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by Michael Sean Winters

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The Democratic Party's instincts for self-destruction continue. The Democratic Congressional Campaign Committee, which tries to get Democrats elected to the House of Representatives, and to which members pay dues, [is not endorsing incumbent Rep. Dan Lipinski of Illinois](#). The pro-life congressman has been targeted by NARAL Pro-Choice America and other abortion rights' groups for years, but the Democratic Congressional Campaign Committee has always followed its custom of endorsing incumbents. There are some inside the Beltway Dems who are determined to make the Democrats the party of late-term abortions and transgender bathrooms, which is the recipe for another Trump victory. These groups are as rigid in their ideology as is the National Rifle Association and both hollow out the center of American politics, yielding disastrous consequences.

Speaking of the NRA, kudos to my friend Bishop Thomas Tobin of Providence for [calling them out](#) for their opposition to common sense safety measures. I disagree with the bishop slightly: I do want to take away their guns if those guns are assault rifles that no one needs unless they are in the military. More on this tomorrow.

[At The New York Times](#), Noam Scheiber and Ken Vogel write about the rich folk trying to destroy unions and who have been pushing the bogus arguments made in the *Janus v. AFSCME* case at yesterday's oral arguments. I am generally not inclined to the modern view that requires us to reduce all political issues to issues of power, but this case is not about law, it is about power, and only the willfully blind fail to see it.

[At Vox](#), a report on the Trump administration's attempt to gut the Affordable Care Act via regulatory reform and executive orders. When people do not have access to health care, many of them die when they needn't have done so. Is the pro-life caucus up in arms? No. They are still so excited that President Trump spoke at their March via video hookup. Pathetic.

[At the always important Wonkblog](#), Andrew Van Dam looks at the real reasons that the number of Americans working has declined in the last two decades. Surprise: It has nothing to do with immigration, Obamacare or food stamps. The principal culprits were automation and bringing China into the World Trade Organization.

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Two articles on the late Rev. Billy Graham. [At Religion News Service](#), Mark Silk looks at how Graham changed the religious landscape such that evangelicalism displaced mainline Protestantism as the default non-RC face of Christianity in U.S. culture. And, [at Huff Post](#), Lyz Lenz looks at how Graham's version of Christianity involved baptizing a not particularly Christian version of Americanism.

I got an email from the notorious Napa Institute, which is not really a think tank, more of a chance for rich folk to rub elbows with conservative bishops and academics. They encourage people to attend the annual Rector's Dinner at "one of our strategic partners, the Pontifical North American College." This raises a question for Fr. Rector: Why is this nefarious group that is filled with people who directly or indirectly attack the pope a "strategic partner" with your seminary? I understand the need to fundraise, but there comes a point at which the Catholic integrity of our institutions is called in to doubt from such associations. What's next? Making the Acton Institute a "strategic partner"?

Upcoming Events

The world is a book, and those who do not travel read only a page.
-St. Augustine-

26th Annual Rectors Dinner

One of our strategic partners, the Pontifical North American College is hosting two inspirational events this April: the Annual Rector's Dinner in Rome on April 12, and a three-night trip to Tuscany following the dinner. This year the most Reverend Joseph Augustine Di Noia and Mrs. Judy Barrett will be honored with the Rector's Award. After the dinner enjoy beautiful historic churches, a wine tasting, and guided tours through iconic Tuscan towns.

Screenshot from the email referenced above

[Michael Sean Winters covers the nexus of religion and politics for NCR.]

Editor's note: Don't miss out on Michael Sean Winters' latest: [Sign up to receive free newsletters](#), and we'll notify you when he publishes new [Distinctly Catholic](#) columns.