



Reviews and Analysis

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Mormon Women for Ethical Government: Review of Claims

David Stewart, Jr.
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1. MWEG selects issues for advocacy because they are the moral and ethical issues of our day.
2. MWEG's advocacy stances have seriously critiqued individuals of only one party because these are the ethical issues, as determined by the group's experts.
3. MWEG's stated principles are good; therefore, the group is good.
- 4... Some or many of MWEG's leaders are politically unaffiliated or identify as Republicans; therefore, the group is nonpartisan.
5. MWEG is nonpartisan because it has praised Republicans.
6. MWEG doesn't have favorites and isn't opposed to anyone.
7. Your criticism of MWEG is wrong because you think the group should criticize Democrats and Republicans equally. Most violations have been on the Republican side.

8. You only critique MWEG because you are (insert allegation of prejudice here).

9. Why do you oppose MWEG for doing good things? You should do something that good instead of destructive.

10. "This makes no sense to me at all. You are attacking a group of political activists for being political activists. Their point of view is not only obvious, it's their whole point."

11. Someone had to say it. Thank you.

Conclusion

Abstract

Background: Mormon Women for Ethical Government (MWEG) claims to be a nonpartisan grassroots group that "transcend[s] partisanship" and "advocates for ethical government." A comprehensive review of all of MWEG's official statements was performed to evaluate the group's adherence to its stated principles.

Methods: All official statements of MWEG from January 2017 to September 2020 were reviewed. Of 59 statements, 48 made specific claims or took positions that could be evaluated. Statements were evaluated for selection bias, interpretive bias, factual accuracy, and factual integrity.

Selection Bias: Of forty-eight (48) MWEG official statements that could be evaluated, the topic selection of ten (10) was rated as neutral (21%), and thirty-eight (79%) as Versus Republican. No statements (0%) were rated as Versus Democrat.

Interpretive Bias: The interpretive bias of nine (9) statements was rated as neutral (19%), and that of thirty-nine (39) was rated as Democrat (81%). No statements were rated as having a Republican (0%) interpretive bias. In no cases (0%) did MWEG even-handedly disclose arguments or perspectives arguments that conflicted with favored narratives.

Factual Accuracy: Twenty-eight statements were rated as "no claims" (58%) for making no specific factual claims. Of the remaining twenty (20) statements (42%) that made specific factual claims, the factual accuracy of fifteen (15) statements was rated as accurate (75%). Two (2) claims were rated as partisan or ideological (10%). One (1) claim was rated as mostly false (5%). Two (2) claims were rated as false (10%).

Factual Integrity: Eighteen (18) statements were rated as "no claims" (37.5%) for making no statements or representations that could be evaluated for factual integrity. Thirty remained (32) that could be evaluated for factual integrity (62.5%). Of these, eleven (11) were rated as accurate (37%) and nineteen were cited as misleading, withholding (information), or both (63%).

Limitations: While specific explanations are provided for each item including references where appropriate and efforts were made to rate items according to standardized criteria, some subjectivity is noted certain determinations. This work thus constitutes a systematized review, and not a formal scientific study. Resources are provided to facilitate readers evaluating each item for themselves and making their own determinations.

Conclusion: Mormon Women for Ethical Government's public conduct in official statements and grassroots social media activism demonstrates strong-form partisanship, lacking basic fairness towards designated political enemies while observing silence or even acting as an apologist for sins of political favorites. Facts and perspectives which do not further the group's political narratives are routinely withheld. Interpretive narratives are derived principally from political ideology, and not from teachings of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints or from normative ethics. MWEG's conduct is inconsistent with the obligations of an ostensibly nonpartisan arbiter of ethics, and with the group's public representations and stated principles. The group's attempts to tip the balance on key national issues while pushing a partisan rather than ethically-based agenda should concern all Americans.

Background and Claims

Mormon Women for Ethical Government (MWEG) MWEG claims to be a "Faithful, Nonpartisan, Peaceful, Proactive" group "inspiring women of faith to be ambassadors of peace [who transcend partisanship and courageously advocate for ethical government](#)." The group claims to provide nonpartisan voter education and to educate regarding how to "[address misinformation on social media](#)." The group's "[Principles of Nonpartisanship](#)" claim that "MWEG will not endorse candidates or party platforms, nor will it privilege one party over another" in its public activities. MWEG is registered as a 501(c)(4) social welfare organization with an affiliated 501(c)(3) nonprofit foundation and is subject to [laws and regulations](#) governing the activities of those organizations.

MWEG's articulated [Principles of Ethical Government](#) are worthy and constructive. The group was formed in January 2017 by Sharlee Mullins Glenn. The principles articulated in Glenn's [LDS Mag essay](#) on Finding Truth are similarly noble. The group notes the need for [fair, unbiased information, writing](#): "To supercede [sic] partisanship and unify in defense of principle, each U.S. citizen also needs access to the unbiased information required to make reasoned civic choices. We must each commit to be a responsible consumer of news, privileging well-researched and reputable reporting over commentary or tweets from partisan sources." The group uses the hashtag "[#countryoverparty](#)."

The official MWEG statement [Voter Engagement and the Need to Measure Bills and Initiatives through Ethical Standards](#) states, in part:

"A large part of our mission involves voter education and engagement...Bills and initiatives should be carefully examined and measured against broadly accepted ethical principles. Good legislation is clear, specific, based on verifiable, objective facts, and free from the taint of money from lobbyists or other special interest groups...Special attention must also be given to ensure that there is not a significant likelihood of unintended negative consequences...When analyzing bills and initiatives and seeking to sort fact from fiction, citizens must be attentive to the sources of information they are consuming, especially when certain individuals or groups who would benefit financially from the legislation may be presenting distorted information."

In these and other statements, MWEG represents itself as a true nonpartisan group that provides trustworthy, balanced and accurate information and advocating for fair, neutral ethics while refraining from selling partisan narratives.

The Need for Nonpartisan Ethical Advocacy

Focus on courteous and civil discourse is greatly needed, especially at a time when the U.S. is deeply divided and [partisan animosity has reached all-time highs](#).

Nonpartisan advocacy for ethics and accountability in government is much needed, including from faith-based groups, women's groups, and others. Many contemporary human rights issues, such as the sectarian war in Yemen in which over 50,000 children are estimated to have died of starvation in 2017 alone, worsening murder rates in Mexico setting new records yearly from 2017 to the present, the genocide of Christians in the Middle East, to name a few, have scarcely registered in public discourse and have received little attention from the ostensible Western guardians of democracy and freedom.

[Democracy worldwide has been declining since 2006](#). The struggle for democracy has been largely leaderless under both the Obama/Biden and Trump administrations. Other key freedoms have been waning worldwide. Corruption is endemic in both

major US political parties, with little expectation of improvement. Support for versus Democratic regimes that violate human rights worldwide by both major US political parties gives cause for deep concern.

Statement of Nonpartisanship

The author is politically unaffiliated and has voted for candidates from both major US political parties for all local, state, and federal offices. I do not advocate or endorse any political party or candidate, and instead encourage all readers to carefully study the issues for themselves and to vote according to their conscience, beliefs, and preferences. I identify as an independent/centrist and have never donated to any political candidate or group or participated in political activism. I have frequently critiqued personalities and platforms of both major parties, to the consternation of partisans on both sides.

My professional duties have included lecturing on ethics to graduate and post-graduate students. I have also written on ethics in mission outreach and presented at the American Society of Missiology. My principal issues are human rights and ethics. My political and religious views are as a pro-LGBTQ, anti-war Mormon who advocated against the U.S. wars in Iraq and Afghanistan when these views were widely unpopular with both major political parties.

In this review, if the group being evaluated makes claims or support platforms that diverge materially from nonpartisan or centrist perspectives, I may introduce contrary evidence and arguments for balance. Such balancing counterpoints are not intended to represent complete statements on the subject matter but are intended to promote consideration of both sides of an issue, where reasonable contrary data and arguments are felt to exist.

I believe that Joe Biden is certain to win the November 2020 U.S. presidential election. The major presidential candidates in this election have serious drawbacks such that I have severe reservations about both Trump and Biden, and am skeptical regarding the fitness of either to serve as president of the United States. I am disappointed by the shortfalls of both political parties that brought our nation to this point.

Others are welcome to personal political viewpoints. I recognize that there are many good people on both sides of the political divide, including many in my friends and family who span the political spectrum. I believe that groups that profess to be nonpartisan and to be governed by normative ethics need to be accountable to those standards. I believe that political candidates, platforms, and policies should be carefully evaluated and not accepted a priori.

No support, endorsement, or funding has been received from any source for this work. The author alone is responsible for its contents. Composing a detailed review was not something that I wanted to do or enjoyed doing. Rather, I wrote out of a sense of civic and moral obligation so that others may be informed regarding claims and representations regarding the group and its activities that have been widely promoted.

What Are Ethics?

[Different forms of ethical theories](#) include deontology, utilitarianism, rights, and virtues. While various systems offer differing perspectives, widely-acknowledged principles include beneficence, non-maleficence or least harm, respect for autonomy, and justice.

The ethicist is neither apologist nor adversary and is unswayed by pressures to place expediency over principle. Any valid

ethical system requires consistency, even-handedness, and impartiality in regard to the identity of the causes and individuals. The nature of ethics is that one doesn't get to pick and choose, to ignore ethical breaches committed by one's fellow-travelers and play up ones by opponents. There are at least two sides to every issue, which need to be engaged in a thoughtful, fair, and even-handed way, regardless of the implications for one's favored or unfavored political candidates or causes.

Courts of law, for instance, are subject to ethically-based principles and rules. Yet abundant sources of bias can nonetheless lead to unjust processes and outcomes. Consider this hypothetical circumstance:

A prosecutor only prosecutes members against an unfavored group while ignoring violations by a favored group. The judge disallows the defense from introducing key evidence and witnesses while acceding to every prosecutorial demand. The defendant is now allowed to speak. The defense is not permitted to cross-examine the prosecution's witnesses, to challenge purported "evidence," or even to state its case. The judge and the prosecutor collude, predetermining conviction without regard to fact and evidence.

Is such a process just? Thoughtful individuals will immediately identify these processes as hallmarks of an authoritarian show trial. Violations at any one of these points would be enough to discredit the process and its outcome. The court's conduct is not made ethical merely by the profession of noble-sounding principles. Rather, the court and its determinations can be ethical and legitimate only through consistent implementation and adherence to ethical principles. Jesus taught that "by their fruits ye shall know them" (Matthew 7:16-20).

Truth is the Foundation of Ethics

In the Book of John, Jesus is represented as the eternal word or [?????](#) proceeding into the world as the incarnation of light and truth ([John 1:1-17](#)). Unswerving commitment to truth, regardless of self-interest or agenda, is the foundational principle of ethics taught by Jesus, Socrates, and Confucius. The late Democratic senator Daniel Patrick Moynihan stated that "everyone is entitled to his own opinion, but not to his own facts."

Worthy causes never need to be supported by misrepresentation and suppression of contrary data. Partisanization of "facts" and its enforcement by censors – whether by government, big tech, media, or groups and individuals going about to challenge and discredit those who do not support their favored narratives – leads to claims being accepted or rejected not by standards of truth and evidence, but of utility to an agenda.

The harm from propagating false narratives is considerable. Untruth opens the door to a host of further evils. Solzhenitsyn observed: Violence can only be concealed by a lie, and the lie can only be maintained by violence. Any[one] who has once proclaimed violence as his method is inevitably forced to take the lie as his [or her] principle." Truth is attacked and becomes marginalized, even forbidden. Fewer and fewer dare to speak out against The Lie. Moral confusion ensues. With the abandonment of truth, the role of conscience is supplanted by ideology.

The presentation of a few decontextualized facts while withholding contrary data to promote a one-sided narrative is not truth. Truth requires good-faith efforts to provide accurate, representative, and balanced data, regardless of whether it supports or discredits favored causes.

No individual or group can be ethical without being truthful.

Partisanship as an Evil

Partisans of all stripes tend to characterize their core beliefs as fundamentally moral while viewing the world in starkly polarized terms. The political platforms of both U.S. [Democratic](#) and [Republican](#) parties are replete with political arguments couched in moralizing terms, but this does not make them ethical. One may believe that one's partisan views are morally right and that one's preferred party is the party of ethics. Yet belief, however strongly, does not make it so. Fair-minded people recognize that the conflation of partisanship with virtue is problematic and unethical.

Confucius noted that the ethical man or woman "in dealing with the world is not for anything or against anything. [He \[or she\] follows righteousness as the standard.](#)" These statements do not mean that worthy causes should not be supported, but rather indicate the corrupting pull of partisanship. The ethical person is not "for or against" partisan causes because the partisan standard is something other than righteousness. The ethical person supports a cause only to the extent it is actually righteous, as fairly evaluated, and parts ways when the cause pursues any path other than the right.

The partisan's creed of knowledge is the "reverse scientific method." Instead of working to eliminate biases and preconceptions and arriving at conclusions based on dispassionate observation and analysis, the partisan starts with the desired conclusion and picks the data to support it. The partisan's confirmation bias ensures that any data, however flawed or dubious, which supports one's opinion is deemed credible, whereas contrary data is deemed a priori not to be meritorious and is dismissed or ignored. Conclusions are based on ideology and not on facts or rigorous methodology.

To the partisan, fairness to opponents, or candor regarding the shortfalls of one's own ideology, cannot be permitted. The partisan levies loud and often misleading critiques against disfavored causes, while suspending ethical scrutiny in regard to favored causes. Behaviors that are condemned by all normative ethical systems, including exaggeration, lying, "double standards," and withholding contrary evidence and perspectives, to name a few, are deemed necessary and even virtuous acts by the partisan when done for the "greater good" of the cause. Offering honest critiques of the shortfalls of favored candidates or acknowledging virtues or achievements of disfavored ones is forbidden to the partisan and can result in being ostracized or "canceled."

The partisan's senses are dulled to the point that he or she can no longer discern between good and evil, and morality becomes inverted (Isaiah 5:20). However initially sincere, the partisan inevitably becomes a liar, a conspirator, and oppressor, and arrives at advocating bad causes and opposing good ones. The Russian moralist Aleksandr Solzhenitsyn wrote:

"To do evil a human being must first of all believe that what he's doing is good, or else that it's a well-considered act in conformity with natural law. Fortunately, it is in the nature of the human being to seek a justification for his actions. Macbeth's self-justifications were feeble - and his conscience devoured him. Yes, even Iago was a little lamb too. The imagination and spiritual strength of Shakespeare's evildoers stopped short at a dozen corpses. Because they had no ideology.

"Ideology - this is what gives evildoing its long-sought justification and gives the evildoer the necessary steadfastness and determination. That is the social theory which helps to make his acts seem good instead of bad in his own and others' eyes, so that he won't hear reproaches and curses but will receive praises and honors. That was how the agents of the Inquisition fortified their wills: by invoking Christianity; the conquerors of foreign lands, by extolling the grandeur of their Mother-land; the colonizers, by civilization; the Nazis, by race; and the Jacobins (early and late), by equality, brotherhood, and the happiness of future generations. Thanks to ideology, the twentieth century was fated to experience evildoing on a scale calculated in millions." (Solzhenitsyn, *The Gulag Archipelago*, Ericson ed. 1986, 77-78)

The belief that unfair, dishonest, or unequal treatment of others is somehow justified - whether because of prejudice and bigotry, a belief that the hated group or individuals do not deserve fair treatment, or for any other reason - runs contrary to Christian morality and Western ethics. The same mentality lies at the root of partisanship and historically has been used to justify oppression in all its forms. The ostensible liberator becomes the oppressor, and no moral authority is gained. No matter how deeply one believes in the rightness of one's cause, one cannot disregard ethical principles without bringing harm to oneself and others.

Statement of Fair Use

Selections of various MWEG statements are cited consistent with the doctrine of "fair use." Citations are made for non-commercial educational purposes in a transformative manner for comment and critique of public statements. The comment and critique presented in this work is in the public interest for concerned citizens nationally and for members of the Mormon/LDS community, in view of MWEG's national political activities and the prominent media attention the group has received, largely without scrutiny or substantive critique since its inception in January 2017. The group's public claims of nonpartisanship, ethical advocacy, use of the Mormon/LDS name to engage in political advocacy, and claims that it supports and conducts itself according to the teachings of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, all warrant scrutiny and critique as a matter of public interest.

Nature and Limitations of Work

Significant limitations of methodology require forthright disclosure. First, this piece represents an initial survey for review purposes to identify issues for further study and investigation. This piece is a systematic review and not a formal scientific study. It is intended for general readers and not for the scholarly research community. The methodology is intended to set a higher bar and provide greater objectivity and verifiability than the purely subjective standards of most review pieces. If this piece had been intended as a formal scholarly study rather than as a review, many additional steps would have been taken. The author is obviously aware of the differences and trusts that most readers will be able to identify, for example, items such as "inflammatory language" in the linked statements without the need for tiring pedantry. Another substantial limitation centers on matters of subjectivity addressed below.

Notes on Subjectivity

Evaluation of certain items necessarily involves some subjectivity. I have attempted to be consistent and fair in the ratings, giving the benefit of the doubt when possible. For some items, I have noted concerns of bias or withholding of information but did not rate a demerit as it was not felt to be sufficiently serious. This obviously involves some subjectivity regarding the precise threshold for errors, omissions, and bias which are deemed problematic.

Many rating systems involve some degree of subjectivity. For instance, pain scales and functional ratings may be interpreted differently by different individuals. One individual who reports a pain level of five on a scale from 0 to 10 may report specific symptoms and severity that may correspond to another individual's rating of three and another's rating of seven. While such differences should be noted, their existence neither renders the scale meaningless nor useless. Similarly, even when rigorously defined criteria exist that can be objectively validated, such as measuring angles on radiographs, well-trained evaluators nonetheless demonstrate significant discrepancies that are referred to as interobserver variability. Aggregating data from multiple reviewers can help to decrease variability but does not eliminate it.

