



Standard-Examiner

Standard Deviations: When you thought the immigration issue couldn't get worse

June 23, 2018

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If there's one thing I've learned in nearly three decades of writing opinion pieces for the Standard-Examiner, it's that no situation is so utterly, hopelessly and *totally* messed up that a certain half-witted columnist can't make it much worse by chiming in on the subject.

I believe I've proven it time and again on all manner of hot-button issues. Race. Guns. Same-sex marriage. Health care. Religion.

For example:

- Remember the time I suggested we solve the debates on abortion and guns by tying the two issues together — either make them both legal or both illegal?
- How about when I compared the literal white sheets worn by members of the KKK to the figurative blankets a local Black Lives Matter spokeswoman was tossing over whites?
- Ooh, or the time I predicted that lifting the ban on caffeinated soft drinks at Brigham Young University would lead to same-sex marriage, women holding the priesthood, and an end to Sunday's three-hour block of church meetings?

Good, good literary times.

But now? it's time to focus my powers of observation on the shiny object of immigration.

Hang onto your officially licensed "Make America Great Again" ballcaps, everyone. The second-dimmest bulb on the Christmas tree is about to wade hip-deep into the immigration quagmire.

First things first — and I can't even believe this has to be said — but the **OVERWHELMING MAJORITY** of immigrants are good, honest people who love their families and just want to live in peace. Whether they arrived legally or illegally, they didn't come here to rape our women, murder our children and rob us blind.

They're not even here to take our jobs. Unless, of course, you're counting the menial, low-paying ones to which we're unwilling to stoop.

Rather, they're exactly like the rest of us immigrants from way back: All they want is a better life in America.

The image President Donald Trump is peddling of scary immigrants intent on doing our country harm is — like much of what he says — a flat-out lie.

This is not to say immigrants don't commit crimes. But compared to native-born Americans, immigrants are actually statistically "safer." A recent Cato Institute study, using 2015 crime statistics in Texas, found that people who entered the country illegally are 25 percent less likely to be convicted of homicide, 11.5 percent less likely to be convicted of sexual assault, and 79 percent less likely to be convicted of larceny.

Which would make sense. Because if I'm living someplace illegally, I'd want to keep a low profile. The last thing I'd be looking for is to draw the attention of law enforcement.

It's patently ridiculous to imply that immigrants are somehow more dangerous than the rest of us and that we need walls and other draconian measures to keep them out. It's like insisting Capricorns are more dangerous than the other astrological signs of the zodiac.

Or that, say, Geminis are dumber than a box of rocks.

Sure, you can make such claims, but without factual evidence to back them up, it's little more than a bunch of hot air.

This past week, Trump held an event with about a dozen "angel families" — those who report losing loved ones at the hands of people who came here illegally. Such deaths are tragic, but they're hardly germane to the issue of immigration.

Besides, if you want to start comparing tragedies, how about the 58 people killed in Las Vegas? Or the 49 killed in Orlando, Florida? Or the 32 in Blacksburg, Virginia; 27 in Newtown, Connecticut; 26 in Sutherland Springs, Texas; 17 in Parkland, Florida; 14 in San Bernardino, California; and 13 each in Binghamton, New York, and Fort Hood, Texas?

Each year we lose countless Americans to gun deaths, but conservatives wouldn't dream of tightening restrictions on firearms. And yet every time an undocumented immigrant commits a crime, these same people call for walls and detention facilities and tough talk against those who aren't like us.

Listen, Mr. President, if I don't get to blame easy access to guns for killing 20 young children at an elementary school, you don't get to blame easy access to our borders for killing a young adult in a tragic DUI crash.

Trump and his allies continue to use fear and anger to further their political agenda. And I can't believe so many Americans are falling for it.

Seriously, what happened to us? We used to be a nation of compassionate people. People who, at least on the surface, invited the world to give us her tired and/or poor huddled masses.

Now, thanks to the example of a commander-in-chief who describes other countries as “s---holes,” we’ve become a nation of “a--holes.”

Ah, but then, what did we expect when we elected Donald Trump?

After all, he is a Gemini.