



Opinions and Facts

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As was stated in the Daily Press editorial on April 20, my letter seems appropo. On April 14, one of the more prolific writers to the Opinion page, (4-5 times a month), went again on a rant against liberals. Besides expressing his opinion, which he is entitled to do, he tried to qualify his points by putting out “facts.” He wrote, “In Florida, 40 percent of all murder convictions were criminal aliens. In Los Angeles, 95 percent of outstanding warrants for homicide were for illegal aliens.” These, so-called “facts” did not seem accurate to me, so I did some research.

Regarding the Florida “fact,” the newsletter of Rep. Matt Gaetz, R-Fla., cites U.S. Sentencing Commission findings for 2014. ... The commission reported 75 people were sentenced for murder: 64 of them were U.S. citizens and 11 noncitizen. Another, more detailed table from the commission showed that of the 75 people sentenced, 9 of them, or 12 percent, were an “illegal alien.” Further, a July 2017 Cato Institute post by immigration policy analyst Alex Nowrasteh pointed out flaws in the FoxNews.com article used by Gaetz’s office to back his claim.

Regarding the Los Angeles “fact,” this figure came from Heather Mac Donald’s testimony before the House Judiciary Subcommittee on Immigration, Border Security, and Claims. It cannot be substantiated. The Center for Immigration Studies, where MacDonald wrote her editorial, hasn’t responded. Even if the statistic is accurate, however, it is subject to a variety of interpretations. For example, illegal aliens might be disproportionately represented by outstanding homicide warrants in Los Angeles because they are more likely to flee the jurisdiction before their cases are adjudicated than legal residents are (not necessarily because they commit a far greater share of the homicides).

Perhaps in the future writers to the Opinion Page should do just that, express their opinion, and leave questionable “facts” out of their letters.