Some additional safeguards are provided here. While readers of most published studies must rely on the accuracy of the evaluator's ratings with no opportunity for independent verification, full transparency is provided here so that the reader can evaluate for himself or herself. An explanation is provided for the ratings and issues of each statement. These explanations contain numerous links to news items and references providing specific evidence for statements and concerns, similar to the limited links in MWEG statements but far more numerous and thorough. Links to each MWEG Official Statement are provided.

The reader can review the MWEG statement, the issues and concerns raised, and external documentation.

The purpose of such documentation is not to suggest that the reader should necessarily accept one perspective over another, but merely to demonstrate when credible and significant other data and perspectives exist if they are reasonably deemed not to have been disclosed or treated even-handedly in the group's official statements. The reader is not expected to rely uncritically on the author's ratings but is invited and encouraged to review all of the material and draw personal conclusions for each item.

There should be little controversy regarding which major political party's figures, policies, or platforms are being critiqued in each statement. Interpretive bias is determined from statements of political figures and platforms of each party. References are not exhaustively documented for each item as these matters are readily available in the public sphere and are deemed to constitute common knowledge.

Virtually by definition, groups and individuals tend to underestimate their bias. Partisan ideologues often perceive personal viewpoints as neutral even when remote from the political center. It is therefore expected that those who share common views and assumptions with the group being evaluated may feel that the group's official statements are less biased and partisan because they express views that the reader personally considers correct. It is expected that individuals sharing the group's ideology and worldview will be less able to identify bias in statements identified as partisan or biased and may even claim that some of these statements are "neutral." The controversial, politically-charged topics treated by the group's official statements are ones on which individuals harbor a wide range of opinions, which are often very strong. Yet whether the reader accepts one set of arguments and conclusions or another is not what is being evaluated.

On these issues, opposing views are presented when deemed potentially credible or meritorious so that the reader can determine whether MWEG's treatment is fair and balanced or skews towards partisanship. Reasonable people should be able to recognize that those they may disagree with often have good reasons for their views, even if they may disagree with their conclusions. The reader may review additional data and perspectives and ultimately side with the group on certain items while recognizing that the new information presented is important and should have been disclosed. On other items, the reader may feel that the withholding of data led the group to improper conclusions. Yet the reader is not asked to render a final verdict on specific political issues evaluated in the statements: only to assess whether the group demonstrates bias and whether facts and necessary information are presented accurately and with integrity. These ratings evaluate whether there are salient and credible facts and perspectives contrary to the group's conclusions, which have not been disclosed: data that a reasonable defense attorney would insist on bringing to the judge's attention before a fair verdict can be rendered.

Notwithstanding efforts at consistency, the nature of the topics and the inevitable subjectivity in determining which opposing arguments are potentially credible, and which omitted facts are salient, and which are not would inevitably lead to some variation in ratings among different evaluators. Nonetheless, ratings are explained below – many in considerable detail – with links to other salient data and to the statements themselves such that the reader is empowered to personally evaluate the merits of each. While recognizing that some variability is inevitable, readers who feel that ratings significantly diverge from what they consider to be fair-minded and accurate are welcome to write with specific observations and concerns, which will be considered for future updates of this review. The author has made good-faith attempts to evaluate each item fairly and is willing to consider additional data and perspectives if readers believe certain items to be substantially in error.

Yet the central purpose of this review is not to quibble over whether readers believe that thirty-four, thirty-eight, or forty-one items should carry a specific rating. This piece ultimately constitutes a review intended to systematize efforts at evaluation, while acknowledging some inevitable subjectivity. It is not a formal research study of the genre of academic dissertations or submissions to scientific journals.

It is hoped that, notwithstanding the limitations of this work as a review piece and not as a formal scholarly study, inevitable subjectivity of certain determinations notwithstanding efforts for fairness, and the controversial nature of many topics, the reader

will be able to understand whether the concerns raised are meritorious or not. The reader is provided with the necessary data and tools to draw his or her own conclusions and is encouraged to do so.

Methodology for Evaluation of MWEG Official Statements

All of MWEG's fifty-nine (59) official statements since the group's inception to the present (January 2017-September 2020) were evaluated for nonpartisanship and factual integrity. As an ostensible ethical watchdog which professes principles of nonpartisanship, fairness, and normative ethics, and as an organization claiming tax-exempt status under 501(c)(4) and (3) codes, MWEG has a moral and legal obligation to adhere to these principles.

Eleven statements which did not take advocacy stances towards specific issues or events could not be evaluated by these criteria were excluded. These include announcements ([Announcement Regarding MWEG's Name, From the Founders: Looking Forward to 2018](#)), commemorative statements ([Utah Senator Orrin Hatch's Announcement of Retirement, In Honor of International Women's Day: A Suffragist's Prayer](#)), condolences ([Passing of President Thomas S. Monson, in Response to the Las Vegas Mass Shooting](#)), local small-town issues ([Unethical Policing Practices by the Woods Cross Police Department](#)), and values statements which make no factual claims or do not reference events ([Voter Engagement and the Need to Measure Bills and Initiatives through Ethical Standards](#), [On Sexual Violence](#), [On Silencing, Denigration and Abuse of Women](#), [In Defense of Truth](#)). Forty-eight (48) statements remained for evaluation.

Title: Attributive language including "Official Statement from Mormon Women for Ethical Government on," "Response from Mormon Women for Ethical Government to," and similar statements have been truncated from the beginning of most titles for space and clarity.

Nonpartisanship

Nonpartisanship is defined by the Oxford Dictionary as lack of bias, especially towards any particular political group. This review uses the term nonpartisan in its common understanding: that one political group is not favored while another is disfavored.

Equal Treatment

Impartiality, normative ethics, and faith-based values all pose a foundational demand for equal treatment towards figures, policies, and platforms of both major parties. Equal treatment does not necessarily imply a 1:1 ratio of items favoring or against each party, but it does imply that consistent standards and criteria are even-handedly applied in evaluating conduct pertaining to both parties.

If (in a very extreme case) a candidate behaved like Stalin, Hitler, or Pol Pot, critiques would rightly be directed overwhelmingly against that individual and party, even while fairly rendering "equal treatment" on the basis of conduct. However, in the United States, episodes of misconduct have been regularly attested among officials of both major political parties.

If figures and parties are treated unequally – such that one set of standards or criteria are applied towards the evaluation of one party, while similar or worse conduct of the other party goes unmentioned; that the group demonstrates systematic favoritism towards one party or disfavoritism towards the other – then bias is present, and duties of nonpartisanship, ethics, and faith-based values have been breached.

The group being evaluated is the one making the claim of nonpartisanship, and thus has the burden of demonstrating to the public that it is in fact nonpartisan: that its acts do not favor individuals, platforms, or candidates of one party while penalizing the other.

For example, a public prosecutor who disproportionately or exclusively prosecuted members of an unfavored party or group while giving a free pass to similar behavior from members of a favored party or group would be deemed biased and illegitimate, even if the claims were meritorious and even if subsequent court proceedings were conducted impartially.

Selection Bias

Selection bias asks a simple question: which major US political party (if any) does the issue selected criticize or support policies, platforms, and individuals? If the statement does not criticize political figures or issues, or criticizes both parties equally, it is listed as Neutral. Statements that principally criticize Republican figures, policies, or platforms, or which favor Democrats, are listed as Versus Republican. Statements that principally criticize Democratic figures, policies, or platforms, or which favor Republicans, are listed as Versus Democrat. This phrasing does not imply that the statement is directed against all Republicans or Democrats, respectively, but that censure is rendered against a figure, policy, or platform pertaining to the respective political party.

Selection bias does not address the merit of the claims, but the ratio of claims criticizing or promoting one group over another can determine whether there may be bias in selecting topics favorable or unfavorable to one political party.

A true nonpartisan ethics organization would be expected to hold political figures and issues of both major parties accountable to similar standards. It is possible that similar standards of conduct could result in substantially discrepant numbers of cases if members of one party are engaged in misconduct at a significantly higher rate than the other. At times, there might be good reasons for varying ratios of critiques of figures and policies of the major parties. Yet a wide discrepancy would require careful investigation and documentation to ensure that there is not unequal treatment arising from bias.

Interpretive Bias

Interpretive bias assesses whether the position statement offers balanced, fair, and independent analysis as would be expected of a nonpartisan group, or whether the narrative closely follows partisan talking points. Inflammatory, prejudicial, or otherwise biased language is also considered.

In determining whether a specific policy platform or critique engages in Democratic or Republican interpretive bias or is nonpartisan, published platforms of the U.S. [Democratic](#) and [Republican](#) parties were consulted, as well as statements and positions of leading figures of both political parties as published in news reports. In some cases, [diffen.com](#), a nonpartisan site comparing the differences among different groups, was consulted to assess interpretive and framing differences.

Interpretive bias is distinct from Selection bias. Selection bias merely states which group's policy or personality is being critiqued. Interpretive bias evaluates whether the interpretation and conclusions drawn by the group are truly nonpartisan or whether they closely follow partisan talking points of one political party based on the criteria above.

For example, a statement that criticizes an individual Democrat or the policy of a Democratic administration but that acknowledged pro and con arguments and treats the topic even-handedly would be rated as Versus Democrat for selection bias but Neutral for interpretive bias. In contrast, a statement on a topic that is ostensibly neutral, neither supporting nor attacking individuals or platforms of either major party, but that approached the topic through the lens of partisan talking points while failing to acknowledge contrary arguments or offer even-handed analysis, would be rated as Neutral for selection bias but partisan for interpretive bias.

Of course, not every item may have valid pro and con arguments. Demerits are applied only when specific, credible contrary arguments and perspectives are identified that have been neglected from the statement being evaluated. Interpretive bias evaluates whether the narratives and perspectives are centrist and receive “equal treatment,” or whether favoritism is demonstrated towards the arguments and narratives of one party over the other, as evaluated by criteria above.

Interpretive bias largely considers, once an allegation is made, whether it is treated fairly and impartially. If selection bias represents a tally of whom the prosecutor chooses to prosecute, interpretive bias evaluates whether the judge ensures a free and fair trial or is biased towards the prosecution or defense.

Factual Accuracy

Factual accuracy assesses whether items claimed as fact and used as a basis for the group's analysis and conclusions are actually careful, accurate, and nonpartisan data generally accepted as fact, or whether disputed, uncertain, or false claims are passed off as fact. Factual accuracy may be rated as Accurate, Partisan/Ideological (dubious factual claims without objective evidence), Mostly False, or False. If no claims are made beyond the acknowledgment of an issue or event precipitating the statement, or if general claims are made that cannot be specifically evaluated, this item is listed as “No claims.”

In our courtroom analogy, factual accuracy evaluates whether the specific factual claims (the “evidence” introduced) are true and objectively verifiable.

Factual Integrity

Factual integrity assesses whether salient facts and context are presented fairly and honestly or whether important data are omitted to create a misleading impression. Factual Integrity is rated as No claims if no claims are made, Accurate if fair and representative data is presented, Misleading if data presented is not fair and representative, or Withholding if key contrary data are withheld. A true nonpartisan ethics group would be expected to present representative data fairly, accurately, and without bias, taking care to ensure proper disclosures of key information.

It is possible for factual integrity to be rated as misleading or withholding information, while factual accuracy is rated as “no claims.” This may occur if an event or issue is cited in general terms with limited or no factual details, but in which the data or facts are represented as supporting a dubious conclusion, and important context or contrary data are withheld.

Factual integrity evaluates whether evidence is are disclosed in an even-handed and unbiased fashion or whether evidence undermining the prosecutor's case is withheld in an attempt to sway the verdict. It is possible to present data which is factually accurate (the victim was injured in a hit-and-run accident by a green Toyota. Sarah drives a green Toyota) while still

lacking factual integrity (failing to disclose that Sarah was out of town or her vehicle was in the shop on the night of the accident).

Other Fields

Some items are straightforward and did not appear to require additional explanation. For items where additional explanation was deemed necessary, evaluation may include some or all of the following:

MWEG Approach: Mormon Women for Ethical Government's stance on the issue.

Explanation

Fact Check: May include key facts and data omitted by MWEG.

Analysis

Nonpartisan/Centrist Approach: What I believe a true nonpartisan/centrist approach would be.

Some items which are proximate and on similar themes are considered together (#21&24, #30&32) with the final item out of numerical order to condense the discussion.

MWEG Official Statement Ratings for Nonpartisanship and Accuracy

#	Date	Shortened Title	Selection Bias	Interpretive Bias	Factual Accuracy	Factual Accuracy
1	8/12/2017	in Response to the White Supremacist Rally in Charlottesville, Virginia	Neutral	Neutral	Accurate	Accurate
2	9/5/2017	(MWEG) with Regard to Announcement About DACA	Versus Republican	Democrat	Accurate	Accurate
3	9/9/2017	in Response to Bannon Interview	Versus Republican	Neutral	Accurate	Accurate
4	10/30/2017	with Regard to the Mueller Investigation	Versus Republican	Democrat	No claims	Withheld
5	11/7/2017	with Regard to Gun Violence	Neutral	Neutral	Accurate	Accurate
6	11/29/2017	in Response to Bigotry	Versus Republican	Neutral	Accurate	Accurate
7	12/12/2017	Alabama Senate Election Results	Versus Republican	Neutral	Accurate	Accurate
8	1/12/2018	President Trump's Crass and Racist Comments	Versus Republican	Democrat	Accurate	Accurate
9	1/22/2018	Fifteen Declarations on Ethical Immigration Policy	Versus Republican	Democrat	No claims	Misleading
10	2/15/2018	with Regard to Continuing Negotiations on Protections for DREAMers	Versus Republican	Democrat	Accurate	Misleading

11	3/28/2018	An Open Letter to Mitt Romney	Versus Republican	Democrat	No claims	No cla
12	4/20/2018	Crisis in Syria	Neutral	Neutral	No claims	Withh
13	5/11/2018	Mother's Day Call to Action: Immigration	Versus Republican	Democrat	Accurate	Accura
14	5/15/2018	Families Can Be Together Forever; Families Should Be Together Now	Versus Republican	Democrat	No claims	No cla
15	5/31/2018	the Separation of Children from Their Families at the Border	Versus Republican	Democrat	No claims	No cla
16	6/26/2018	in Response to the Supreme Court's 5-4 Decision to Uphold Travel Ban	Versus Republican	Democrat	No claims	Mislea
17	9/24/2018	With Regard to the Brett Kavanaugh Confirmation Proceedings	Versus Republican	Democrat	No claims	Withh
18	9/27/2018	in Response to Today's Testimonies from Dr. Christine Blasey Ford and Judge Brett Kavanaugh	Versus Republican	Democrat	No claims	Withh
19	9/28/2018	in Response to the Senate Judiciary Committee Vote on Judge Kavanaugh	Versus Republican	Democrat	No claims	No cla
20	10/4/2018	Before the Vote on the Confirmation of Brett Kavanaugh as a Justice to the Supreme Court	Versus Republican	Democrat	No claims	No cla
21	10/12/2018	MWEG Promotes Voter Registration, Education, and Turnout Ahead of Midterm Elections	Versus Republican	Democrat	No claims	Mislea
22	10/19/2018	Environmental Stewardship and Climate Change	Neutral	Democrat	No claims	No cla
23	10/27/2018	Condemning Reckless Rhetoric and Hate-Fueled Violence	Versus Republican	Democrat	No claims	Withh
24	11/7/2018	the 2018 Midterm Elections	Versus Republican	Democrat	No claims	Withh
25	11/9/2018	Forced Resignation of Attorney General Jeff Sessions	Versus Republican	Democrat	No claims	No cla
26	11/26/2018	Regarding the Treatment of Those Seeking Refuge at the Southern Border	Versus Republican	Democrat	Mostly False	Withh
27	1/17/2019	New Revelations About the Separation of Children from Their Families at the Border	Versus Republican	Democrat	No claims	No cla
28	1/24/2019	Continuing Government Shutdown	Neutral	Democrat	No claims	No cla
29	2/26/2019	Joint Resolution in Response to the President's Declaration of National Emergency	Versus Republican	Democrat	False	Withh
30	3/15/2019	Tragic Religious Persecution and Violence in Christchurch, New Zealand	Neutral	Neutral	Accurate	Accura
31	3/23/2019	Conclusion of the Mueller Investigation	Neutral	Democrat	Accurate	Accura

32	4/22/2019	the Tragic Religious Persecution and Violence in Sri Lanka	Neutral	Democrat	Accurate	Accur
33	6/6/2019	the Victimization of Children in Our Broken Immigration System	Versus Republican	Democrat	Accurate	Withh
34	7/16/2019	New Asylum Rule and in Defense of Fair and Just Policy Solutions	Versus Republican	Democrat	No claims	No cla
35	8/5/2019	El Paso Massacre and White Supremacy	Versus Republican	Democrat	No claims	No cla
36	8/23/2019	Child Detention	Versus Republican	Democrat	No claims	No cla
37	9/25/2019	Whistleblower Complaint, Truth, and Transparency	Versus Republican	Democrat	No claims	No cla
38	11/25/2019	the Testimonies of Marie Yovanovitch and Dr. Fiona Hill	Versus Republican	Democrat	No claims	No cla
39	12/18/2019	the House Impeachment Vote	Versus Republican	Democrat	Partisan	Mislea
40	1/21/2020	Refugee Resettlement in Texas	Versus Republican	Democrat	No claims	No cla
41	2/6/2020	Impeachment Acquittal and Senator Romney's Vote	Versus Republican	Democrat	No claims	No cla
42	2/20/2020	Politicization of the Department of Justice by Attorney General Barr	Versus Republican	Democrat	False	Mislea
43	3/10/2020	Judiciary Independence	Versus Republican	Democrat	Accurate	Withh
44	6/8/2020	Confronting Systemic Racism	Versus Republican	Democrat	Ideological	Withh
45	7/17/2020	Call to Action: Speak Up for Transparency in COVID-19 Data	Versus Republican	Democrat	Accurate	Withh
46	7/23/2020	Call to Action: Ask Your Senators to Provide Funding to Keep Our Elections Safe and Accessible	Neutral	Neutral	No claims	No cla
47	7/29/2020	Call to Action: Speak Out Against Federal and Executive Overreach	Versus Republican	Democrat	No claims	Withh
48	8/17/2020	Pledge Not to Leverage or Weaponize Faith for Political Gain	Neutral	Neutral	No claims	No cla

#1. [in Response to the White Supremacist Rally in Charlottesville, Virginia](#)

Selection Bias: Neutral

Interpretive Bias: Neutral

Factual Accuracy: Accurate

Factual Integrity: Accurate

Nonpartisan/Centrist Approach: All Americans should denounce hateful conduct and notions any group's superiority.

