

June 2019

The “S” Word

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For the past two years California, and to a lesser extent Oregon and Washington, have been at war with the federal government. Most of us don't realize it, but the criminal-in-chief that sits in the White House has been waging war on the three states that hug the Pacific Coast. Many of his policies and pronouncements, while embarrassing and detrimental to the country as a whole, have been directed expressly at us in the West.

California Attorney General Xavier Becerra has filed fifty lawsuits¹ against the Trump administration since 2017. The lawsuits range from fighting the diversion of emergency dollars to fund a border wall and environmental protection rollbacks, as well as contesting the dismantling of the Affordable Care Act and banning transgender people from the military.

Washington Attorney General Bob Ferguson has also filed thirty-four lawsuits against the administration,² including one protesting the “gag rule” that impacts federal funding for reproductive healthcare and family planning services. Washington was instrumental in filing the lawsuit against the federal government for the administration's policy of separating children from parents crossing the border illegally, one of the most inhumane and draconian policies enacted in the last two hundred years.

Oregon has filed at least sixteen lawsuits against the Trump administration including suits challenging the crackdown on sanctuary cities, the elimination of a law that makes it easier for young immigrants to stay in the country, the travel ban and efforts to repeal the Affordable Care Act. In March 2019, Oregon led a national lawsuit against the Trump administration over a new "gag rule" that prevents family planning clinics from referring patients for an abortion.³

The record is impressive. The three West Coast States have been involved in almost one-hundred lawsuits against the excesses of the Trump administration.

The feeling of enmity is mutual. In his diarrheal tweets Trump loves bashing California--its “ridiculous” sanctuary cities, its “gross mismanagement” of its forests, even the “disgusting” streets of San Francisco. He also enjoys slagging California liberals, like House Intelligence Committee Chair “Liddle” Adam Schiff, House Financial Services Committee Chair “Low IQ” Maxine Waters, and House Speaker Nancy Pelosi, who “has behaved so irrationally & gone so far to the left that she has now officially become a Radical Democrat.”⁴

He has spouted his dislike of California and the liberal climate of our three states repeatedly in the past two years, and he has attempted to follow-up with legislation specifically aimed at California. After the devastating CAMP fire of November, 2018, he attempted to withhold FEMA funding for disaster relief for the victims, falsely claiming that “poor forest management” by the California Department of Forestry was responsible for the fire. On May 16, 2019, he pulled \$1 billion in funding for the high-speed rail project between Los Angeles and the Bay Area. Granted, the rail-line has been problem-plagued and way behind schedule, but I can’t help but think that Trump’s withdrawing the billion is motivated by malice.

Despite his loathing for the West Coast, the three states are thriving.⁵ Yes, we have lots of problems, especially in California, with sky-high housing costs and attendant homelessness. Our taxes are high, and we don’t necessarily get that much bang for our tax dollars, but we outperform the rest of the country, and are possibly the envy of the world.

Sacramento is projecting a \$24.1 billion surplus this year. Part of the surplus will be used to improve healthcare funding and expand the number of people eligible for state funded medical care. Governor Newsome also plans on expanding early childhood education.⁶

Contrast this to what we see in other parts of the country—the new push in the Deep South and Midwest to deny women their Civil Rights, as well as their Reproductive Rights – more denial of medical care to the underclass and declining state revenues. The Trump administration is working to undermine one of the pillars of ACA, no discrimination for “pre-existing conditions,” while the three Pacific Coast States are working to expand medical coverage.⁷ Welcome to the tax-cutting Welfare to the Rich State.

Of course, there’s going to be tension between California and the rest of the country. Are we surprised?

When I look at the antagonistic postures between the West Coast and the rest of the country, I feel that it is time, perhaps, to mention the “S” word—Secession. Perhaps, it is time for Washington, Oregon and California to form our own country—we can call it Cascadia. The United States has gotten so large and so polarized that it may be time to break up the country into smaller, more manageable political units, and one natural unit is our three states.

We feed more money into the federal coffers than we’ll ever get in return. We’re subsidizing states like Alabama and Kansas who are the beneficiaries of our largesse. Yet these states continue to pass ever restrictively strict legislation – rollback of abortion and reproductive rights, voter restrictions, etc. I feel my federal tax dollars are being fed down a rat hole to subsidize everything I’m against. I ask, why don’t we cut the apron strings tying us to a dysfunctional government in Washington DC, and go it alone?

We are well-positioned to become a self-governing nation, free from the craziness coming out of Washington DC. California alone has the fifth largest economy in the world, and when added to Oregon and Washington I suspect we would raise to the fourth largest economy. Our three economies are well balanced between agriculture, aerospace, high-tech and other

industries. Of the six largest university research institutions in the United States, four of them are in California (Stanford, UC Berkeley, UCLA and UC San Diego).⁸

When I mention secession, I'm not talking about the type of secession we had with the Old South in 1860 and '61— for that way lies civil war. I'm talking about a negotiated “divorce” from the United States ala Brexit, but handled much better. We can call it “Calexit” or “Cascadiaexit.” We would still maintain close ties with the other forty-seven states, but we would be our own nation, exempt from the capricious whimsy of our current crop of national leaders. We can set our own immigration and healthcare standards. We can work without federal interference to work at combating global climate change.

Let's face it; the rest of the country hates us. How many cracks have you heard about “Californication” or “California, the land of fruits and nuts?” Most of Red State American wants no part of us. And, truth be told, I'm not real fond of Red State America.

We've been “married” to the US for almost 170 years. I think the marriage has gone stale, and it is time for some changes. Like any marriage gone bad I say it's high time we negotiate a divorce — amicable and fair, hopefully; but a divorce nonetheless.

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