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Notes from editor (not for publication):

HEADLINE ELEMENTS:

####BEGIN HED####

No child should be born stateless

####END HED####

####BEGIN SUBHED####

Birthright citizenship reflects both constitutional law and
a deeper moral truth: All people have inherent worth

####END SUBHED####

TEXT BODY:

####BEGIN TEXT####

THE SUPREME COURT closed its session before the Fourth
of July weekend with many rulings, one of them concerning
birthright citizenship.

The Declaration of Independence states, "We hold these
truths to be self-evident, that all men are created equal, that they
are endowed by their Creator with certain unalienable Rights,
that among these are Life, Liberty, and the Pursuit of Happiness."

12 As a person of faith, I read our nation’s two primary
13 political documents through a theological lens. So therein is a
14 political statement with theological underpinnings and
15 ramifications.

16 * * *

17 FIRST, WE SHOULD acknowledge that the United States of
18 America was not founded as a Christian nation. George
19 Washington was a deist. Even John Adams, at first a Puritan
20 Congregationalist, became the equivalent of a Unitarian-
21 Universalist. James Madison, who was the primary writer of the
22 United States Constitution, was also a deist. Thomas Jefferson was
23 as well.

24 So the tropes related to the United States being a
25 “Christian nation” spoken of at the Faith & Freedom Coalition’s
26 annual Road to Majority Conference are lies. Madison drafted a
27 secular constitution. And I thank God for that. To the extent that
28 the Declaration and the Constitution reference God (or a
29 Creator), they do so as inspired by the Enlightenment (a
30 philosophical movement) and not by Christianity.

31 When I read the preamble of the Declaration, I read that
32 all humans are created in the image of God. We are all children
33 of God. Therefore, all people born in the United States and, in
34 fact, all people in the United States (illegally or legally) possess
35 unalienable rights. Even when prosecuted, due process is
36 required.

37 We all have a God-given inherent worth — the
38 Fourteenth Amendment, following the Civil War and the
39 abolishment of slavery, makes this unalienable right clearer. Any
40 person born in the United States (with rare exceptions) is a
41 citizen and is honored as a citizen.

42 * * *

43 THE THREE JUSTICES who cast dissenting decisions
44 opposing the majority of the court — which upheld birthright
45 citizenship by a one-vote margin — found, ironically, that the
46 Constitution of the United States is unconstitutional!

47 Justice Clarence Thomas's dissenting opinion argued the
48 same rationale as those who desire increasing restrictions on gun
49 ownership, thus desiring to curb the Second Amendment based
50 on the original intent of the writers of the Constitution.

51 Even justices can be incredibly hypocritical when it
52 comes to interpreting the law. The signers of the Constitution
53 intended to include only men as citizens — for only men were
54 given the right to vote. Yet, the 19th Amendment — passed in
55 1920 — clarifies what the Constitution's spirit implied, and that is
56 that women be included.

57 If parents of a child entered the United States legally or
58 illegally, that is not a decision or an act committed by a child
59 born in the United States. If my mother commits a crime, I, as her
60 son, am not to bear her punishment.

61 * * *

62 THE PROPHET Jeremiah wrote: "No longer will anyone go
63 around saying, 'Sour grapes eaten by parents leave a sour taste in
64 the mouths of their children.'" All people born in the United
65 States have unalienable rights, and they are accountable for their
66 own actions.

67 An infant child cannot be held responsible for the
68 decisions of their parents. Furthermore, to weaken or dilute
69 birthright citizenship would render countless human beings
70 stateless.

71 If the Republicans aligned with Donald Trump want to
72 change the Constitution rather than obey it, then they ought to
73 pass a constitutional amendment.

####END TEXT####

BIO/COATTAIL:

####BEGIN BIO/COATTAIL####

74 **REV. DR. SCOTT EVERETT COUPER** is the minister of
75 Centre Congregational Church, UCC, in Brattleboro. He notes
76 that he "writes to his church and his community, and not on
77 behalf of his church and community."

####END BIO/COATTAIL####

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