#2. with Regard to Announcement About DACA

Selection Bias: Versus Republican

Interpretive Bias: Democrat

Factual Accuracy: Accurate

Factual Integrity: Accurate

Explanation: Topic criticizes the Republican administration and uses charged language ("indefensible and reprehensible disregard.") Factual claims are accurate and appear representative.

#3. in Response to Bannon Interview

Selection Bias: Versus Republican

Interpretive Bias: Neutral

Factual Accuracy: Accurate

Factual Integrity: Accurate

Explanation: While Trump and an associate are criticized, their statements are indefensible and should be condemned regardless of one's political views.

#4. With Regard to the Mueller Investigation

Selection Bias: Versus Republican

Interpretive Bias: Democrat

Factual Accuracy: No claims

Factual Integrity: Withholding

Explanation: MWEG points to "recent indictments" in the Mueller investigation while failing to disclose that the indictments were [unrelated to the topic of the investigation](#) and included process crimes for which Obama officials and Clinton operatives "[have skated free.](#)" The statement [makes additional demands echoing statements of prominent Democrats](#) denouncing the potential use of presidential pardons. Comparative data, such as [Obama's pardon of a general who lied to the FBI](#) and [Bill Clinton's pardon to stymie investigation](#), are not disclosed.

Nonpartisan/Centrist Approach: The same standard should be applied to all parties, regardless of political affiliation.

#5. With Regard to Gun Violence

Selection Bias: Neutral

Interpretive Bias: Neutral

Factual Accuracy: Accurate

Factual Integrity: Accurate

#6. [in Response to Bigotry](#)

Selection Bias: Versus Republican

Interpretive Bias: Neutral

Factual Accuracy: Accurate

Factual Integrity: Accurate

Explanation: The statement denounces deplorable rhetoric of Donald Trump that should be condemned by all. The interpretive bias is rated as neutral. However, in this and other statements, MWEG never calls out figures of the political left for racist and bigoted statements and even [blood libels](#). No demands were made for leftists promoting dangerous [Soviet-style racist tropes](#) to [overcome their prejudices](#) even after one was voted [2019's anti-Semite of the year](#). Then-presidential candidate and now vice presidential nominee Kamala Harris [compared Immigration and Customs Enforcement officers to the KKK](#). Many other leftists have disparaged entire groups of dedicated public servants, including police and immigration officers, often in incendiary terms.

Nonpartisan/Centrist Approach: Those engaging in bigoted and inflammatory speech should be held accountable equally, regardless of their political affiliation.

#7. [Alabama Senate Election Results](#)

Selection Bias: Versus Republican

Interpretive Bias: Neutral

Factual Accuracy: Accurate

Factual Integrity: Accurate

Explanation: While the item celebrates the defeat of a Republican senatorial candidate, the individual's conduct is reprehensible and the rebuke is ethically justified. The narrative is presented fairly.

Yet moral standards need to be applied equally without regard to political affiliation. When Democrat Cal Cunningham in a competitive North Carolina Senate race was [embroiled in a sexting scandal](#) as [acknowledged fact](#) and was further alleged to be [carrying on an eight-year affair](#), MWEG did not issue a similar statement condemning misconduct and stating that Cunningham should be kept out of the Senate as a matter of public integrity. Cunningham did not drop out of the race, insisting that his sexual misconduct was less consequential and that his "[campaign...is about things that are much bigger or more important.](#)" Cunningham's reasoning is substantially similar to that conveyed by an MWEG editorial [brushing off allegations against Joe Biden](#).

A true arbiter of ethics does not get to pick and choose, to play up allegations against political enemies while engorging them entirely for political favorites. MWEG has engaged in partisan weaponization of allegations of sexual misconduct. In other statements, the group has repeatedly attacked conservatives on the basis of unsubstantiated claims (#17,18,19, 20), while [refusing to hold leftists accountable](#) even in the face of confirmed misconduct.

#8. President Trump's Crass and Racist Comments

Selection Bias: Versus Republican

Interpretive Bias: Democrat

Factual Accuracy: Accurate

Factual Integrity: Accurate

Explanation: These remarks are unacceptable and should be condemned by all. However, MWEG does not hold Democrats similarly accountable for bigoted and inflammatory rhetoric (see #6 above). The statement goes far beyond condemning offensive remarks to full-throated advocacy of impeachment of President Trump by Congress less than a year into his term:

"We impatiently await the time when honorable members of Congress from both sides of the aisle will put aside politics, recognize what is at stake, and take decisive action to protect this country from a President who is so clearly unfit for office."

#9. Fifteen Declarations on Ethical Immigration Policy

Selection Bias: Versus Republican

Interpretive Bias: Democrat

Factual Accuracy: No Claims

Factual Integrity: Misleading

MWEG Approach: MWEG makes no distinction between legal and illegal immigration. Nowhere is the term "illegal" found in the statement, nor the word "alien" used federal law, or even "undocumented." Euphemisms are used to obfuscate. Illegal border entry is sanitized by the circumlocution "attempting to cross a border without express permission," as if the unauthorized crossing of transnational borders were a trivial formality. The statement twice refers to "otherwise law-abiding immigrants." "Otherwise" tacitly admits the never explicitly acknowledged fact of illegal entry.

A headlined declaration (#3) states that "strong border security is vital to the welfare of our nation," while smaller text goes on to undermine this in subtler language by denying that most illegal crossers should be apprehended or deported.

Fact Check: "Law-abiding" makes a non-factual assertion ignoring other crimes committed by fraudulently obtaining identification, forged or stolen [social security cards](#), and federal benefits to which the individual is not lawfully entitled. Reports have found that most adult illegal aliens have [committed multiple felonies](#). Identity theft and tax fraud are hardly victimless crimes.

It is difficult to claim a serious stance towards border security and enforcement of immigration law without forthright acknowledgment that illegal immigration involves breaches of law. MWEG suspends central tenets of the LDS faith regarding the importance of "obeying, honoring, and sustaining the law" (Article of Faith 12) entirely in regard to U.S. immigration law. One might view such violations sympathetically and advocate for broad amnesty. Yet these matters require even-handed disclosure and discussion.

MWEG's assertion that illegal immigrants do not take jobs from American workers is asserted as an ideological tenet while [ignoring contrary evidence](#) of job losses that primarily harm American-born minorities and the poor. Even the Clinton-associated Brookings Institution acknowledges that illegal immigrants take jobs from American workers, but "[may not actually be 'stealing' as many U.S. jobs as Trump thinks](#)" and offer other important contributions. The relationship between immigration and jobs needs to be considered even-handedly rather than asserted a priori.

Nonpartisan/Centrist Approach: MWEG's concept of "border security" is radically different from that of most Americans. A "consensus plurality" supports "[better border security and stronger enforcement of our immigration laws](#)" while offering those already here a path to citizenship by meeting certain requirements. There are good reasons for supporting a modest level of immigration, and immigrant contributions can [grow the economy](#).

#10. [With Regard to Continuing Negotiations on Protections for DREAMers](#)

Selection Bias: Versus Republican

Interpretive Bias: Democrat

Factual Accuracy: Accurate

Factual Integrity: Misleading

Explanation: MWEG condemns the Republican administration while failing to disclose objections that proposed legislation would allegedly "[increase illegal immigration, surge chain migration, continue catch-and-release and give a pathway to citizenship to convicted alien felons.](#)"

#11. [An Open Letter to Mitt Romney](#)

Selection Bias: Versus Republican

Interpretive Bias: Democrat

Factual Accuracy: No claims

Factual Integrity: No claims

Explanation: MWEG denounces Mitt Romney's stance over the mere statement that he is a "hawk on immigration," with no mention of any specific policies.

MWEG has devoted numerous statements to immigration-related issues, making it the group's top issue. MWEG's January 2019 "[A Citizen's Solution for Ethical Immigration Reform](#)" (not listed on the group's website as an "official statement") is a thoughtful piece demonstrating engagement and effort, notwithstanding its failure to address key issues and unworkability in the contemporary political environment.

However, the group's official statements frequently fail to deal with immigration controversies fairly and even-handedly. Most Americans support legal immigration and [feel some sympathy towards illegal immigrants](#). There is no doubt that [conservatives have made substantive mistakes](#) on immigration policy. Yet the group pushes leftist narratives and agenda while ignoring key data and counter-arguments which taken together, would offer a more balanced view.

In repeatedly attacking only one party over the immigration crisis and framing the matter in inflammatory partisan language,

MWEG fails to address the culpability of leftist fellow-travelers for their substantial role in the crisis. Flouting of federal law by leftist politicians with "sanctuary city" and even "sanctuary state" ordinances, including mandates of non-cooperation with federal immigration officials and refusal to honor detainers for criminal aliens, have disincentivized bipartisan compromise. There is no reason for Democrats to offer concessions or to support rather than undermine enforcement of immigration law when they are getting what they want for free, through [sweeping national injunctions by activist judges](#) and [self-acknowledged executive overreach](#) which have radically changed the rules of the game without the hard work and accountability of legislative compromise.

Democratic vice-presidential nominee [Kamala Harris has advocated decriminalization of illegal entry into the U.S.](#) and non-enforcement of border security. She has expressed support for sanctuary cities and states that ignore federal immigration law and prohibit cooperation of local law enforcement with federal immigration officials. Democratic congresswoman Veronica Escobar has been accused of [sending staff to Mexico to coach individuals to seek asylum with fraudulent claims](#), notwithstanding that encouraging others to make false statements on an immigration application constitutes a [violation of the law](#). Hillary Clinton's claim that half of illegal immigrants paid federal income taxes was found by Just Facts to be false: very few "actually pay federal income tax," and of those who filed tax returns, the vast majority did so [to receive cash welfare payments](#) to which they were not legally entitled. Yet MWEG has written no letters to Democratic politicians who have undermined U.S. immigration law, violated their ethical obligations and duties, spread false narratives, or even engaged in blatant violations of law, whereas the mere mention of being "a hawk on [illegal] immigration" by a Republican elicits the group's indignant critique.

The letter to Romney acknowledges that although "a large percentage of our members live in Utah," MWEG curiously learned about Romney's remarks "to a gathering of Utah County Republican women in Provo" only by reading about them. Awareness of MWEG's ideology and politics may offer insight into why MWEG may not have firsthand knowledge from an event for Republican women featuring a nationally prominent candidate held in many of its members' back yard.

#12. [Crisis in Syria](#)

Selection Bias: Neutral

Interpretive Bias: Neutral

Factual Accuracy: Accurate

Factual Integrity: Withholding

Background: The crisis in Syria is a major human rights catastrophe that has killed over 400,000, [displaced six million internally](#), and [five million seeking refuge abroad](#).

Analysis: Relief for the war in Syria is one of MWEG's few nonpoliticized, nonpartisan human rights issues. The dire humanitarian crisis that has displaced millions and caused untold suffering. The number of Christians and other religious minorities have dwindled markedly due to genocide. It is unfortunate that MWEG did not follow noble thoughts and expressions of sympathy with calls to action for its members to work towards concrete relief steps and lobbying elected officials for specific interventions.

MWEG fails to acknowledge basic facts or demand accountability. The Syria crisis, which unfolded during the Obama administration, will [stain's Obama's legacy forever](#). While MWEG has been quick to blame Republicans over suspicions and unsubstantiated allegations, the group fails to attribute responsibility for massive suffering and loss of human life resulting from failed leftist policies.

Nonpartisan/Centrist approach: Coordinating with relief agencies, assessing needs and opportunities, mobilizing donations, inviting refugees in the U.S. to speak at local events to raise awareness, working to protect threatened minorities, and lobbying elected officials all would have been appropriate steps for a concerned social welfare organization.

Elected officials should be held accountable for policy failures, regardless of their party affiliation. The architects of catastrophic

policies, in this case, the Obama administration and its officials, should be held accountable, and constructive solutions sought going forward. #countryoverparty.

#13. Mother's Day Call to Action: Immigration

Selection Bias: Versus Republican

Interpretive Bias: Democrat

Factual Accuracy: Accurate

Factual Integrity: Accurate

Explanation: The topic condemns the Republican administration, while the interpretation adds charged language and additional negative commentary. The factual narrative is accurate. While context and information are withheld, this deficiency is not deemed sufficient to warrant a demerit for factual integrity.

#14. Families Can Be Together Forever; Families Should Be Together Now

Selection Bias: Versus Republican

Interpretive Bias: Democrat

Factual Accuracy: No claims

Factual Integrity: No claims

Explanation: As above, the item condemns the Republican administration with charged language while failing to suggest viable solutions. The implications of the 2105 Gee decision, noted later, are never acknowledged or addressed, nor the difficulties it poses for enforcement of immigration law. This deficiency also is not deemed sufficient to warrant a demerit for factual integrity.

#15. The Separation of Children from Their Families at the Border

Selection Bias: Versus Republican

Interpretive Bias: Democrat

Factual Accuracy: No claims

Factual Integrity: No claims

Explanation: as above (#14). Criticizes Department of Homeland Security and administration in inflammatory terms. Does not investigate or address underlying issues.

#13,14,15, 36 Immigration and Child Detention

Analysis: A porous border has incentivized many families to send unaccompanied children on a dangerous journey. In 2014, [President Barack Obama called on families from Central America to stop sending unaccompanied children](#) to the U.S. border, acknowledging a "humanitarian crisis" and stating:

“Our message absolutely is don’t send your children unaccompanied, on trains or through a bunch of smugglers. We don’t even know how many of these kids don’t make it, and may have been waylaid into sex trafficking or killed because they fell off a train. Do not send your children to the borders. If they do make it, they’ll get sent back. More importantly, they may not make it.”

Migrant children have been commoditized and exploited with many adults "[illegally crossing the border with children – who are not their own](#) – to avoid long-term federal custody." Alleged relationships of migrant children to accompanying adults are often misstated and difficult to verify. Some are not safe with accompanying adults. [Some unaccompanied minors have been abandoned. Others are fleeing domestic abuse; some are abused by traffickers](#). The policies that MWEG advocates pose perverse incentives with real risks.

Nor does MWEG pay any heed to the massive human cost of these policies across the southern border. No mention is made of the role of "[transnational smugglers who advertise easy admission to the United States as part of a multi-billion-dollar criminal enterprise](#)." During the Obama years, human smuggling between Latin America and the U.S. constituted an estimated [\\$6.6 billion industry annually](#), with smugglers typically charging between five and ten thousand dollars per person.

The U.S. border has become more porous due to the [2015 Gee ruling](#). Many have expressed concern that criminal cartels, rather than bipartisan laws passed by Congress, have increasingly determined who can enter and live in the U.S. Growing revenue from human and drug trafficking and other criminal enterprise resulting from a porous border have strengthened criminal cartels, contributing to murders, kidnapping, and other violent crimes in Mexico. Largely driven by the drug and human trafficking trade, the murder rate in Mexico has continued to reach new annual highs of over 25,000 in 2017, [over 33,000 in 2018](#), and [over 35,000 murders in 2019](#). [Brazen murders of law enforcement officers in Mexico](#) have become increasingly routine, making the country less safe and less just for peaceful and law-abiding citizens.

While MWEG has repeatedly pointed to the need for family unification of minors who were held in temporary custody at the U.S. border, there has been no mention of the tens of thousands of murders committed by criminal cartels enriched and emboldened by the breakdown of U.S. immigration law. The temporary separation of migrant children in border custody from [ostensible] parents is deplorable, and has received wide attention and has been substantially wound down by the U.S. administration. Yet even more serious is the permanent separation experienced by hundreds of thousands of families across Mexico who lost parents, children, and loved ones murdered by criminal cartels funded by the U.S. human trafficking and drug trades and have no prospect for family unification. Those who enable and facilitate the activities of criminal organizations share accountability for these murders.

Nonpartisan/Centrist Approach: There is a moral duty to advocate for ethics and rational, sound policies. However, this requires a comprehensive evaluation of the issues, rather than one-sided partisan narratives. Child detention should be ended, but safeguards are also needed to ensure that accompanying adults are actual legal guardians and that children are protected from physical and sexual abuse by human traffickers and others. Ethical policy must work to diminish or eliminate lucrative incentives for human traffickers and criminal cartels. The economic incentives posed by the porous U.S. border and inept foreign policy have contributed to neighboring nations of Mexico, Guatemala, Honduras, and El Salvador becoming some of the most violent and dangerous in the world. The United States has a moral obligation to work to mitigate, prevent, and repair the negative externalities to its neighbors of foreign and domestic policy and to help remedy underlying issues of corruption, violence, and human rights abuses in other nations that have made their citizens unsafe.

[#16. in Response to the Supreme Court’s 5-4 Decision to Uphold Travel Ban](#)

Selection Bias: Versus Republican

Interpretive Bias: Democrat

Factual Accuracy: No claims

Factual Integrity: Misleading

Explanation: MWEГ condemns the decision of the US Supreme Court. The group cites leftist tropes in representing travel bans for individuals from seven countries as a Muslim ban and conflates the court's decision with anti-Muslim sentiment in the US.

Fact Check: In attempting to map inflammatory narratives onto the [Supreme Court's carefully considered decision](#), MWEГ withholds salient information and reasoning. MWEГ ignores the court's finding that the policy "[is facially neutral toward religion](#)." MWEГ does not acknowledge the rationale stated by the Department of Homeland Security, which was not religiously-based but rather centered on security risks and concern that it could not verify information for individuals from these nations. MWEГ fails to note that the seven countries restricted were first identified as security risks, [four in legislation passed by Congress and signed by Obama, and three more by the Obama administration](#), although Trump's response to these risks was very different. MWEГ fails to note that two of the countries, North Korea and Venezuela, are not Muslim countries and that 88% of the world's Muslims live in countries not included in the order.

