

Caleb Bailey

Maryland man is being punished for Trump support

By Stephen Moore

You've probably never heard of Caleb Bailey, but he is a political prisoner who has been locked behind bars for almost 10 years, with five more years on his sentence. His conviction and long prison sentence are a travesty and a miscarriage of justice that should be immediately rectified.

Anyone who has publicly supported President Trump should cringe when hearing the facts of his case.

In Mr. Bailey's state of residence, Maryland, violent rapists, armed robbers and kidnapers have received shorter prison sentences. Yet Caleb Bailey is not violent. He has never in his life committed a violent act. Not once.

So why is he in prison serving a 16-year, eight-month term?

His crime: In April 2016, Mr. Bailey and his father were elected as Trump delegates to the Republican National Convention from Maryland. Maryland is, of course, one of America's most politically liberal and Trump-hostile states.

On May 5, 2016, and just seven days after Mr. Bailey's name appeared in local media for being chosen as a Trump delegate, Mr. Bailey's home was raided by a squad of 42(1) heavily armed agents from the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives. They presented a search warrant and then occupied and ransacked his home for more than eight hours.

It didn't help Mr. Bailey's cause that he had posted Trump campaign signs in his front yard and had Trump bumper stickers.

After conducting their arguably illegal search and seizure that violated Mr. Bailey's Fourth Amendment rights, the agents seized and hauled away in three large trucks nearly \$200,000 of his private property, most of which were items not on the search warrant.

Among the many outrages of this case is that much of his life's savings, including valuable coins, were never returned to him. They mysteriously disappeared.

Mr. Bailey was charged with illegal possession of several firearms (he was a gun collector), including 37-millimeter safety flare launchers, which used to be sold over the counter at Walmart and sporting goods stores. None of the guns was ever used in the commission of any crime.

They also found in their illegal search a stack of old DVDs containing child pornography. Mr. Bailey informed the agents that the videos had been sent to him unsolicited in the mail. There was zero evidence that he was a distributor, and an electronic expert testified that the material was dormant.

As incriminating evidence that the feds were out to get him, Mr. Bailey was handcuffed and sent to a maximum security jail in Baltimore, even though agents on the scene had told Mr. Bailey and his father that his offenses were so minor that he deserved to be sent to a "low" security jail. He was denied bail.

Before his trial, the prosecutors told Mr. Bailey's attorney that they would ask for an outrageous sentence of life in prison unless he took a plea bargain. With this harrowing prospect of decades in prison, he took a plea deal.

The typical sentence for illegal gun ownership was zero to 10 years. The prosecutors recommended 10 years for each infraction. Again, none of these guns was ever used in the commission of a crime because Mr. Bailey never committed any crime.

Lawyers who have looked into the case say that, for a first-time offender, the typical punishment for these offenses would have been probation or less than a year in jail, not 16 years.

Mr. Bailey has already served 10 years, so even if you believe every allegation is true, he has served more than his time for his crimes. Prison officials describe his behavior while behind bars as "exemplary." He has declared remorse for his actions.

In a letter to Mr. Trump, Tony Covington, a tough-on-crime Maryland state's attorney, wrote that in his entire career, "I have never offered an opinion or recommendation on the commutation of someone's sentence. I do so now because I believe that justice can best be served by granting Mr. Bailey's [pardon] request."

The Washington Post and others have accused Mr. Trump of abusing his pardon powers to gain freedom for his political supporters. They have the story upside down. In too many of these cases, the men and women who have been granted clemency were unjustly incarcerated by Trump-hating prosecutors and judges simply because they supported Mr. Trump. They were put behind bars because of their political beliefs.

Caleb Bailey is Exhibit A. Almost 10 years of his life have already been stolen from him, and the Trump haters want him to serve another six behind bars. That is the ultimate miscarriage of justice.

Please, Mr. President: Free Caleb Bailey. Stephen Moore is a co-founder of Unleash Prosperity.

