

## Women of the world, take over

BY KATHRYN JEAN LOPEZ

When I was editor of National Review Online, I had a rule: Never post pictures of Nancy Pelosi or Hillary Clinton looking bad. I'm not a fan of their politics, but most of us have our moments when we don't look our best and wouldn't want it captured on camera. Cheap shots aren't winning moves.

Similarly, Donald Trump and JD Vance need to establish some rules about Kamala Harris. Making fun of her past verbal gaffes are cheap shots. Remember when Republican Rick Lazio walked over to Hillary Clinton's podium during a 2000 debate in Clinton's run for the Senate, and it didn't go well for him? He looked like a bully. And for all our faults, most of us recoil at bullies — especially, I'd like to think, men bullying women.

Trump also needs to be self-aware. The "Me-Too" moment is still in our cultural memory, even with the short attention spans our phones have imposed on us. We know Trump's history. Even if everything about him on the cover of the New York Post over the years hasn't been true, we know enough of it is. Unfortunately, there is video evidence. An awful comment he made to Megyn Kelly during a primary debate and a Billy Bush interview come to mind, for starters. (If you don't know, do yourself a favor and don't look it up.)

It's not breaking news that abortion is going to be a major motivating factor in this election. Maybe it's because I'm in New York, but I see young girls looking up to Harris. They don't really care about politics or policy, but they see someone who looks like them, and there is something comforting about that. I have no polling to base this on, but I think women who have had abortions are going to vote for her. She's one fewer person who seems to be judging what they did.

Pro-lifers are seen as judgmental, I get it. I'm sorry if I have contributed to that stereotype.

If Trump and Vance want to win, they should rely on women to make the case for voting for them. The simple fact that they are men is a liability if the top-ticket opponent is a woman. Have rallies where they take a bit of a backseat and let women share their experiences.

Eleanor McCullen comes to mind. She was a plaintiff in a Supreme Court case involving buffer zones outside abortion clinics. She's a beautiful, grandmotherly figure who smiles and says, "Good morning" and carries a sign offering "hope, help, love." She's often told by women that she provided what they longed for — a way out of the abortion appointment. (The opportunities for such encounters are dwindling because abortion pills are more readily available to take in the privacy of one's home, leaving women even more alone and isolated when they terminate a pregnancy.)

Everywhere I go, I encounter people sick of politics and politicians. A progressive woman in New York told me the other day how relieved she was to watch the Olympics and pay attention to something other than the election.

I've always encouraged men to not be shy about talking about abortion, as an act of chivalry. But right now, women need to be leading the discussion. The Republicans were wrong to decide that leaving abortion to the states is the way to go, but they were on the right track that a different approach is needed. If Harris is the Democratic nominee, the ways of Trump, in particular, are not going to cut it.

Perhaps it is a honeymoon period, but Kamala Harris is resonating with people who don't usually care about politics. Even if she never even said a word on the campaign trail, that would be the case. If Republicans want to win, attacking her is not a winning strategy. They need to give the microphone over to women who can convey something tender and powerful. Vance tells a redemption story, but his mother was the star of his convention speech.

Enough with the ugliness of politics. There's a country full of women with stories to tell and messages we need to hear. These early days are critical for changing the feel of the Trump campaign. Even if they don't win, they would be making a life-saving contribution to a culture desperate for hope.

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### Letters to the Editor

#### Support for Empowering Girls Event appreciated

To the Editor:

The Auburn Rotary Club wishes to express our heartfelt gratitude to the Northeastern Center, Bowen Center and The School Care Team for their invaluable support and participation in The Auburn Rotary Club's first annual Empowering Girls Event.

Held on Saturday, July 27, 2024, this event was organized for middle school girls in DeKalb County with the goal of teaching them essential coping skills, fostering healthy friendships, promoting social media safety, and more. The girls had a great time engaging in group activities, crafts, and enjoying delicious food.

The success of this event would not have been possible without the dedication and expertise of the Northeastern Center, Bowen Center, and The School Care Team and numerous volunteers and contributors. Their contributions helped create a positive and impactful experience for all the participants.

We are grateful for the continued support from these organizations and look forward to collaborating on future events that empower and uplift our community's youth.

Lara Teague

The Auburn Rotary Club

#### Thoughts on assassination attempt and school board elections

To the Editor:

I would like to offer my opinion on the attempted assassination of former President Donald Trump and further comments on school board elections.

It is my contention the Biden/Harris administration, Democrat leadership, news media allies and Secret Service senior leadership created an environment encouraging the assassination attempt.

Democrat leadership and news media allies caricatured Trump as an aspiring, racist dictator and an existential threat to democracy

through a constant barrage of fake news.

The Charlottesville "Unite the Right" rally is one example from many.

This rally involved the proposed removal of a monument of Confederate General Robert E. Lee.

The media reported Trump claimed white supremacists at the rally were 'very fine people'.

Trump did not say this. He said there were very fine people on both sides.

There were two sides: those who wanted to retain the monument and those who wanted to remove it.

Some individuals wanted to retain the monument for historical and sentimental reasons. These are examples of 'very fine people'.

Unfortunately, there were white supremacists that wanted to retain the monument, too.

The media claimed Trump called white supremacists 'very fine people' to bolster their narrative that Trump is the American Hitler.

Snopes recently posted an article fact-checking the media's claim and declared it false. It was seven years late but serves to expose media deceit.

Additionally, woke Secret Service senior leadership signaled the opportunity for assassination through understaffing, diminutive DEI hires and lack of critical resources.