MWEГ has elsewhere claimed to oppose the politicization of the justice system, but here demands a political result from the high court, citing considerations unrelated to the merit of the case and the questions at hand. Nothing in MWEГ's statement acknowledges or engages with the issues addressed in the Supreme Court ruling, and it appears likely that MWEГ's leadership did not actually [read the Supreme Court ruling](#) before taking to the internet to denounce it. If they did read it, an accurate and fair response would have been warranted. MWEГ's irresponsible attack on the Supreme Court demonstrates #partyovercountry partisanship that is the opposite of responsible civic engagement.

Nonpartisan/Centrist Approach: There is a reasonable need to verify information regarding individuals attempting to enter the US and implement common-sense security measures with evidence-based policy. State sponsors of terror should be sanctioned and those responsible held accountable. Efforts should be taken to improve communication and bilateral relationships with nations for which traveler data has been difficult to verify. Common-sense security measures Inflammatory rhetoric on all sides should be condemned. Fair treatment and respect are needed across all faiths.

[#17 With Regard to the Brett Kavanaugh Confirmation Proceedings](#)

Selection Bias: Versus Republican

Interpretive Bias: Democrat

Factual Accuracy: No claims

Factual Integrity: Withholding

[#18 in Response to Today's Testimonies from Dr. Christine Blasey Ford and Judge Brett Kavanaugh](#)

Selection Bias: Versus Republican

Interpretive Bias: Democrat

Factual Accuracy: No claims

Factual Integrity: Withholding

[#19 in Response to the Senate Judiciary Committee Vote on Judge Kavanaugh](#)

Selection Bias: Versus Republican

Interpretive Bias: Democrat

Factual Accuracy: No claims

Factual Integrity: No claims

[#20 Before the Vote on the Confirmation of Brett Kavanaugh as a Justice to the Supreme Court](#)

Selection Bias: Versus Republican

Interpretive Bias: Democrat

Factual Accuracy: No claims

Factual Integrity: No claims

MWEG Approach: MWEG issued four (4) statements centered on allegations against Supreme Court nominee Judge Brett Kavanaugh. These statements demonstrate pervasive bias. In all three statements before the final vote was imminent, MWEG explicitly reverses the constitutional presumption of “innocent until proven guilty,” placing the burden of proving innocence on Kavanaugh.

“If these statements are proved false, an investigation will prevent harm to the court’s legitimacy.” (#17)

“If Judge Kavanaugh is indeed innocent of these charges, as he persists in claiming that he is, then he should welcome an independent investigation that could clear his name.” (#18)

“If he is innocent of these charges, then he, more than anyone, should want this investigation to take place so that his name can be cleared.” (#19)

MWEG not only reverses the presumption of innocence, but further raises the bar, insisting that Kavanaugh has the duty to prove innocence — not only beyond the standard of reasonable doubt required for conviction in criminal court but beyond any doubt, no matter how baseless or absurd:

“We must ensure beyond any doubt that only those with exceptional and unassailable character and judgment are permitted to wield the power and privileges inherent in the highest offices in the land.” (#18, emphasis mine)

MWEG demanded that the Senate “immediately suspend the confirmation proceedings until a thorough independent investigation can be conducted,” stating that “at risk is the legitimacy of the Supreme Court,” and stated that “if Judge Kavanaugh is confirmed without that additional process, that doubt will linger over both him and the legitimacy of the Supreme Court.”

MWEG’s moralizing was one-sided. While the group repeatedly noted that Kavanaugh should not be confirmed if accusations were believed, among other things, the group issued no warnings or calls for accountability if accusers were found to be bearing false witness (9th commandment). MWEG asserted without evidence or analysis of the facts that fellow anti-Trump critic Christine Blasey Ford was a “credible witness.” In contrast to palpable hostility and skepticism towards Judge Kavanaugh, MWEG acted as a Blasey Ford apologist, noting that the content of her leaked letter should not be used to discredit her while failing to note that her letter was [leaked by Democrats](#).

On social media, many MWEG members supported #WeBelieveYou Christine Blasey Ford and similar taglines from the moment the allegations were made, contrary to principles of basic fairness and due process, and perseverated in these narratives even as the claims fell apart. As it became apparent that there was no credible basis to the allegations against Kavanaugh, MWEG followed the lead of the far left in pivoting to impugn Kavanaugh’s temperament after he was subjected to intense abuse.

Fact Check: MWEG conspicuously failed to seek “[clear, objective, verifiable facts](#)” or to eschew “distorted information” from

biased partisans.

Christine Blasey Ford was a registered Democrat, progressive donor, and Trump critic whose allegations against Brett Kavanaugh involved [a changing narrative with numerous factual inconsistencies](#). Key claims were [contradicted by Blasey Ford's lifelong friend Leland Kayser](#), Ford's [long-term boyfriend](#), and others. Assertions initially trumpeted to bolster Ford's credibility, such that Ford had allegedly passed a lie detector test, never materialized; others, such as reported notes from a therapist, contradicted Ford's tale. Female prosecutor Rachel Mitchell ["eviscerated" Blasey Ford's case](#), pointing out numerous problems and contradictions. There was no evidence, credible or otherwise, that Blasey Ford had ever even met Kavanaugh.

Kathleen Parker of the Washington Post notes that Leland Kayser, Blasey Ford's lifetime friend and registered Democrat, is the "true hero" of the Kavanaugh saga. Kayser "became increasingly convinced that [Ford's story isn't true and doesn't make sense](#)," notwithstanding pressure from "Ford's team of friends and advisers...to get her on board," but stood by her convictions to tell the truth.

Ford's [story fell part fast after her testimony](#). [New accusers brought forth by Democrats were even less credible](#). Blasey Ford's attorney has subsequently acknowledged that [her testimony was politically motivated](#), contrary to earlier claims. Accuser [Julie Swetnick was referred for criminal investigation for providing false statements, obstructing congressional investigations, and conspiracy in violation of federal law](#). Michael Avenatti's media circus has ended, and Avenatti is now a [convicted felon](#).

By all indications, Kavanaugh appears to be a good man with exemplary moral character who is [broadly supported by women who actually know him](#) but was subjected to fever-pitched personal attacks and even death threats. Except with partisans whose views were never based in fact, Kavanaugh appears to have come as close to vindication as possible in the #metoo era.

Analysis: Notwithstanding numerous factual inconsistencies, contradictions, a lack of any credible evidence, and likely political motivations, MWEG was undeterred in dignifying baseless allegations both in its official statements and on social media. The group pushed the obstructionist agenda of the far left with calls for ongoing hearings long after the lack of merit had become apparent to fair-minded parties.

Centrist Republican [Susan Collins' statement on the Kavanaugh confirmation](#) is far more fair-minded, insightful, and honest than MWEG's advocacy. [Margot Cleveland wrote in USA Today](#) that moderate, pro-choice Republican Senator Susan Collins was "willing to proclaim the difficult truth: Ford's claims of sexual assault were not believed because they were not believable." Cleveland continued:

"The extreme left of the Democratic Party may celebrate leaders' no-holds-bar attempt to derail Kavanaugh's confirmation, but swing suburban moms are appalled by the Democrats' ill-use of Ford, Ramirez and Swetnick... Moderate women voters also find Democratic senators' utter disregard for the men affected by false claims of sexual assault terrifying. Women watched as Kavanaugh spoke forcefully to defend his name and honor, and in Kavanaugh, women saw their innocent fathers, husbands, brothers, or sons, falsely accused, condemned and left with a reputation irreparably damaged. And in Kavanaugh's loving wife, young daughters and distraught mother, women saw themselves and their families... And as Ford's story fell apart following her testimony, women saw the obvious harm the Democrats' tactic will inflict on real victims of sexual assault."

Throughout the process, MWEG not only failed to stand up to its fellow leftists against the extreme abuse heaped on Judge Kavanaugh and his family but demonstrated shocking disregard for the impact of false charges on men. Relentless character assaults, however baseless, malicious, and absurd, are dignified and encouraged by MWEG with the assertion that it is the nominee's duty to be "unassailable...beyond any doubt," whereas the group made no call for accountability towards those who bear false witness. Such dehumanizing conduct violates MWEG's professed "absolute commitment to civility."

As the allegations began to fall apart, not only did MWEG fail to stand up for fair treatment of Kavanaugh, but it pivoted with the left to impugn his temperament. Recognized by those who knew him and throughout his professional career as kind and professional, Kavanaugh's sin was the audacity to defend himself. After relentless abusive, malicious, and humiliating, attacks including death threats against himself and his wife, Kavanaugh expressed outrage at the assault against his character and family, which he noted "[has destroyed my family and my good name.](#)"

MWEG stated: "we also boldly declare that revelations of sexual misconduct should not be strategically employed by politicians for political purposes." This "bold" declaration, as well as misstating the facts at hand (the Kavanaugh hearings offered no "revelations"), is sadly hollow. MWEG's repeated lobbying of Mormon senators to stop the confirmation process for additional investigations without basic diligence to determine whether the charges were even credible, and – most astonishingly – reversing the presumption of innocence and placing the burden on the accused to prove the allegations false, creates a strong incentive for politically motivated allegations to continue. The group's own statements both invert (#17,18,19) and raise (#18) the burden of proof to charge the accused with proving his innocence beyond any doubt – at least, in regard to conservatives. Thus MWEG requires no evidence at all to demand unending investigations of conservatives and to persevere in such demands long after any allegations have been discredited. There have been "[no lessons learned, no moments of self-reflection and no one being held accountable](#)" at MWEG.

Nonpartisan/Centrist Approach: Allegations should be taken seriously and investigated to determine whether they are credible and substantiated, regardless of the politics of the accused. The process should take into account the rights of both the accuser and the accused. If claims of misconduct are found to be substantiated, the individual responsible should not be confirmed or appointed, and further action should be taken as appropriate.

Baseless claims should not be permitted to create political theater and unending calls for investigation as part of a tactic of political obstructionism once it has been determined that they lack reasonable predication or when key claims are found to be untruthful. Those who bear false witness, who make claims that are shown to be fraudulent, malicious, or in bad faith, should be held accountable and should face personal and legal consequences commensurate with the harm they sought to inflict on others.

Joe Biden Allegations (Comparison – no MWEG statement)

Background: Recent revelations about Democratic presidential nominee Joe Biden seem to cry out for ethical inquiry. In March 2020, Democratic presidential candidate Joe Biden was accused of sexual assault – not by an opposition political activist, but by a long-term employee [with a more credible case](#) than unsubstantiated and likely politically motivated allegations against Judge Kavanaugh.

Media have continued to report [Joe and Jill Biden's "sweet story."](#) an elaborate tale that allegedly started with the couple being introduced after the tragic death of Biden's wife and infant daughter in a car accident. Various versions include that Biden was set up on a blind date with Jill, that he was introduced by his brother, or that he saw a picture of Jill and wanted to meet her. Joe Biden has repeatedly boasted about how "smart" he was for marrying Jill.

In August 2020, Jill Biden's ex-husband, Bill Stephenson, provided information contradicting Biden's long-time narrative. Stephenson is not a political activist and reports no ill-will, noting: "I genuinely [don't want to harm Jill's chances of becoming First Lady](#)...I'm not bitter because, if it wasn't for my divorce, I would never have met my wife Linda and she's the greatest thing in my life — but it does have facts in it that aren't pleasant to Jill and Joe." He further noted: "I don't want to hurt anyone. But facts are facts and what happened, happened."

Stephenson noted that he and Jill actually met Biden when he was an aide for Biden's first senate campaign in Delaware. [Joe Biden then seduced his campaign assistant's wife, carried on an affair, precipitated their divorce, married her himself -](#)

and concocted [an elaborate lie that he and Jill have been publicly telling for over 40 years.](#)

MWEG Approach: MWEG's treatment of allegations towards Joe Biden offers a "shoe on the other foot" test of the group's professed ethics and values. In response to both of these allegations, MWEG was silent. MWEG issued no press release and did not call for further investigation of the allegations against Biden. It did not state that a Biden presidency would be tainted without full hearings and sweeping investigations. MWEG made no statement that if voters believe that Joe Biden may have committed sexual assault, he should not be elected president of the United States. Only in response to repeated inquiries from multiple sources did it [pen an editorial for the Salt Lake Tribune](#) to demur. MWEG has had no response to subsequent revelations that Biden seduced his campaign aide's wife, carried on an affair, and broke up Stephenson's marriage.

Analysis: Unlike Blasey Ford, Stephenson is a non-hostile party with direct, confirmed knowledge. He should be precisely the kind of witness that MWEG would seek in view of its stated focus on "[clear, objective, verifiable facts](#)" in contrast to "distorted information" from biased partisans. Stephenson's specific factual claims –working on then-New Castle County Councilman Biden's first campaign for Senate with his wife Jill and meeting Biden in that capacity, in contrast to Biden's tale of meeting Jill later on a "blind date" or being introduced by Biden's brother – are subject to direct verification.

It is difficult to imagine a more profound abuse of power, breach of trust, and violation of ethics than seducing an aide's wife, carrying on an affair, breaking up a marriage, and lying about it repeatedly. [Biden's plagiarism in law school](#) almost prevented him from being admitted to the bar.

Those who hold values that MWEG has loudly professed should find these matters deeply troubling. How can the American people trust an individual who has violated core values proclaimed by all major faiths and ethical systems and repeatedly lied about it? What does this say about Biden's character? How can an individual who has conducted himself in this way be considered fit to serve as President of the United States? Pointed questions should be put to Biden. Now that evidence is out, will he admit to the truth of what really happened to the American public, or will he persevere in a lie? Why did he lie about it? About what else has Biden lied?

Reason.com writer Robby Soave wrote, "[What a difference the partisan affiliation of the accused makes!](#) MWEG's criticisms of moral character and fitness for office are suspended entirely in regard to Joe Biden. MWEG's demands towards Judge Kavanaugh inverted the burden of proof against conservatives and even demanding them to prove innocence against any doubt (#18). These concerns about the need for "exceptional and unassailable character" have evaporated in regard to the Democratic nominee for the "highest office in the land." The lack of any calls for public accountability towards Biden once again reveals partisanship, not ethics, as the driving force of the group's activism.

Nonpartisan/Centrist Approach: All individuals, both Democrats and Republicans, should be held accountable to a consistent moral standard.

[#21 MWEG Promotes Voter Registration, Education, and Turnout Ahead of Midterm Elections](#)

Selection Bias: Versus Republican

Interpretive Bias: Democrat

Factual Accuracy: No claims

Factual Integrity: Misleading/Withholding

[#24 The 2018 Midterm Elections](#)

Selection Bias: Versus Republican

Interpretive Bias: Democrat

Factual Accuracy: No claims

Factual Integrity: Misleading/Withholding

Explanation: In #21, MWEG draws attention to the Georgia voter registration controversy while failing to disclose that the “exact match” policy reportedly reflected a state law authorized under federal law.

In #24, MWEG questions the legitimacy of the 2018 midterm election, presumably regarding the same Georgia voter registration controversy.

Fact Check: The details of the Georgia voter registration controversy are more fairly represented in the [Associated Press article the statement cites](#) than in the MWEG statement itself. Context is neglected regarding similar problems with voter registration matching in other states due to [glitches](#) or process problems regarding [problematic “exact match laws”](#) passed by state legislatures. While impugning the legitimacy of the Georgia election with partisan allegations, MWEG fails to note much larger threats to American elections.

Until 2018, ballot harvesting was prohibited by law in virtually every state and punishable as a felony. “Ballot harvesting” involves the collection and submission of large numbers of ballots by political operatives. Across the US, prohibitions on “ballot harvesting” have long been recognized as a widely bipartisan issue essential to the integrity, security, and transparency of elections. [Electoral fraud by paid political operatives](#) undermines the integrity and legitimacy of elections..

In 2018, Democratic supermajorities in California pushed through legislation to legalize ballot harvesting by political activists. Widespread “ballot harvesting” by Democratic operatives flipped multiple congressional seats to Democrats, including seats that had already been called in the press for Republicans, with late-breaking “ballot harvest” votes absent a chain of custody and other anti-fraud measures. [Placing a “bounty” on ballots harvested by paid political operatives](#) led to Democrats claiming all but 7 of California’s 53 Congressional seats and flipped control of Congress from Republicans to Democrats. California Republicans are now underrepresented with little voice in government.

Former Utah representative Jason Chaffetz raised concern regarding [California’s model of ballot harvesting](#) that Democrats have attempted to spread nationwide for the 2020 election. He noted the lack of chain of custody, opportunities for political operatives to “harass voters to turn in ballots, ‘assist’ them in filling them out, and potentially ‘lose’ ballots that don’t support the candidate the ballot harvester is paid to help.” With ballot harvesting, there is no election transparency and no opportunity for observers to monitor the integrity of the process. Ballots are counted behind closed doors, “where [third parties regularly attempt to influence the process](#).” “Ballot harvesting” violates principles of election security and transparency and has drawn parallels to the opaque and unverifiable electoral practices of authoritarian regimes and third-world dictatorships that are [neither free nor fair](#).

One proposal passed by the Democratic Congress “would have banished voter photo identification laws...[and] legalized vote harvesting in every state.” Democratic lawsuits in some states have also sought to [eliminate signature verification for mail-in ballots](#), even as [thousands of mail ballots sent to voters who have not lived there in years have piled up unclaimed](#). What could possibly go wrong? Yet MWEG is silent on these unprecedented threats to election integrity breaching internationally recognized standards. The prospect of large-scale voter fraud, apparently, is not an issue of government ethics or legitimacy for MWEG so long as Democrats benefit.

Nonpartisan/Centrist Approach: If voter registration is held up or ballots are disqualified due to matching problems, fair, nonpartisan approaches are needed to ensure that affected voters are notified promptly and have an opportunity to remedy deficiencies. [This recent decision of Clinton appointee Judge Orlando Garcia in Texas](#) is an excellent example of such an approach.