Republicans must stop saying, 'The Democrats won't let us do it'

By David N. Bossie

In 2024, Republicans across the country campaigned and won on the issues of election integrity and fiscal responsibility. With just about nine months to go until the all-important midterm elections, it's time for decisive action.

The American people are sick and tired of lax voting laws that don't require an ID to cast a ballot and don't even require proof of citizenship to register to vote. It goes without saying that mail-in voting has remained a glaring problem since the arrival of COVID-19, even though, for decades, bipartisan figures such as former President Jimmy Carter and former Secretary of State James Baker have agreed that the practice invites widespread fraud.

Like with so many other issues, the broken status quo in our elections can't go unaddressed and immediate reform is being demanded.

It doesn't take a genius to know that secure elections are critical to any thriving democracy, and the United States is no exception. That's why, according to polling data, 8 in 10 Americans support commonsense reforms such as Voter ID and the Safeguard American Voter Eligibility Act, or SAVE Act, which would make sure that only citizens are allowed to register to vote.

Just as important as securing our elections with a sense of urgency is doing something consequential to confront our national embarrassment — a \$38 trillion debt — an absolute must. Over the past quarter-century, career politicians in Congress have developed a repulsive addiction to reckless spending, and it must stop now or our country will go bankrupt.

It's really that simple: The legislative branch controls our nation's purse strings, and President Trump has said he wants a balanced budget and would sign such an agreement if it is sent to his desk.

That being said, it's not as straightforward as it was when House Speaker Newt Gingrich made the concept of a balanced budget a reality in the late 1990s. Today, hardly any Democratic members of Congress in either chamber give a hoot about the

national debt crisis or our beloved country's dire financial situation.

Nearly as bad, far too many Republicans talk a good game about cutting federal spending, only to arrive in Washington and morph into spineless political squishes once they meet their first deep-pocketed lobbyist.

It's welcome news that Republicans in Congress



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are getting back to regular order and transparency in the appropriations process and working toward the goal of making multitrillion-dollar omnibus bill heists a thing of the past. However, turning the Titanic away from the fiscal iceberg that's rapidly approaching has been more difficult than anyone could have imagined.

Frankly, passing all the appropriations bills is a positive sign, but going forward, the focus must be on enacting them on time and dramatically shrinking their price tag across the board, and then having

the courage to ensure the future solvency of Social Security and Medicare. There's no way to sugarcoat the mess we're in. America has gone from \$5 trillion in debt to \$38 trillion in just 25 years.

So, to all the uniparty career politicians on Capitol Hill who have allowed the drunken spending spree to go on unchecked for so long, the failure to act now is the legacy you're leaving behind. To

the small band of conservative heroes in Congress (you know who you are) who wake up every day sounding the alarm and fighting the lonely fight for fiscal sanity, hardworking American families hear you and stand with you.

Whether we like it or not, these aren't normal times. Our election system must be fortified and the size and scope of the federal government slashed and reformed without delay. America survived before the Senate filibuster, and it will survive after it.

Democratic filibuster abuse must be addressed now. At a minimum, existing Senate rules must be enforced so obstructionist Democrats are required to talk in order to slow down the passage of voter ID laws that enjoy the massive support of Americans from across the political spectrum.

The argument that every state can be trusted to run its own elections as it sees fit is no longer valid, because blue state after blue state has demonstrated little interest in making long-overdue election integrity reforms. History has proved that sometimes the federal government must step in when states are refusing to do what's right. This is one of those moments.

Republican leadership in the Senate must come to grips with the fact that the familiar excuse of "Democrats won't let us do it" no longer passes muster. Our country has a \$38 trillion national debt and an election system in which people are losing faith. Time is of the essence, and November will be here before you know it.

David N. Bossie is the president of Citizens United. He served as a senior adviser to the Trump 2024 and 2020 campaigns. He served as deputy campaign manager for Donald J. Trump for President in 2016 and deputy executive director for the Trump transition team.

End the American Bar Association's grip on law schools

It's no neutral referee

By Allen Mendenhall

Texas and Florida have done something long overdue: They have told the American Bar Association to take a hike.