I suspect Thomas Matthew Crooks was a modern-day Walter Mitty, fantasizing about winning societal acceptance and becoming a hero by assassinating Trump, the Adolf Hitler of Blue-Anon imaginations.

Hatred expresses itself in hateful words which leads to hateful actions, particularly murder.

There is no shortage of angry, hateful leftist Democrats who wish Crooks had succeeded.

On the matter of school board elections, it is reasonable for voters to expect candidates to publicly disclose their positions on racial, sexual and gender related matters. I intend to vote for transparent conservative candidates.

Do candidates believe males identifying as females should be permitted to participate in

women sports or use women restrooms and locker rooms? Do they believe teachers and students should be required to use preferred gender pronouns? Do they believe woke teachers and counselors should be permitted to introduce troubled students with body dysphoria to the possibility they may be nonbinary? Do they believe parents should be denied knowledge that their child is struggling with body dysphoria? Do they believe prurient content should be permitted in classrooms and libraries? Do they believe comprehensive sex education materials introducing students to every manner of sexual depravity should be used in classrooms? Do they acknowledge instruction of the child in relation to faith and morals (including sexuality) belongs to parents and church, and not the government?

I suspect a few current board members hold woke positions on race, sex and gender.

Others may be conservative, but it doesn't affect their representation. Perhaps they fear confrontation with activist educators, teacher unions, parents, advocacy groups and community members.

ENSC candidates John Klaassen and Joel Lash discussed their positions with me. I am convinced they will not participate in perpetuating harmful racial, sexual and gender ideologies.

ENSC superintendent Teresa Gremaux apparently holds a view of Title IX like the Biden/Harris administration and Democrat leadership. Her advocacy led to gender-related controversies at Manchester Community Schools.

I am concerned inadequate vetting introduced the possibility of similar activism at ENSC.

Board members across America need to be willing and prepared to resist activist superintendents, teachers and federal agencies amidst threats of lawfare and accusations of bigotry.

A more detailed version of this article is available on my blog at [christiannewsjunkie.com](http://christiannewsjunkie.com) (no hyphens).

Robert Sparkman  
Rome City

### What Others Say

#### Mental health resources in schools

"He was bullied almost every day. He was just an outcast."

That observation by a former classmate of the 20-year-old man shot and killed by Secret Service agents after attempting to assassinate Donald Trump should have quelled all the loose talk spewed by the former president's supporters to persuade voters that the tragic incident was politically motivated.

Profiles of Thomas Matthew Crooks thus far instead resemble those of other young mass shooters going as far back as the 1999 murders of 12 students and a teacher at Columbine High School in Colorado. Since 1980, the median age of a mass shooter in this country has dropped from 39 years old to 22. Most mass shooters of any age are also non-Hispanic white men.

Could Crooks have wanted to leave life in a blaze of glory? A Secret Service sharpshooter fatally shot him within moments after he wounded Trump and shot three other men, one of whom died.

The lack of evidence leading to a specific motive for Crooks may leave that question unanswered forever, but that hasn't stopped unsubstantiated accusations that he was stirred to action by anti-Trump comments made by

President Joe Biden and other Democrats. It's true that Crooks donated \$15 to a Democratic organization on the day Biden was inaugurated in 2021, but later that year he registered to vote as a Republican.

While the search for Crooks' motivation continues, we should return to a topic that, like the need for better gun laws, our nation has yet to adequately address. America's overburdened, underfunded mental health system still lacks enough resources to both help people before they become mass shooters and address the neglected needs of the general population.

Our high schools, in particular, where students spend as much as seven hours a day or more, need trained staff members who can provide appropriate counseling before a student hurts themselves or others.

"He sat by himself, didn't talk to anyone, didn't even try to make conversation," said another classmate of Crooks. "He was an odd kid, but nothing about him seemed dangerous." Figuring out which "odd kid" needs help requires more guidance counselors and advanced mental health professionals at our schools. Instead, many school boards have reduced those positions to save money.

The American School

Counselor Association recommends at least one counselor for every 250 students, but only Vermont (186) and New Hampshire (208) meet those criteria. Both Pennsylvania (353) and New Jersey (337) fall under the national average of 444 students per counselor, but their schools also fail to meet the ASCA standard.

That means even when an overburdened school counselor notices a student has issues beyond bad grades or choosing a college, the demands of assisting dozens of other students may give them little time to intervene effectively. Even if time isn't an issue, most guidance counselors are not specifically trained to help a student who exhibits behavior that may indicate they might commit a violent act.

The National Association of School Psychologists recommends schools have one psychologist on-site for every 500 students, but the national average is only one psychologist for every 1,127 students. In Pennsylvania, the average is one school psychologist for every 1,022 students. New Jersey averages one psychologist for every 663 students, but that doesn't meet the NASP standard, either.

Most students who need help don't become a danger to others, but many harm themselves, and

some die by suicide. Students' mental health was further impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic, which closed schools, limited children's interaction with peers, and increased their time on social media sites. U.S. Surgeon General Vivek Murthy declared a mental health crisis among children in 2021 and issued another warning last year about social media's adverse impact on young people.

School districts need more resources to intervene when they recognize a student needs mental health assistance. One avenue may be funding provided through a federal grant program that is part of the Bipartisan Safer Communities Act signed into law last year by President Biden. It includes \$1 billion to be competitively awarded to school districts implementing programs to "prevent and respond to acts of bullying, violence, and hate."

Urgency, however, should also spur state and local governments and school boards to act beyond stringent security measures.

Schools not only need teachers, administrators, and support staff, they also need enough guidance counselors and mental health professionals on-site to help prevent a school from becoming the scene of an avoidable calamity.

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