No voters should be wrongly disenfranchised. Election integrity measures are similarly essential to ensure a chain of custody for ballots and that those completing ballots are those they claim to be and are eligible to vote. As the balance of power in key national, state and local elections has often hinged on small numbers of votes, ballot harvesting and the dismantling of important election security measures threaten to blow open the doors for the party most willing to engage in fraud.

#22 [Environmental Stewardship and Climate Change](#)

Selection Bias: Neutral

Interpretive Bias: Democrat

Factual Accuracy: No claims

Factual Integrity: Neutral

MWEG's Approach: MWEG's call "to boldly mobilize in pursuit of creative and radical strategies" and to implement "policies that will aggressively and immediately address this worldwide threat" demonstrates alarmism and calls for sweeping intervention. The statement appears to stop only slightly short of endorsing legislation similar to Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez's "Green New Deal."

Fact Check and Analysis: Climate change is real and requires bipartisan action. However, the MWEG statement was composed in November 2018 [following the election and public rhetoric of the Democratic Green New Deal Wing](#), and pushes the alarmism of Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez' subsequent "Green New Deal." The statement ignores that sweeping "climate change" legislation proposals, such as the [Green New Deal](#), have been cited as sweeping power-grabs which [ignore science and basic economics](#) while doing little for the climate.

MWEG further ignores crucial ethical issues that are not part of the hot-button leftist agenda, such as the fact that [animal populations worldwide have declined by an average of 60% over the past forty years](#). Some species have gone extinct, and many others are critically endangered. The world has become a far less hospitable place for animals, including mammals, fish, birds, reptiles, and amphibians, including even for common species that are not currently endangered. Even the Bubonic Plague in medieval Europe was [proportionally less catastrophic](#) to human populations, and contemporary animal populations show little prospect of rebound.

MWEG's stated enthusiasm for "radical strategies" obscures the need for public discourse, sober appraisal of the real impact of proposed legislation, and evidence-based policy formulated with competent nonpartisan experts rather than hysterical extremists. Competency, not radicalism, is needed.

Nonpartisan/Centrist Approach: Responsible measures are needed to act as good stewards of the environment, engage in sustainable development, and reduce activities harming the environment. These measures should be evidence-based and collaborative, engaging stakeholders in the community, business, and government, and should be advised by competent, nonpartisan experts. The costs, benefits, unintended consequences of new legislation should be carefully weighed to optimize the cost/benefit ratio to achieve the most benefit while being mindful of the burden to individuals and the economy. The human costs and implications should be considered, and compromises sought where appropriate. International treaties should seek to ensure that other nations are acting responsibly and working cooperatively towards common goals while still acknowledging development needs and economic realities.

#23. Condemning Reckless Rhetoric and Hate-Fueled Violence

Selection Bias: Versus Republican

Interpretive Bias: Democrat

Factual Accuracy: No claims

Factual Integrity: Withholding

MWEG Approach: MWEG condemned threats of "hate-filled political violence," including [against "prominent Democrats."](#) MWEG correctly states that "[there is no such thing as harmless rhetoric.](#)" [Another MWEG statement notes:](#)

Words spoken at rallies and over podiums and airwaves should be both chosen and judged based on how they affect those most susceptible to violent tendencies. We must elevate our public discourse and guard against those who insist upon stoking the flames of hatred and discontent for their own advantage.

Bigotry and racism in any form are deplorable. This is the case, regardless of the identity of the perpetrators or the victims. Multiple MWEG statements condemn inflammatory and bigoted statements of Donald Trump, and rightly so. Yet MWEG weaponizes charges of bigotry and racism against conservatives while failing to call out any leftists who have engaged in bigoted, racist, and incendiary conduct.

Hillary Clinton has encouraged mobs, stating that "[you cannot be civil](#)" with Republicans. Unsurprisingly, [political violence from the left has increased](#). As a [surge of homicides has swept Democrat-run cities](#) leading to hundreds of excess deaths compared to prior years, public officials of both major parties had a moral obligation to speak out for peace, civility, and national unity. Yet [not a single speaker at the Democratic National Convention spoke to condemn violent riots](#). Michelle Obama's talk at the 2020 DNC contained [inflammatory and untruthful claims so egregious that her remarks were called out as false](#) even by the "[Lean Left bias](#)" [Associated Press Fact Check](#). AP further noted that Obama's remarks were "misleading and a matter that Democrats have persistently distorted."

This hate-filled rhetoric has had dire consequences for our nation. Law enforcement officers and many innocents have been murdered, homes and businesses have been destroyed, lives and dreams have been shattered.

Increasing incivility and violence has been directed against conservatives. Surrounding conservative leaders and individuals, restricting their movements, and engaging in verbal and sometimes physical attacks have become increasingly common tactics of the left. A few examples include the [politically-inspired murder of Trump supporters in Oregon](#) and allegedly also in [Milwaukee](#), the attempted [moral justification of political murder](#) by a leftist professor, the [shooting and attempted murder of senior Republican congressman Steve Scalise by an anti-Trump Bernie Sanders supporter](#), [death threats against Supreme Court nominee Brett Kavanaugh and his wife](#), and the [menacing of Senator Rand Paul and his wife](#) requiring police protection after leaving a White House event. In September 2020, security officials intercepted a letter sent to the White House demanding that President Trump drop out of the presidential election in an [envelope containing the poison ricin](#). In none of these or other cases did MWEG speak out against political violence against conservatives, nor against those who encouraged and enabled it.

Nonpartisan/Centrist approach: Civility is much needed on all sides of the political divide. Bigotry, intimidation, incitement, and political violence are never acceptable. Those who engage in such behavior should consistently be held accountable,

regardless of their political affiliation or that of their targets.

#25. [Forced Resignation of Attorney General Jeff Sessions](#)

Selection Bias: Versus Republican

Interpretive Bias: Democrat

Factual Accuracy: No claims

Factual Integrity: No claims

Analysis: While [MWEG expresses](#) doubt regarding “the legality of the appointment of Acting Attorney General Whitaker,” the group suspends its scrutiny and ostensible ethical reservations entirely in regard to violations of government ethics committed against the Trump campaign and administration.

Gross abuses and politicization of the justice system, including that [senior FBI officials lied to the FISA court and to Congress](#), FISA rules were [ignored in surveilling the Trump campaign](#), and [document falsification by a senior FBI lawyer leading to criminal indictment](#), are never mentioned. The Justice Department inspector general’s identification of “numerous errors and omissions” in the Carter Page surveillance application and even former Deputy Attorney General Rod Rosenstein’s acknowledgment that the investigation had “insufficient predication” have been similarly ignored by MWEG.

Across multiple statements, MWEG uncritically represented the Special Counsel Office (SCO) as consisting of dedicated, impartial public servants who would indisputably reveal “truths,” and to whom it expressed deep gratitude. This may be the case for some but is problematic as a sweeping generalization. An FBI official on the Mueller team has since [spoken out](#) in regard to the Mueller team’s “get Trump” attitude, including their willingness to misrepresent statements to serve a political agenda. He noted that the approach was “‘upside down’ with attorneys drafting search warrants and getting agents to simply act as affiants.” He raised concern about the SCO’s bias, distortion, and politically-motivated investigation without valid predication. These reports appear to represent the conduct of a true whistleblower speaking out against the weaponization of the justice system against political enemies. Yet MWEG was again silent. Violations of government ethics elicit no objections and are even deemed commendable by the group, so long as they are directed to harm conservatives.

MWEG writes that “the legitimacy of the executive branch depends upon” the Mueller investigation. Yet the MWEG already called for the president’s impeachment some ten months earlier, stating that they were “impatiently awaiting the time when” Congress will “take decisive action to protect this country from a president who is so clearly unfit for office” (#8, above). MWEG’s verdict has long been in, opining that the Trump administration is not legitimate. The group nonetheless makes pretense to open-mindedness, as if a lack of evidence and findings from such investigations would be deemed to vindicate the president.

Nonpartisan/Centrist Approach: Consistent ethical standards must be applied and equally enforced in all cases, without regard to favored agendas or the political affiliation of either the perpetrator or target of unethical conduct.

#26 [Regarding the Treatment of Those Seeking Refuge at the Southern Border](#)

Selection Bias: Versus Republican

Interpretive Bias: Democrat

Factual Accuracy: Mostly False

Factual Integrity: Misleading/Withholding

MWEG Approach: MWEG soft-peddles documented attacks on federal law enforcement officers, stating that there were “possibly some who may have been throwing rocks” as if it were a matter of controversy. The group represents that tear gas was used indiscriminately against women and children and implies that its use represented an unprecedented deviation from the practices of prior administrations.

Fact Check: [Violent agitators were throwing rocks at Border Patrol agents](#), who then deployed tear gas. The acting homeland Security chief stated that women and children were “absolutely not” deliberately targeted. All previous administrations from Jimmy Carter to the present have employed 2-chlorobenzylidene malononitrile (CS), or tear gas, at the border, [including 79 times under President Obama in a five-year period from 2012 to 2016](#) under “far less circumstances” with fewer agitators at the border. Curiously, members of MWEG appear never to have objected to the routine use of tear gas at the border under President Obama at a rate of more than once a month.

Analysis: It is unethical to criticize behavior by an administration of one party while giving an administration of the other party a free pass for similar conduct, as well as to fail to make key disclosures to promote a political narrative.

Nonpartisan/Centrist Approach: While tear gas has been widely used by both Democratic and Republican administrations and violence against border officers remains a difficult challenge, the use of tear gas is problematic and should be abolished by all administrations or used only as a last resort following specific protocols. Republican and Democratic administrations should be held to similar standards.

[#27. New Revelations About the Separation of Children from Their Families at the Border](#)

Selection Bias: Versus Republican

Interpretive Bias: Democrat

Factual Accuracy: No claims

Factual Integrity: No claims

[#28. Continuing Government Shutdown](#)

Selection Bias: Neutral

Interpretive Bias: Democrat

Factual Accuracy: No claims

Factual Integrity: No claims

MWEG Approach: While MWEG condemns the government shutdown, ostensibly a nonpartisan issue, its approach demonstrates leftist interpretive bias. Concerns of record national debt and unsustainable government spending that represented a central issue of the shutdown are never even acknowledged. Nor the ethical issues of high levels of debt and the burden to future generations acknowledged.

Fact Check: Congressional laws imposing a debt ceiling are not mere formalities intended to be raised indefinitely, but to encourage difficult bipartisan compromise to achieve the fiscal discipline necessary for a sustainable future and to promote real national discussion about priorities. While MWEG condemns the shutdown in harsh terms for the hardship to civil servants, government employees have always [received back pay after government shutdowns](#) – even for time spent sitting at home when no work was done. The same is not true for millions of private employees who have been out of work for months during the Covid-19 crisis without a word of concern from the group. The real loser in government shutdowns is always the American taxpayer.

In 2019, the US government debt represented the equivalent of [a \\$69,000 bill for every person in America](#). By 2021, the [national debt will exceed the size of the US economy](#). Economic research has found that high government debt acts as a drag on the economy and reduces economic growth, and thus diminishes the prosperity of all Americans. The Mercatus Center at George Mason University notes that “empirical evidence overwhelmingly supports the view that a large amount of [government debt has a negative impact on economic growth potential](#), and in many cases that impact gets more pronounced as debt increases.” They further warn that “large increases in the debt-to-GDP ratio could lead to much higher taxes, lower future incomes, and intergenerational inequity,” and project that the United States’ current fiscal trajectory will result in a loss of approximately \$13,000 per capita by 2049.

Years of fiscal irresponsibility by both Republicans and Democrats, consisting of a combination of [overspending and undertaxing](#), have led to the rapid growth of public debt. The taxes paid by US households – not only by high-income earners but also by middle and low-income households – are far below the rates in many European nations popularly represented by Democratic socialists as economic models and are insufficient to sustain recent levels of government expenditure. The availability of low-interest loans has been viewed by politicians of both parties as a largely “pain-free” way to spend now without the need for making hard decisions. The burden of servicing interest on government debt has represented an increasingly large portion of government expenditures, funds that are lost for constructive uses to both the government and the taxpayer without reducing debt.

Analysis: All of the senators named for compromising are Republicans, with the implication that other Republicans are being criticized for not voting to end the shutdown without concessions on fiscal sustainability. Here as elsewhere, MWEG’s take on “bipartisanship” involves almost exclusively Republicans crossing over to support Democratic proposals, while the group virtually never calls on Democrats to cross the aisle to support Republicans. The statement quickly pivots to immigration as the group’s most prominent issue.

Nonpartisan/Centrist Approach: Unsustainable levels of government spending and ballooning national debt are key issues of government ethics which can be addressed either by making hard choices and compromise to achieve long-term solutions or by the consequences of unchecked debt which make the United States less prosperous for all Americans. Hard decisions and real compromises involving both Democrats and Republicans need to be made for the benefit of current and future generations. The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints advocates provident living for individuals and families; these same principles are applicable to governments and organizations.

[#29. Joint Resolution in Response to the President’s Declaration of National Emergency](#)

Selection Bias: Versus Republican

Interpretive Bias: Democrat

Factual Accuracy: False

Factual Integrity: Misleading/Withholding

MWEG Approach: MWEG wrote that Congress “must pass this resolution” to “terminate President Trump’s declaration of national emergency.” MWEG denies that the border crisis represents a real national emergency to deny the president of funding.

Fact Check: Undocumented migration at the southern US border had reached very high levels at the time of the president’s declaration. Several months later, in June 2019, Acting Secretary of Homeland Security Kevin McAleenan noted a “full-blown emergency” with a [record 144,000 migrants apprehended in May 2019 and 60,000 migrant children](#) over a forty-day period at

that time. Under a national emergency, the [president has broad emergency powers](#), including some ability to reallocate funds or make expenditures in advance of Congressional appropriation.

Analysis: Yet again, MWEG follows the lead of leftists who characterized the border “emergency” as “a manufactured crisis” (Chuck Schumer), “manufacturing a crisis” (Nancy Pelosi), a “‘crisis’ that doesn’t exist” (Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez), and “a fake crisis at the border is fear-mongering” (Elizabeth Warren). Subsequently, many of these same leftists acknowledged that [the crisis was genuine](#) while merely pivoting to another attack on Trump.

It is reasonable for Congress to withhold funding for a border wall, but that does not mean that the President’s action to allocate emergency funds to build a section of border wall in an area affected by the emergency was improper. The underlying issue was MWEG’s opposition to the border wall rather than executive overreach. MWEG again presented a leftist agenda as a moral imperative on the basis of misleading claims and withholding of contrary data.

Nonpartisan/Centrist Approach: Whether or not one agrees with President Trump’s plan to build a border wall, the facts remain that (1) record levels of immigration at the southern border overwhelming existing infrastructure and resources constituted a real national emergency, and (2) the president has broad emergency powers under such circumstances, including some rights of emergency funding. Ongoing expenditures are subject to Congressional review. If Congress does not agree with the President’s emergency response, it is in Congress’ power to cut off funding or withhold appropriations.

#30. [Tragic Religious Persecution and Violence in Christchurch, New Zealand](#)

Selection Bias: Neutral

Interpretive Bias: Neutral

Factual Accuracy: Accurate

Factual Integrity: Accurate

#32. [Tragic Religious Persecution and Violence in Sri Lanka](#)

Selection Bias: Neutral

Interpretive Bias: Democrat

Factual Accuracy: Accurate

Factual Integrity: Accurate

Analysis: Hate-fueled violence against Muslims, Christians, and other groups are all equally abhorrent and should be condemned in the strongest possible terms. Large majorities of major religious groups, including Christians, Muslims, and others, condemn violence and extremism. Within various communities, there are vocal minorities willing to resort to violence and intimidation, and many others who are complicit through silence or support.

All violence is despicable, and hate-based or political violence even more so. A distinction exists between the acts of lone, often mentally disturbed extremists and well-organized groups which systematically use violence as a tool for political, religious, or economic aims. Opposition to hate-fueled violence includes calling for accountability not only for individual perpetrators but supporting efforts to dismantle or reform groups, organizations, and systems that engage in hate and oppression.

Over [260 million Christians worldwide experience very high or extreme levels of persecution](#). A 2019 report by the British government found that persecution of Christians is approaching “genocide levels” and that “[eradicating Christians and other minorities through violence](#) was the explicit objective of extremist groups” in at least five nations with a combined population of over 450 million. Christians in Iraq are “[on the verge of extinction](#),” while Christian leaders in the West have maintained silence. The number of [Christians in Syria has fallen to less than one-third of prior levels in less than a decade](#). Hate crimes against Christians have surged, with [attacks on churches worldwide reportedly increasing by over 1,000% from 2018 to 2020](#) and thousands killed for their faith. Yet many attacks on Christians fail to even [make the headlines](#). Italian journalist Giulio Meotti noted that “ABC, CBS, and NBC devoted six times more coverage to the death of one gorilla than they did on the [mass execution](#)” of “[21 Christians on a beach in Libya while they invoked the name of Jesus in Arabic and whispered prayers](#).”

Open Doors reports that “[Islamic extremism remains the global dominant driver of persecution](#), responsible for initiating oppression and conflict in 35 out of the 50 countries on the list,” and “continues to increase.” Unfortunately, discrepant standards playing up violence against some groups and playing down violence against others have been increasingly employed to serve political agendas and push partisan narratives. Following the Sri Lanka attacks on churches and hotels that [killed 290](#) and wounded many others, Hillary Clinton and Barack Obama sent coordinated tweets offered condolences to “Easter worshippers.” Of course, no one worships Easter. This absurd neologism was part of a strategy of obfuscation in tweets that failed to acknowledge many of the victims as (predominately black) Christians, the nature of the attacks as religiously-motivated hate crimes, and the perpetrators as Islamic extremists.