The Lone Star State just reclaimed direct authority over which law schools qualify graduates to sit for the bar exam. Florida followed suit days later, announcing that, effective Oct. 1, 2026, it would no longer treat the ABA as the sole gatekeeper to the legal profession. This was a clean break, not bureaucratic tinkering.

The timing is telling. Just last month, even the Federal Trade Commission — hardly a right-wing agency — called the ABA a monopoly. When even the administrative state recognizes that you have accumulated too much unaccountable power, you have crossed a line.

Conservatives, trained like Pavlov's dogs to defer to credentialed expertise, kept genuflecting.

So how did we get here? How did states quietly outsource one of their core sovereign functions — deciding who may practice law — to a private organization headquartered in Chicago?

The answer is classic late-20th-century centralization. As lawyers increasingly practiced across state lines, "uniformity" became the buzzword. Somewhere along the way, the ABA's Section of Legal Education and Admissions to the Bar morphed into a national gatekeeper.

State supreme courts, mistaking delegation for sophistication, shrugged and signed off. That arrangement might have worked if the ABA had remained neutral.

It hasn't.

Over time, the ABA transformed from a professional association into a liberal advocacy group that occasionally remembers it represents lawyers. The ABA Standing Committee on the Federal Judiciary provides the clearest evidence. The pattern is unmistakable: Originalist and textualist nominees face heightened scrutiny and frequent "not qualified" ratings; living constitutionalists sail through.

The rot goes deeper. The ABA has taken public positions on abortion, LGBTQ issues, and the entire diversity, equity and inclusion catechism that are indistinguishable from Democratic National Committee talking points. It defends left-wing judges, not on grounds of judicial independence — which would at least be principled — but on explicitly political grounds.

In other words, the ABA is a combatant in the culture war, fighting for the other side while demanding that conservatives continue treating it as a neutral referee.

This same dynamic has played out across every captured institution: universities, corporations, professional associations, and even science and medicine. The political left takes control, weaponizes the institution against conservatives, and then screams about "norms" and "institutional

integrity" when anyone suggests fighting back. It's a con game, and conservatives keep falling for it.

That's why Attorney General Pam Bondi was right to revoke the ABA's privileged access to non-public information about judicial nominees.

For decades, the ABA enjoyed a backstage pass to lifetime federal appointments. Granting that kind of influence to a left-leaning advocacy organization is like letting People for the Ethical Treatment of Animals help pick the secretary of agriculture.

The problem doesn't stop at judges.

ABA accreditation standards now include ideological tests that have nothing to do with producing competent lawyers. Consider Model Rule of Professional Conduct 8.4(g). On paper, it addresses discrimination and harassment. In practice, it has been weaponized to enforce political conformity on contested cultural questions.

When professional standards become instruments of thought control, the profession has lost its way.

Texas and Florida saw the writing on the wall and acted.

Here's what should get other states' attention: No legislature was required. No bruising floor fights. No lobbyists swarming the Capitol. State supreme courts already possess the authority to regulate admission to their own bars. They simply forgot they had it.

Critics will warn of a "race to the bottom," predicting a flood of incompetent lawyers churned out like fast-food hamburgers. This is nonsense, and it's insulting. It assumes state supreme courts are either incapable or unwilling to enforce standards. Several states already allow graduates of non-ABA-accredited law schools to sit for the bar exam. Civilization remains intact.

State's highest courts have every incentive to get this right. They are the ones who must deal with lawyers daily. They are far more accountable

than distant bureaucrats drafting social justice resolutions in Chicago. Texas and Florida aren't being reckless. They are being federalists. They are remembering that, in our constitutional system, it is states, not private ideological cartels, that regulate professions.

The question isn't whether the ABA should exist. It can continue issuing position papers to its heart's content. The real question is why states ever allowed themselves to be governed by an organization that decided professional neutrality was optional.

Red states, take note: You don't need the ABA's permission to run your legal profession. You never did. Now is the time to act like it.

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