Republicans nominated E-Bay zillionaire Meg Whitman.

She is undoubtedly a competent person and, unlike her fellow GOPer, Carly Fiorina, who is running for the Senate, there is at least something resembling an argument that someone with experience as a CEO has a skill set that might work well in running a state government. Of course, a boss in the private sector does not have to deal with independently elected representatives of the people, as a governor does, so I don't buy the argument really. As Arnold can tell her, state legislators don't take orders, they take votes, and as long as California is required to have 2/3 majorities on budgetary issues, the state's finances are going to be a nightmare.

So, the race appeared entirely boring ? until the world was introduced to Nicandra Diaz Santillan, who was, until last year, Ms. Whitman's maid.

Whitman fired Santillan in 2009 when, she claims, she "discovered" that Diaz Santillan did not have the legal right to work in the United States. Ms. Diaz Santillan was, in the parlance of the GOP, an "illegal alien." The other night, in a debate with Brown, Whitman said that she considered Diaz Santillan like a member of the family and she was heart-broken about having to let her go. [Ms. Diaz Santillan says](#) [1]she was never treated like a family member.

Quick quiz: What is more offensive really?

1. Someone works for you for many years, and you find out that they are in a legal quandary and you happen to be a zillionaire and you do nothing to help them;
2. Someone works for you for many years and you are completely clueless about the circumstance of their lives;
3. When this longtime employee's legal status is "discovered," undoubtedly by those beginning to prep you for a political campaign, you blame the employee for stealing the mail that would have indicated their legal status;
4. You then claim the person was like family, even though that familial sensibility did not cause you to help them;
5. All of the Above.

Ms. Whitman may have been clueless about her maid's legal status (although I doubt it) but what is the excuse for the catalogue of moral callousness that her behavior and flailing explanations exhibit? Not only wouldn't I want Whitman for my governor, I wouldn't want her for my neighbor!

Former Gov. Brown appears to be [pulling away](#) [2] since the world learned about Ms. Diaz Santillan, and is likely to reclaim the Governor's mansion. (Will he date Linda Rondstadt again?)

Winning this race is a misfortune I would not wish on anyone, but if he wants it, he can have it. As for Ms. Whitman, don't you wish she had taken that \$100+ million and spent it in Haiti?

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[2] [http://www.realclearpolitics.com/epolls/2010/governor/ca/california\\_governor\\_whitman\\_vs\\_brown-1113.html](http://www.realclearpolitics.com/epolls/2010/governor/ca/california_governor_whitman_vs_brown-1113.html)