MWEG’s acknowledgment that the attacks were motivated by “religious hatred and bigotry” and identification of many of the victims as Muslims and Christians, respectively, is commendable. While the group rarely deviates from the narratives of the political left, this acknowledgment constitutes a noteworthy exception. MWEG quickly returns to script by failing to acknowledge that the Sri Lanka attacks were perpetrated by Islamic extremists. The group has always gone out of its way to make specific attribution of blame and link violence to rhetoric from the political far-right or alt-right, yet refuses to attribute attacks from Islamic supremacists and political leftists. Any groups promoting hate or violence, regardless of their faith or politics, should be held accountable.

In another statement, the group denounces “[Islamophobia](#).” Too often, this problematic term has been used to inappropriately lump those who [call out Islamic extremists for terror attacks and Islamist governments for human rights violations](#) together with those who express prejudice or bigotry against members of the faith generally. The term “Islamophobia,” according to liberal Belgian parliamentarian Alain Destexhe, is used as a “political weapon” with the objective of “mak[ing] Islam untouchable by placing any criticism of it as equivalent to racism” and “deliberately intends to [transform the critique of religion - a fundamental right in Western societies - into a crime](#).” Rights of conscience and free speech include the freedom not to believe and to critique and dissent.

LDS Scripture teaches that “We do not believe it just to [mingle](#) religious influence with civil government, whereby one religious society is fostered and another proscribed in its spiritual privileges, and the individual rights of its members, as citizens, denied” ([Doctrine and Covenants 134:9-10](#)). Unfortunately, this remains the case in much of the world today, especially in authoritarian nations and in most Muslim-majority nations. Christians, Jews, and other religious minorities living under subjugation to Islamic law, or “dhimmis,” are systematically denied basic legal, social, economic, and religious rights. Many routinely face threats, intimidation, and live under threats of violence. [Perpetrators are rarely held accountable due to government complicity](#). Human Rights Watch notes [that textbooks in Saudi Arabia still contain “hateful and incendiary language” directed against nonbelievers](#). Sarah Leah Whitson, the Middle East Director at HRW, noted that “as early as first grade, students in Saudi schools are being taught hatred toward all those perceived to be of a different faith or school of thought...The lessons in hate are reinforced with each following year.”

Religious reformers and dissidents serve essential roles but have increasingly been attacked, silenced, or ignored. Brave Iranian women who have risked their lives to defy “the subjugation of women” and protest oppressive patriarchy have been almost entirely [ignored by Western feminists](#). Western “[white liberals attack brown Islamic dissidents](#)” who oppose extremism and even use “[fascist tactics to blacklist enemies](#).” Leftist groups like the Southern Poverty Law Center have found themselves “defending the kind of violent supremacists it had once sought to prosecute, and attacking types...it had once defended against violence.”

Ignorant, bigoted, and irresponsible rhetoric based on religion, ethnicity, ideology, or other factors is never acceptable. Such reprehensible conduct must be clearly distinguished from rights to dissent and to engage in legitimate critique, which must be preserved and protected from intimidation, threats, and violence. Criticisms of extreme, violent elements should never be conflated with attacks on mainstream segments of the group. There is an obligation to stand up and speak out against such abuses and against extremism of all kinds in defense of basic human rights.

Nonpartisan/Centrist Approach: No group or religion should be treated as inferior or superior to another. True human rights and ethics groups advocate for the equal protection and rights of all groups, including for Christians, Jews, and other religious minorities to experience the same rights and freedoms in Muslim-majority nations that Muslims experience in Christian and Jewish-majority nations. Radicalization, oppression, hate-based violence should be denounced, and the right to peaceable worship without fear or intimidation should be defended for all groups and in all nations.

#31. The Conclusion of the Mueller Investigation.

Selection Bias: Neutral

Interpretive Bias: Democrat

Factual Accuracy: Accurate

Factual Integrity: Accurate

MWEG Approach: “We must put aside our predetermined ideas and commit to being open-minded and accepting of whatever truths are revealed by this investigation.”

Analysis: The group had already called for Trump’s impeachment (#8) and appeared to have expected damning findings from the Mueller investigation. While MWEG breathlessly hyped the investigation, the group never acknowledged the Special Counsel’s central finding that there was [no evidence of collusion between the Trump campaign and Russia](#). Even a CNN commentator acknowledged that the Mueller report “looks bad for Obama” over the administration’s failures on Russia across multiple fronts, and raises [“a legitimate question...whether the potential ‘collusion’ narrative was invented to cover up the Obama administration’s failures.”](#) MWEG has shown no interest in putting aside its preconceptions.

#33. The Victimization of Children in Our Broken Immigration System

Selection Bias: Versus Republican

Interpretive Bias: Democrat

Factual Accuracy: Accurate

Factual Integrity: Withholding

MWEG Approach: MWEG relentlessly attacks the Trump administration while failing to acknowledge inhumane child detention practices and conditions of the Obama years.

Fact Check: MWEG is demerited for charged, inflammatory language (“militaristic tent cities”) and incendiary allegations without evidence (“other atrocities”), which [echo the claims of far-left politicians like Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez](#)’ claim that migrant detention centers are “concentration camps.”

The "concentration camps" were built by the Obama administration. Associated Press fact checkers observed that "Democrats routinely and inaccurately blame Trump for creating 'cages' for children," noting that they - along with poorly-equipped border detention centers - [were actually "Obama's creation."](#) The Associated Press noted that photos of young immigrants behind a chain fence in a holding cell which were used in Democratic tweets to [promote congressional hearings](#) on Trump policies " [were from 2014, during the Obama administration](#), but were presented by liberal activists as if they showed the effects of Trump's immigration policy now."

Overall detainee death rates during the first two years of the Trump administration were "[almost identical to that of the first two years of the Obama Administration](#)" and "show all indication of falling further in FY2019." Border facilities were overwhelmed with unprecedented numbers of migrants during the Trump presidency, with a record [60,000 child migrants apprehended in a 40-day period in 2019](#) alone in the face of inadequate Obama-era infrastructure. Sending children to the border in sweltering heat is inherently dangerous; some children have existing medical problems, and many arrive in a medically fragile state.

The administration worked with Congress to obtain [emergency supplemental funding](#) of \$3 billion for the Department of Health and Human Services and \$1.1 billion for Customs and Border Patrol. However, data show that the agency subsequently [misused millions in emergency funding intended for migrants and health care](#). An investigation by the Government Accountability Office found that immigration officials [did not follow the agency's own guidelines on health care for migrant children](#) and should be held accountable.

Analysis: MWEG's attack on the Republican administration for the tragic border deaths of migrant children is partly meritorious, although the group withholds key information and context to promote a partisan narrative.

#34. New Asylum Rule and in Defense of Fair and Just Policy Solutions

Selection Bias: Versus Republican

Interpretive Bias: Democrat

Factual Accuracy: no claims

Factual Integrity: no claims

MWEG Approach: MWEG represents massive increases in migration as being substantially driven by asylum needs and then uses this as a springboard to attack US administration policy.

Fact Check: Many asylum applications are meritorious and should be processed appropriately and approved. However, qualified asylum seekers have represented only a minute fraction of undocumented migrants at the southern border. The MWEG narrative fails to offer a balanced view or to critically scrutinize underlying issues.

In June 2019, Acting Secretary of Homeland Security Kevin McAleenan noted a "full-blown emergency" with a [record 144,000 migrants apprehended in May 2019 and 60,000 migrant children](#) over a forty-day period at that time. In comparison, [2,488 migrants from Mexico and Central America in 2016](#) and [5,175 in 2018 were granted defensive asylum](#).

Traditionally, asylum criteria have been based on the demonstration of compelling security concerns or recent persecution due

to political, religious, or human rights activities, and victims of torture or violence when local governments will not protect them, an urgent need for medical treatment not locally available, and some specific additional criteria. The definition of what conditions do and do not qualify for asylum is an important matter of national policy, as too narrow definitions risk excluding those who need asylum, whereas too broad criteria risk overwhelming limited resources and infrastructure.

Obama-era policy expanded the criteria for asylum to include [domestic and gang violence claims](#). This expansion was problematic, according to Attorney General Jeff Sessions, in vastly expanding the criteria for asylum and created "'powerful incentives' for people to 'come here illegally and claim a fear of return.'" Too often, US policy has harmed its neighbors through unintended consequences.

Both domestic and gang violence are serious problems that need to be addressed. Yet such a vast expansion of asylum definitions would qualify large proportions of the population in dozens of nations worldwide, potentially overwhelming US resources. US immigration courts have tended to take a middle position between the extremes of the Obama/Holder Justice Department and the Trump/Sessions Justice Department. Asylum claims on the basis of gang or domestic abuse are considered, but [according to one legal help site](#), "would still not amount to persecution on an applicable ground unless it is perpetrated by a person or group that the victim's government cannot or will not control."

US asylum policies have long been identified as a "weak link" with loopholes for mass migration. A 2014 Congressional hearing during the Obama administration entitled "[Asylum Fraud: Abusing America's Compassion?](#)" investigated abuse of the asylum system. Even the far-left New York Times acknowledged during the Obama presidency that immigrants are sometimes "[fed false stories to bolster asylum pleas](#)." More recently, there have been allegations that migrants were [coached regarding what to say for asylum](#), as immigration officers often have no way of verifying the underlying facts.

These "loopholes" were blown wide open by legal decisions that created new incentives for mass migration. According to former Acting Secretary of Homeland Security Kevin McAleenan, the massive increase in immigration under the Trump administration appears to have been "primarily the result" of a "single district court order" which [prevents immigration officials from obtaining effective immigration-enforcement results](#) for the families arriving at our border" and "incentivizes adult migrants to travel with children so they will be released into the country." The 1997 Flores settlement was greatly expanded in 2015 to apply to accompanied minors as well as unaccompanied ones by an Obama-appointed judge, posing a strong incentive for migrants "[regardless of the actual validity of \[the\] asylum claim](#)." This decision was upheld by a three-judge panel in 2016, including two Democratic appointees.

[Politifact acknowledged](#) that asylum applications increased by 1,675% from 2008 to 2017 and that the percentage of asylum applications granted has remained at about 20% since 2012. Politifact cites Joshua Briesblatt, an analyst with the leftist American Immigration Council, who attributed the increase without evidence to "families fleeing record levels of violence in the Northern Triangle." This claim is contradicted by reported crime data. US Department of State reports that [in Honduras, the murder rate dropped to half its prior level](#) from 86 per 100,000 in 2012 to 43.6 per 100,00 in 2019. [In El Salvador, the murder rate fell by nearly two-thirds](#) from 104 per 100,000 in 2015 to 36 per 100,000 in 2019. [Murder rates in Guatemala have declined over the last several years](#), and rates of kidnapping and other violent crimes have fallen markedly in all three nations. Claims that increasing crime in Central America was the primary impetus for vast increases in undocumented migration do not hold up, as violent crime rates fell dramatically over this period. Restrictions on immigration enforcement by activist judges and strong incentives posed by generous social welfare programs are far more likely candidates to explain the increase.

Asylum seekers represented only a tiny fraction of total undocumented migration at the southern border, suggesting that most come for other reasons, with economics appearing to figure prominently. Among asylum seekers, the [University of Syracuse TRAC Database](#) reported that in Fiscal Year 2018, immigration courts approved asylum applications for only 14.5% of immigrants from Mexico, 18.8% from Guatemala, 21.2% from Honduras, and 23.5% from El Salvador. These cases involve "defensive asylum" claims subsequently registered by individuals apprehended crossing the border illegally. Some additional individuals were allowed to remain in the country without being formally granted asylum. These figures do not include an unknown number who crossed the border illegally without being apprehended. From [Fiscal Year 2012 to 2017](#), "the asylum denial rate was 79 percent for people from El Salvador, 88 percent for people from Mexico, 78 percent for people from Honduras and 75 percent for people from Guatemala." Important nuances exist, including higher approval rates for "affirmative

asylum," as well as some cases granted asylum outside of the court system. The overwhelming majority of asylum seekers - some 84% in 2018 - were legally represented. Wide inconsistencies in decisions of immigration judges, with [asylum denials in the San Francisco area alone ranging from 10% to 97% depending on the judge](#), also promote lottery-style mentality, as approval can depend on the judge as much or more than on the merits.

McAleenan noted in 2019 that of a recent sample of asylum seekers arriving at the southern border, [90% failed to show for court hearings](#), making policies that allow individuals to remain in the US while awaiting a hearing problematic. The Trump administration noted that such loopholes allowed individuals with ["fraudulent or meritless claims to gain entry" into the United States and then to remain indefinitely](#). The Syracuse TRAC database reported in FY 2018 that for ["98.6 percent of all grant or deny decisions, the immigrants were present in court."](#) Some have used this figure to assert that almost all asylum applicants show up for court and that claims of high "no-show" rates are false. This claim, however, is misleading. The TRAC data only report attendance at a hearing for a final grant or deny decision, usually after more than a year of process, and applicants are motivated to attend because of the potential that they may be granted legal asylum. McAleenan's figure referred to attendance at initial court hearings. Many initially claim asylum to be released into the US while awaiting initial hearings and never show up. Such cases may be dropped from the asylum system without being formally processed further. The number of individuals granted asylum through legitimate processes, whether through the courts or USCIS, represents a tiny fraction of undocumented immigrants attempting to enter the US.

Some have also noted that although judges did not approve some asylum cases, they were also not formally rejected. However, incomplete cases are carried forward to the following year and thus included in subsequent data at the time of their resolution. Granting of asylum requires an affirmative determination by a qualified immigration judge or USCIS official, and there is no basis for assuming that those who disappear from the system without completing the process have valid asylum claims. The merit of such claims is almost certainly not at any higher rate than the proportion of completed cases in which asylum is granted, and more likely, substantially lower. Those who are aware that their cases are not meritorious will have less incentive to pursue them.

Analysis: Calls for compassion towards economic immigrants are appropriate but require – as the official LDS Church statement notes more effectively than MWEG's one-sided advocacy – an acknowledgment of a nation's right to secure borders and a fair and comprehensive policy considering all of the complex issues. Despite the group's doubletalk (see #9 above), MWEG's border security and immigration enforcement stances appear to amount to little more than a call for open borders that would apprehend known criminals while detaining few others. Those who favor this approach should call for it honestly, rather than couching the issue principally as one of asylum, as qualified asylum seekers represent only a tiny fraction of undocumented immigrants attempting to enter the US.

Open-border, minimal enforcement positions fall to reductio ad absurdum arguments. How many undocumented immigrants should a country whose [government debt will soon exceed the size of the entire national economy](#) admit annually? Why should those who cross the border illegally be allowed to live in the US indefinitely while many others who are denied visas requested through lawful means are not? What about the many other nations worldwide with worthy and deserving citizens experiencing hardship, or who have needed skills and training, who would also like to be admitted to the United States? What of the adverse selection bias posed by rewarding those willing to violate the nation's immigration laws while neglecting millions of law-abiding foreigners who would like to come to the US? Is it ethical or moral to allow admittance to the United States to be determined by criminal human trafficking organizations, rather than laws passed by Congress? As [David Frum pointed out in the Atlantic](#):

"Hundreds of millions of people will want to become Americans. Only a relatively small number realistically can. Who should choose which ones do? According to what rules? How will those rules be enforced?"

Frum notes that "If liberals won't enforce borders, fascists will," and observes that "we need to make hard decisions now about what will truly benefit current and future Americans" – while being fair to those everywhere who desire to come to the United States, and not only those who attempt to cross illegally.

Nonpartisan/Centrist Approach: Meritorious asylum claims should be processed compassionately and promptly according to law and international standards. Compassion is needed towards existing economic migrants, especially in view of years of dysfunction of immigration law and enforcement. Fair and just immigration reforms are needed. Immigration policy should be discussed in balanced and accurate terms, rather than representing unprecedented “national emergency” levels of undocumented immigration as if it largely represented an asylum issue.

#35. El Paso Massacre and White Supremacy

Selection Bias: Versus Republican

Interpretive Bias: Democrat

Factual Accuracy: no claims

Factual Integrity: no claims

Explanation: All hate-based violence is despicable. Leftists who have engaged in hate speech or incitement, including episodes resulting in murder and destruction, are never held accountable by MWEG, despite the [growing problem of left-wing incitement to violence](#). MWEG blames the Republican president for violence while withholding the perpetrator’s specific denial of a link. Such rhetoric should be condemned regardless, and individuals across the political spectrum should be held accountable for hateful rhetoric.

Nonpartisan/Centrist Approach: All individuals who engage in inflammatory hate speech and incitement should be accountable. Extreme ideologies promulgating hate and teaching or implementing violence should be condemned and dismantled, including white supremacy, anarcho-socialism, radical Christian nationalism, Islamic supremacy, and others, regardless of their political affinities.

#36. Child Detention

Selection Bias: Versus Republican

Interpretive Bias: Democrat

Factual Accuracy: no claims

Factual Integrity: no claims

Explanation: See #13,14,15 above.

#37. Whistleblower Complaint, Truth, and Transparency

Selection Bias: Versus Republican

Interpretive Bias: Democrat

Factual Accuracy: no claims

Factual Integrity: no claims

#38. Testimonies of Marie Yovanovitch and Dr. Fiona Hill

Factual Accuracy: no claims

Factual Integrity: no claims

MWEG Approach: During the Trump impeachment hearings, MWEG [lionized former ambassador Marie Yovanovitch and National Security Council Deputy Fiona Hill in devotional tones](#). They were characterized as a “remarkable public servant” exemplifying “courage and competence” and “personifying” the mission of “courage and competence” in advocating for ethical government.

Fact Check: These testimonies offered no direct knowledge of the core allegations at the heart of the impeachment trial. Both spoke thoughtfully. However, MWEG’s glowing adulation was premature.

Subsequent revelations have demonstrated that [Yovanovitch gave false testimony during the impeachment trial](#), claiming that she had no direct contact and little knowledge of Burisma, the company for which Hunter Biden worked, when in fact, she had met directly with a Burisma representative after Trump’s election and received multiple letters from the company. Declassified documents show that under Yovanovitch, the US embassy in Ukraine [illegally monitored Americans](#) who apparently had been deemed political enemies. Yovanovitch claimed in sworn testimony that the monitoring stopped because of “lack of resources,” whereas documents indicate that the practice was actually stopped because of legal review by the State Department, which noted that it was “barred by law.”

Hill had [worked for a Clinton-associated think tank and co-authored a paper with Igor Danchenko](#). Danchenko is the Democratic operative who admitted to fabricating allegations that became the primary source for the discredited Steele dossier, which spawned now-discredited Trump-Russia collusion claims and the Mueller investigation. While MWEG statements pushed these allegations as credible and breathlessly demanded investigation and accountability from the US administration, the group has been silent on subsequent findings showing no evidence of collusion as well as an acknowledgment by the investigation's initiator that initial surveillance had ["insufficient predication"](#). MWEG has not commented on these developments and the impact on their narrative.

Analysis: Both Yovanovitch and Hill seem to be thoughtful individuals with distinguished careers. Yet it is unclear how Yovanovitch came to make false statements during her testimony, or why she ordered the US Embassy to seek help from Washington to engage in illegal monitoring of apparent political enemies. Could an educated woman of her stature really not recall meeting with Burisma representatives after Trump’s election and receiving multiple letters from the company? How could she not know her facts about the central topic of the inquiry, Hunter Biden’s dealings with the Ukrainian company Burisma, in sworn Congressional testimony during hearings to impeach the president? Was this information intentionally withheld, and for what purpose? Why did Yovanovitch order the illegal monitoring of US citizens, and why did she lie about the reason why the practice was stopped?

These material revelations have evoked no call from MWEG for investigation, no pontifications about the legitimacy of the Congressional impeachment hearings being called into question by perjured testimony, no calls for investigation of potential conflicts of interest. Should [Yovanovitch be prosecuted for perjury](#) – on at least two documented counts - and for illegal monitoring of American citizens, when a Trump associate has been prosecuted on lesser grounds [notwithstanding the impression of the interviewing FBI agents that he did not lie](#)? Hill’s relationship with Danchenko raises additional questions warranting exploration.

MWEG’s endorsement of the testimonies was premature at the time, and more so in light of subsequent revelations. False testimony cannot be noble or courageous, and it is unfortunate if such conduct is deemed to model “courage and competence” for MWEG.

Nonpartisan/Centrist Approach: In the presence of serious red flags – false testimony before Congress, violations of law in the capacity of official government duties, and potentially serious conflicts of interest - matters of character and agenda remain unclear. Further investigation is needed.

#39. [The House Impeachment Vote](#)

Selection Bias: Versus Republican

Interpretive Bias: Democrat

Factual Accuracy: Partisan

Factual Integrity: Misleading/Withholding

MWEG Approach: The group wrote, in part:

“Regardless of the behavior of any other political actor in either party, the president of the United States is never justified in bringing our common resources and might to bear against a political rival. As an organization committed to the defense of ethical government, we feel an urgent need to speak in defense of our norms and institutions. The House of Representatives produced the required articles, following procedures previously established, and voted through a legislatively approved process. They have fulfilled their constitutional obligation.”

“By attempting to compel Ukraine to announce investigations benefitting only his re-election efforts, President Trump forced every American taxpayer to become an unwitting contributor to his political campaign and a supporter of his re-election...Congress has subpoenaed and instructing his staff to testify. If he is innocent, their testimonies will be exculpatory. Subversion of this process, regardless of outcome, represents a subversion of justice.”

Fact Check: MWEG presents an [Adam Schiff-style distortion](#) of the Trump-Zelensky phone call and represents partisan talking points as fact. The actual phone call or statements of Trump or [Zelensky](#) are never engaged, nor is evidence favoring the accused disclosed. The claim that Trump “attempt[ed] to compel Ukraine to announce investigations” and they would benefit “only his re-election efforts” are both partisan ones.

Analysis: MWEG’s profession of open-mindedness (“If he is innocent, their testimonies will be exculpatory”) is refuted by the group’s prior, contemporary, and subsequent statements. Yet again, MWEG reverses the presumption of innocence, placing the burden on the accused to prove that charges are false rather than on the prosecution to prove that they are true. MWEG already declared long before the Trump-Zelensky call that it was “impatiently awaiting the time when” Congress will “take decisive action to protect this country from a president who is so clearly unfit for office” (Statement #8). Any pretext, apparently, will do: the group’s verdict has long been decided. Here, it declares that the House has fulfilled its “constitutional obligation” in convicting the president. Subsequently, the group declared at the outset of the Senate trial that Donald Trump [“has violated the obligations of his office”](#) and, in a member editorial promoted on the group’s official “impeachment advocacy” page, [“must be impeached and removed from office.”](#)

MWEG’s conduct – pushing a foregone conclusion, representing distorted partisan claims as fact, withholding exculpatory evidence, all while framing the matter as if it were acting fairly and presenting real prospects for vindication – is dishonest.

MWEG's charged language and construal of political allegations against Trump as fact contrast starkly with its treatment of Joe Biden. At a meeting of the Council on Foreign Relations in 2018, Joe Biden bragged that while serving as Vice-President in the Obama administration, [he demanded the firing of the Ukrainian prosecutor investigating the company his son Hunter worked for with a six-hour deadline as a condition for a billion-dollar US loan guarantee](#):

"I went over, I guess, the 12th, 13th time to Kiev. And I was supposed to announce that there was another billion-dollar loan guarantee. And I had gotten a commitment from Poroshenko and from Yatsenyuk that they would take action against the state prosecutor. And they didn't. So they said they had—they were walking out to a press conference. I said, nah, I'm not going to—or, we're not going to give you the billion dollars. They said, you have no authority. You're not the president. The president said—I said, call him. (Laughter.) I said, I'm telling you, you're not getting the billion dollars. I said, you're not getting the billion. I'm going to be leaving here in, I think it was about six hours. I looked at them and said: I'm leaving in six hours. If the prosecutor is not fired, you're not getting the money. Well, son of a bitch. (Laughter.) He got fired."

?

The quid pro quo, abuse of power, conflicts of interest, and internal interference in the matters of another nation are astonishing. These violations are established by Biden's own admission, and not by second-hand allegations or Adam Schiff-style misrepresentations. Yet MWEG made no position statement or press release. MWEG did not call for an investigation into Biden's conduct or denounce it as unethical. MWEG did not call for Biden or his son to testify at the Trump impeachment trial to ascertain the truth, nor for sanctions and punishment for breaches of public integrity.

Similarly, there is no mention of far more consequential and blatant conduct by leftist administrations. The Obama administration's interference in presidential elections in Nigeria, which senior advisors attempted to conceal from the American people, has been blamed by Nigerians [with destroying the path to progression](#) for their country of over 195 million by installing a repressive dictator and [eliciting complaints of election interference from the former incumbent president](#).

Nonpartisan/Centrist Approach: A single, consistent standard should be applied to both Republican and Democratic administrations.

#40. [Refugee Resettlement in Texas](#)

Selection Bias: Versus Republican

Interpretive Bias: Democrat

Factual Accuracy: No claims

Factual Integrity: No claims

Explanation: The "[hysterical](#)" [refusal of Republican governors to accept refugees](#) dating back to the Obama administration, as well as attempts to impose religious requirements, should be condemned and has fortunately been overridden by the courts.

In many cases, accepting refugees is a win-win situation that [benefits refugees themselves as well as the towns and cities](#) in which they settle. Many US cities [need more immigrants and refugees](#). However, Obama-era policies of arbitrarily [settling refugees, sometimes without coordination or notice to state and local governments](#), created challenges for local infrastructure and resources. Part of the legal rationalization requiring states to accept refugees has involved an equitable distribution of refugees. When disproportionate allocation excessively taxes the resources of one state compared to others, inequities result which should rightly be addressed.

Governor Abbot's stance was rightly overruled by the courts. MWEG nonetheless fails to disclose or address his key concern: that Texas has long borne the brunt of "disproportionate migration issues resulting from a broken federal immigration system" as well as receiving "more refugees...than any other state."

While multiple MWEG statements create the impression of the Trump administration as deviating from ostensibly higher standards of its predecessor, [Obama's poor record on human rights](#) is never mentioned. Obama's [support for authoritarians](#) and [failure to support pro-democracy protestors against oppressive regimes](#) is given a free pass, where no acknowledgment is made of the efforts of Trump administration officials [to re-emphasize human rights as a cornerstone of policy](#). For one of many examples, Obama [failed to raise the issue of the massacres of Christians](#) with the Nigerian regime, whereas his successor has been the only Western leader to do so. The Obama administration's conduct may have even [facilitated the genocide of Christians in Nigeria](#). The facts are hardly as one-sided as MWEG conveys. More complete and balanced data needs to be engaged fairly.

Nonpartisan/Centrist Stance: All states should be required to accept refugees for resettlement consistent with national and international obligations. However, federal authorities should work to coordinate with state and local authorities and should work to observe principles of proportionality to promote a fair distribution of refugees and/or provide temporary economic assistance for states receiving additional refugees to avoid overwhelming local resources and infrastructure.

#41. Impeachment Acquittal and Senator Romney's Vote

Selection Bias: Versus Republican

Interpretive Bias: Democrat

Factual Accuracy: No claims

Factual Integrity: No claims

MWEG Approach: MWEG's virtuous-sounding language contains euphemisms and obfuscation. These statements require an explanation in standard English.

"Mormon Women for Ethical Government will continue to fight against the rank partisanship evident in both houses of Congress throughout this process..."

In claiming "rank partisanship evident in both houses of Congress," MWEG is pointing the finger only at Republicans in the House and Senate who did not jump on the impeachment bandwagon, as explained below.

"We will continue to fight against the corruption and self-interest that saddles our nation with immoral leaders who govern unchecked."

The group has criticized only Republicans but has never offered serious critique or raised issues of corruption and self-interest by Democrats. Here it promises to continue this same behavior going forward. Just one Democrat has ever been mentioned in an official critique of the group, only to be immediately exculpated (see #43).

"We will continue to fight for the free and fair elections that have made our nation great."

MWEG has fought against Republicans who, according to the AP article the group cited, reportedly followed their states' voter registration laws (#21,24). MWEG has never objected to large-scale ballot harvesting and the dismantling of basic election security measures that benefit Democrats. Here it promises to continue the same one-sided partisanship going forward.

"We encourage our fellow Americans to support and defend leaders, regardless of their party affiliation, who offer a vision of collaboration and adherence to the rule of law."

MWEG here invites Americans, regardless of their prior party affiliation, to unite to defeat Donald Trump and to support Democrats, who the group deems to constitute the party of law and virtue.

Fact Check: To understand what MWEG's noble-sounding statements actually mean, we must evaluate the group's actual conduct.

The MWEG view of "bipartisanship" on impeachment and most other issues has referred principally if not exclusively to Republicans crossing over to support the leftist agenda. The group has never criticized Democrats for extreme partisanship, such as Vice Presidential nominee Kamala Harris' record as the farthest-left Democrat in the Senate who ["joined bipartisan bills the least often compared to Senate Democrats."](#)

MWEG's advocacy stance was predetermined long before impeachment charges were even filed and was not dependent on the claim's merit. In statement #8 above, back in January 2018, MWEG stated that it was "impatiently awaiting the time when" Congress will "take decisive action to protect this country from a president who is so clearly unfit for office."

The group's [impeachment advocacy against Donald Trump](#), rather than advocating a fair process of fact-finding and deliberation, encouraged impeachment as a foregone conclusion, claiming that Donald Trump ["has violated the obligations of his office"](#) and ["must be impeached and removed from office."](#) The group's partisan agenda was couched in quasi-religious language selectively directed only against Republicans, such as a piece entitled ["GOP, Wake Up from the Slumber of Sin."](#)

The Democratic-run impeachment of Donald Trump in the House of Representatives raised numerous ethical concerns for violations of rights of due process, transparency, and basic fairness in the most [unprecedentedly partisan impeachment process in US history](#). Democrats [colluded with a registered Democrat in the CIA](#) to bring forth dubious charges. Democrats then engaged in a "rigged process" of "Soviet-style secret proceedings" ["marked by no transparency and no due process."](#) Arbitrary and capricious rules were set by Chairman Jerry Nadler. Republicans and the president were denied the power of subpoena. "Exonerating evidence benefitting the president [was] kept hidden behind secure doors reserved for classified briefings." Democrat Adam Schiff "lied about evidence of Trump lied about evidence of Trump-Russia collusion for more than two years, lied about what President Trump said on the phone call with the president of Ukraine, and lied about his committee meeting with the 'whistleblower.'" Republican representatives have complained that the [House impeachment proceedings were a sham](#) and that key evidence was withheld.

The Senate's primary task in impeachment proceedings is [to determine whether the House of Representatives had met the burden of proof](#), rather than to conduct a de novo investigation or full judicial trial. In forwarding the impeachment referral to the Senate, House Democrats had already declared that additional witnesses were not necessary for their case. Law professor Jonathan Turley noted that "the House insisted this was a 'crime in progress' and there was no time to delay a submission to the

Senate. It then [immediately contradicted its rationale](#) by waiting more than a month to submit articles of impeachment to the Senate.”

Senators already had mountains of documents and witness testimony to consider. During the Clinton impeachment, Senate “[Democrats had opposed any witnesses in the impeachment trial of President Clinton and voted as a bloc for a summary acquittal](#). There was no reason to expect Republicans to adopt an entirely different approach.” Senate Republicans nonetheless considered calling witnesses, but [House Democrats refused to allow a witness swap with Republicans during the Senate trial](#).

Analysis: [Contravening its own purported principles](#) of nonpartisan advocacy for fairness, due process, and respect for precedent, MWEG’s alleged concerns for a “free and fair trial” did not apply to the process in the Democrat-controlled House of Representatives. Notwithstanding numerous ethical and due process violations perpetrated by Democrats and the hyperpartisan nature of the process, MWEG did not speak out against these abuses. MWEG failed to stand up for integrity and fairness. MWEG did not lobby for transparent and open proceedings, respect of historical precedent, fair and due process, or equal rights of subpoena and calling of witnesses. MWEG did not encourage Democratic representatives and senators to evaluate the data open-mindedly and determine whether the burden of proof was met. MWEG refused to condemn authoritarian and capricious behavior by Chairman Jerry Nadler or repeated lies told by Representative Adam Schiff.

MWEG’s previously-stated claim to “feel an urgent need to speak in defense of our norms and institutions” as an “an organization committed to the defense of ethical government” (Statement #39) evaporated into thin air in the face of “sham” proceedings run by Democrats. The group’s selective outrage about far lesser issues of government transparency – allegations which have been trotted out repeatedly to bludgeon Republicans when data were not released fast enough to satisfy the group’s conspiracy theorists – is nowhere to be found in the face of secret, closed-door proceedings run by Democrats to condemn the Republican president.

MWEG not only suspended ostensible ethical concern for basic rights and due process but attempted to legitimize these breaches, writing that “The House of Representatives produced the required articles, following procedures previously established, and voted through a legislatively approved process. They have fulfilled their constitutional obligation.” MWEG thus presented the Democrat-run “show trial” as a commendable and even patriotic activity. The group goes further, bludgeoning Republicans as “rank partisans” for not signing on to a process many objected to as a “sham.”

During the Senate trial, MWEG’s supposed voices of conscience were similarly applied to purely partisan aims. Only after the House’s rushed partisan impeachment was belatedly sent to the Senate did MWEG instruct its members to “[be a witness, speak out for a free and fair trial](#)” and demand additional witnesses. MWEG appropriated quasi-religious language (Mormons are taught to “be a witness of Christ”) to suggest a moral obligation to push a partisan agenda.

MWEG did not lobby for equal access to witnesses by both sides. It did not call upon Democrats to compromise with Republicans so that proper witnesses could be called in both the House and Senate trials. MWEG attacked only Republican senators for not calling witnesses that were the duty of the Democrat-controlled House of Representatives to call. The group focused only on lobbying Republican senators to vote for impeachment: [successfully so, in the case of Mitt Romney](#).

At no time did MWEG’s conduct constitute advocacy for a “free or fair trial.” MWEG’s #partyovercountry partisanship was complicit in the violation of rights and process against its designated political enemies.

Nonpartisan/Centrist approach: Both Democrats and Republicans should be called to respect precedent, process, and uphold rights, and to keep an open mind regarding evidence rather than pushing a predetermined outcome. A nonpartisan group

would not advocate a predetermined impeachment outcome but would instead advocate for a truly “free and fair” trial respecting the rights of all parties. Both sides should have been free to subpoena documents and witnesses from the beginning. Partisan collusion, the secret process carried on by House Democrats, denials of basic rights and due process to the president and his allies, repeated lying by Adam Schiff, and authoritarian conduct by Jerry Nadler, among others, should be specifically called out as unethical and contrary to the standards of a “free and fair” trial. Supporting rights and principles is everyone’s duty, regardless of the identities of those involved.

#42. Politicization of the Department of Justice by Attorney General Barr

Selection Bias: Versus Republican

Interpretive Bias: Democrat

Factual Accuracy: False

Factual Integrity: Misleading/Withholding

MWEG Approach: MWEG levies [accusations of corruption and politicization of the justice department](#), stating: "We have witnessed a corruption of criminal justice independence as Attorney General Barr interfered with prosecutorial sentencing recommendations for Roger Stone and supervised the placement of politically supportive U.S. attorneys in key positions."

Fact Check: MWEG's conduct mirrors that of house Democrats called out even by the anti-Trump New York Times for berating the Attorney General and attempting to portray him as a "dangerous errand-boy for the president" even while "[refus\[ing\] to let the attorney general answer the questions posed to him](#)," substituting their own answers for his, and failing to consider his conduct fairly in the context of fact and his own words.

Attorney General William Barr pointed out that he agreed with Stone's prosecution and imprisonment but noted that "line prosecutors were trying to advocate for a sentence that was more than twice anyone in a similar position had ever served, and this was a 67-year-old man, first-time offender, no violence. And they were trying to put him in jail for seven to nine years. And I wasn't going to advocate that because that is not the rule of law." Obama appointee Judge Amy Berman Jackson, who was by no means favorable to Stone, stated that [she would not have agreed to the prosecutors' original sentencing recommendation](#). Barr continued: "I agree the president's friends don't deserve special breaks, but they also [don't deserve to be treated more harshly than other people](#)." The initial sentencing recommendations have been cited as being [harsh and politically motivated](#). Stone had been denied requests for a new trial despite evidence of [bias and misleading statements by the jury forewoman](#). Obama-administration officials have [skated free for similar conduct](#) and have not been prosecuted by the Republican attorney general.

A review of the Flynn case by an independent prosecutor [discovered key exculpatory evidence](#) that the FBI had an obligation to turn over to Flynn's attorneys early in the investigation but did not. Unsealed transcripts include acknowledgments that there was [no derogatory information](#) to warrant the investigation in the first place. Numerous irregularities have been cited in the investigation and prosecution, and the agents who interviewed Flynn [did not believe he was being deceptive](#).

MWEG's allegation that Barr has "lost the faith of his principled employees and peers in the justice system" is a leftist canard. Jeff Sessions' appointment to the office of attorney general was [criticized in a letter signed by over 1,000 law professors](#). The Harvard Gazette acknowledged that [lawyers generally identify with leftist politics, elite lawyers even more so, and law professors extremely so](#). It noted that the anti-Sessions letter was "was very quickly dismissed" as being politically motivated "by political observers and by political actors." Similarly, [over 2,400 law professors signed a letter opposing Brett Kavanaugh's nomination](#) to the Supreme Court. Subsequently, [many of the same professors who opposed Kavanaugh downplayed or ignored more substantive allegations against Biden](#). Some have since acknowledged that opposition to Kavanaugh was not based on a belief in the credibility of the allegations, regarding which some have since acknowledged skepticism – contrary to their public letter of the time – but on other, presumably ideological, factors. Such is the systemic bias of this group: conservatives are routinely criticized, whereas [leftist administrations are given a "free pass" in the face of substantial misconduct](#).

While acknowledging that Trump's treatment was "abhorrent," Barr [has rebuked Trump's "Obamagate" campaign and refused to engage in politicization of the justice system against Obama officials](#). Barr has incurred the displeasure of Donald Trump for [refusing to prosecute Obama-era officials](#) based on his judgment of the case. This is precisely the fairness and independence that an attorney general should have in ensuring the integrity of the justice system. One editorial noted that "[Bill Barr is a threat to the deep state, not the rule of law](#)." Barr was standing up for the rule of law and against Obama-era politicization of the justice department. It was Obama attorney general Eric Holder, and not William Barr, who [described and conducted himself as his president's "wingman."](#)

Analysis: MWEG's inflammatory claims push leftist talking points while withholding key information and failing to deal with the topic fairly and honestly. MWEG's conduct towards Attorney General Barr warrants ratings of "gross misrepresentation" and "severe partisanship."

#43. Judiciary Independence

Selection Bias: Versus Republican

Interpretive Bias: Democrat

Factual Accuracy: Accurate

Factual Integrity: Misleading/Withholding

MWEG Approach: This is MWEG's first and only statement to date that [critiques a Democrat by name](#). Lead billing is given to attacks on a Republican. The statement immediately acquits the Democrat, noting that he had "walked back his words and apologized for them."

Fact Check: The criticism of Schumer is farcically weak. MWEG cited a "breach of judiciary independence" when Senator Chuck Schumer threatened conservative Supreme Court justices in regard to a Louisiana abortion law, but only after the group first condemned Trump for requesting Justices Ginsburg and Sotomayor to recuse themselves from cases regarding him.

MWEG fails to disclose unprecedented threats made by Schumer's colleagues against the judicial independence of Supreme Court conservatives, who [threatened to "pack the court"](#) if it did not rule their way in a second-amendment case.

While serving as an apologist for the Democrat, MWEG omits key context regarding the Republican's request for potentially conflicted jurors to recuse themselves. Deeming the latter an "aberrant request," MWEG fails to disclose inflammatory statements made against him by sitting justices contrary to the Judicial Code of Conduct and requirements of impartiality as acknowledged by both [liberal](#) and [conservative](#) commentators. MWEG further failed to cite other politicized activities of these justices, such as [Justice Sotomayor sending a video of ardent admiration and congratulations](#) to San Francisco's radical district attorney Chesa Boudin, trained by radicals and Hugo Chavez' regime in Venezuela.

MWEG's framing of Trump's request for recusal of conflicted jurists as an affront to judicial independence greater than or equal to the pointed threats of Schumer and his Democratic colleagues against Supreme Court conservatives is dishonest. Recusal is a matter left to the conscience and discretion of the jurors themselves, whereas Schumer's statement was a threat. Even a child can tell the difference.

#44. [Confronting Systemic Racism](#)

Selection Bias: Versus Republican

Interpretive Bias: Democrat

Factual Accuracy: Ideological

Factual Integrity: Withholding

Analysis: Racism is evil in any form. Unfortunately, MWEG's statements are infused with political language invoking uncritical credence to core tenets of critical race theory and intersectionality. These theories contain many dubious and problematic claims, are heavily influenced by political ideology, and have never been demonstrated by robust scholarship. Black scholars, including [Thomas Sowell](#) and [Wilfred Reilly](#), have publicly criticized allegations of systemic racism. Numerous ethical concerns have been cited, including that these theories tend to [deny personal responsibility](#).

The primary resources regarding systemic racism that have been widely cited in national discussions include [junk studies](#) and marginal and problematic works, especially the "anti-racism" books of Ibram Kendi and Robin DiAngelo, which are ideological manifestos devoid of scholarly rigor or even internal consistency. John McWhorter, a Black professor at Columbia, noted in *The Atlantic* that Robin DiAngelo's "White Fragility is the prayer book for what can only be described as a cult," is [replete with claims that are either plain wrong or bizarrely disconnected from reality](#)," and is dehumanizing to Blacks. Black scholar Coleman Hughes' essay "[How to Be an Anti-Intellectual](#)" deconstructs Ibram Kendi's "How to Be an Anti-Racist" as the work of a partisan ideologue with a tenuous grasp on reality, ridden with contradictions and contrary to established scholarly principles. Kendi's view of an omnipotent "Department of Anti-Racism" – unaccountable censors with vast power over government, business, education, and public officials – is, in Hughes' words, both Orwellian and openly totalitarian. Both DiAngelo and Kendi's works are permeated with doublespeak and inversions of normative ethics, arguing, for example, that racial discrimination is actually good so long as it favors the authors' political agenda. Their multi-million dollar "anti-racism" industry has been critiqued as [reinforcing racism rather than extirpating it, peddling ideology](#) rather than insights.

MWEG's language approaches explicit endorsement of reparations, another far-left agenda item [opposed by Americans by a wide margin](#) and controversial even within the Democratic Party. A 2003 scholarly article from the University of Maryland Law Journal of Race, Religion, Gender, and Class entitled "[Why the Reparations Movement Should Fail](#)" addresses numerous problems with the reparations movement, from the movement's flawed claims and assertions to its proposed remedies, while also failing to acknowledge decades of social spending programs and affirmative action-type initiatives serving minorities. Contemporary "reparations" proposals would indiscriminately penalize those with no link to slavery and even those whose ancestors fought and died to overturn it while making payments on the basis of skin color to recent immigrants and others whose ancestors were never slaves. Such formulations appear to represent a political patron-client relationship more than any coherent notion of social justice or a [distraction from other issues while generating a plethora of secondary consequences](#). Substantive issues shown to harm economic and employment prospects that disproportionately affect minorities, including dysfunctional inner-city schools and governments, federal incentives which reward single parenthood and disadvantage two-parent families, crises of drug addiction and violence, and others are neither acknowledged nor addressed.

Any systematic discrimination against one group or in favor of another should be identified and addressed with high-quality, methodologically robust nonpartisan research and recommendations. MWEG's uncritical acceptance of problematic ideological claims is no substitute for evidence-based nonpartisan approaches.

Many Latter-day Saints are inclined to agree with President Russell M. Nelson's denunciation of racism and challenge for Latter-day Saints to ["lead out" in the fight against prejudice](#), but not with MWEG's politicized formulations in the language of the left and citation of ideologies which have been noted by critics to reinforce racism and discrimination rather than combating them.

Nonpartisan/Centrist Approach: Racism and prejudice in any form are wrong and should be opposed and remedied in ways that are both careful and thorough. Detailed fact-finding is needed and critical evaluation of data to accurately characterize the

issues, instead of uncritical promotion of ideologically-based claims.

#45. Call to Action: Speak Up for Transparency in COVID-19 Data

Selection Bias: Versus Republican

Interpretive Bias: Democrat

Factual Accuracy: Accurate

Factual Integrity: Withholding

Analysis: The facts are overshadowed by MWEG's formulation of what is essentially a conspiracy theory attacking the Republican administration, notwithstanding that the Covid database move was endorsed by the CDC director and that system upgrades to efficiently handle and transmit large volumes of public health data have been long overdue. Serious concerns about the inadequacy of the prior database are never acknowledged. Comparative data are neglected, such as the catastrophic failures following the [Obama rollout of ObamaCare](#), which led oversight officials to ask "why the administration spent significant taxpayer money on a product that is entirely dysfunctional and puts their personal information at risk." MWEG makes calls for transparency while ignoring that Covid-19 data have continued to be provided by the U.S. administration on an ongoing basis. In contrast, the group endorsed secretive, non-transparent processes by Democrats without raising ethical concerns (#41).

Nonpartisan/Centrist Approach: The Covid-19 database transition clearly could have done better, but it was neither a nefarious Trump conspiracy nor a fiasco on the scale of the failed Obamacare rollout. The growing pains of the database transition appear to reflect challenges of the Washington bureaucracy and professional civil service more than a political failure.

#46. Call to Action: Ask Your Senators to Provide Funding to Keep Our Elections Safe and Accessible

Selection Bias: Neutral

Interpretive Bias: Neutral

Factual Accuracy: No claims

Factual Integrity: No claims

#47. Call to Action: Speak Out Against Federal and Executive Overreach

Selection Bias: Versus Republican

Interpretive Bias: Democrat

Factual Accuracy: no claims

Factual Integrity: Withholding

Analysis: MWEG's approach is most notable for its selectivity. Trump is called out for executive overreach while the group ignores [vast overreaches of the Obama Presidency](#) and evidence that [Trump's overreach followed in Obama's footsteps](#). [Obama's unprecedented war on inspectors general](#) worked to undermine government ethics and accountability, yet seem to have concerned none of MWEG's future members.

Promises [to use executive authority in broad and overreaching ways by Joe Biden](#) and [other Democratic presidential candidates](#)

have evoked no rebuke from the group. [Draconian overreach](#) and [authoritarian conduct by Democratic governors](#), which have impacted the lives of millions, are unmentioned. One example is an executive order [shutting down Covid-compliant charter schools](#) in Oregon, restricting freedom and [disadvantaging black and minority students who have narrowed or closed the achievement gap](#) with education in charter schools compared to traditional public schools. Data demonstrate that [executive overreach goes largely unchecked in states with a Democratic governor and Democratic attorney general](#). However, the same analysis indicates that this relationship does not hold for Republicans.

Some of Trump's overreach arose in consequence of the [Democratic-controlled House of Representatives' refusal to negotiate](#) throughout the summer of 2020. Whereas MWEG has previously berated the Republican president for lack of bipartisanship for declining to sign on to problematic immigration proposals with minimal Republican support, the group never calls Democrats out for obstructionism or makes pointed calls for them to come to the table to meet pressing national needs. As we have seen elsewhere, MWEG's calls to "bipartisanship" overwhelmingly represent demands for Republicans to cross over to support a leftist agenda, but rarely if ever for Democrats to make real concessions to work with Republicans.

Nonpartisan/Centrist Approach: A single standard for executive authority and accountability should be applied to both Republican and Democratic administrations.

#48. Pledge Not to Leverage or Weaponize Faith for Political Gain

Selection Bias: Neutral

Interpretive Bias: Neutral

Factual Accuracy: No claims

Factual Integrity: No claims

MWEG Approach: The pledge, which applies to both signatory organizations and individuals, states in part:

"We hereby pledge to never...advocate for, or speak negatively about, candidates, parties, or political ideologies in lessons, talks, and discussions at church; or...morally condemn individuals for their personal political expressions or imply that any candidate or party has doctrinal, Church, or divine support. We believe we more closely approach Zion when we respectfully allow others to act according to their conscience and ensure that our religious spaces are free from the acrimony of politics."

Analysis: Amen! This sounds like a really great idea. As is the case with so many other MWEG statements, noble-sounding principles are articulated and then ignored or implemented only selectively. No group has leveraged and weaponized faith for political gain as much as MWEG.

Leveraging and weaponizing faith also includes the representation of a political agenda as a moral imperative by cherry-picking official Church statements while ignoring inconvenient teachings, seeking privileged access to co-religionist elected officials, and leveraging the Mormon name to gain free publicity and media access, to name a few.

The MWEG pledge concludes by praising the LDS Church's "commitment to maintaining political neutrality," even as the group's own conduct has been anything but politically neutral. If MWEG had adhered to this and other professed principles, there would have been no need for this review.

MWEG Official Statements

Selection Bias

Of forty-eight (48) MWEG official statements that could be evaluated, the topic selection of ten (10) was rated as Neutral (21%) and thirty-eight (79%) were rated as criticizing Republican personalities, policies, and platforms. No statements (0%) were rated as primarily critiquing Democrats.

Interpretive Bias

The interpretive bias of nine (9) statements was rated as Neutral (19%) and that of thirty-nine (39) was rated as Democrat (81%). No statements were rated as having a Republican (0%) interpretive bias.

The nine statements were rated as Neutral interpretation, primarily because of the lack of any credible competing view identified by the reviewer, and not because efforts to fairly state other arguments. In no cases (0%) did MWEG even-handedly disclose arguments or perspectives that conflicted with leftist narratives.

Factual Accuracy

Twenty-eight statements were rated as "No claims" (58%) for making no specific factual claims. Of the remaining twenty (20) statements (42%) that made specific factual claims, the factual accuracy of fifteen (15) statements was rated as Accurate (75%). Two (2) claims were rated as Partisan or Ideological (10%). One (1) claim was rated as Mostly False (5%). Two (2) claims were rated as False (10%).

Factual Integrity

Eighteen (18) statements were rated as "No claims" (37.5%) for making no statements or representations that could be evaluated for factual integrity. Thirty remained (32) that could be evaluated for factual integrity (62.5%). Of these, eleven (11) were rated as Accurate (37%), and nineteen were cited as Misleading, Withholding (information), or both (63%). Statements with an "accurate" rating for factual integrity all received this rating because the narrative was unchallenged. In none of these cases (0%) did MWEG actively disclose key data that did not support the favored narrative.

Analysis and Discussion

Analysis of Official Statements

In our court example (see "What Are Ethics?" above), MWEG has shown severe bias at every step. To date, it has censured Republican individuals and causes exclusively (38/48) and no Democrats (0/48). The accused do not receive a fair trial as the arbiter is sweepingly biased towards Democrats (39/48) and never towards Republicans (0/48). Inaccurate or partisan claims are sometimes introduced as evidence (5/20). Key data and context which would provide a more fair and accurate representation are routinely withheld (19/30).

Selection Bias. MWEG's selection bias reflects an agenda taken almost exclusively from hot-button issues of the political left. Ethical issues of concern to centrists and conservatives, such as leftist authoritarianism, media censorship, public safety, political prosecutions, electoral fraud, educational indoctrination, national debt, unsustainable government spending, and others, are entirely ignored. Even on topics that would seem to demand treatment, such as #28 (Continuing Government Shutdown), MWEG fails to even acknowledge valid concerns about unsustainable government spending and the mounting national debt but instead criticizes those who have not signed on to no-strings increases in government funding before pivoting to immigration.

Nonpoliticized, nonpartisan humanitarian issues are nearly absent from the group's advocacy. The genocide against China's Uighurs in what is "[probably the largest incarceration of an ethnoreligious minority since the Holocaust](#)" has received no attention. MWEG has been nowhere to be found as [free speech has been curtailed and democratic protections eliminated for millions in Hong Kong](#). [Brave women in Iran](#) have marched, under threat of arrest, imprisonment, and even death, to protest repressive Islamic patriarchy and the denial of basic freedoms. Their sisters at MWEG did not stand in solidarity. Mexico has the third largest Mormon population in the world after the U.S. and Brazil. Violent murders at the hands of drug and human trafficking cartels have set new annual records in Mexico for each year with data since MWEG's inception (2017, 2018, 2019), yet have evoked no response or statement of concern. An estimated ten women a day are killed in Mexico by intimate partner violence, but when [women in Mexico marched in protest](#) against widespread violence and murders, MWEG was nowhere to be found.

MWEG Official Statement #12 (Crisis in Syria) may represent the group's only nonpoliticized humanitarian issue to date, but the group failed to take concrete action. Several immigration statements involve humanitarian issues but are heavily politicized. Comparison with other statements suggests that it is likely precisely because of MWEG's partisanship that the Syria crisis is treated as a nonpartisan issue. Whereas MWEG has routinely used charged language attempt to link conservatives for various ills, often on the basis of partisan allegations, the statement deviates from the group's norm of attributing fault by avoiding mention of [Obama administration policy failures](#) contributing to massive loss of life, destruction, and displacement in Syria.

Interpretive Bias. MWEG's interpretations are overwhelmingly biased towards Democrats (81%), the remainder are neutral, and none favor Republicans. The group's advocacy tilts towards the radical wing of the Democratic party. MWEG advocated impeachment (#8) in January 2018 when [only 66 Congressional Democrats supported impeachment and 121 were against](#). Another statement suggests support for reparations for slavery (#44), although a June 2020 poll showed that [reparations were supported by only one in three Democrats](#).

Several MWEG statements appear deceptive, professing open-minded nonpartisanship when the group's verdict has long been rendered. In #25, MWEG writes that "the legitimacy of the executive branch depends upon" the Mueller investigation. Yet MWEG had already called for the president's impeachment some ten months earlier, stating that the group was "impatiently awaiting the time when" Congress will "take decisive action to protect this country from a president who is so clearly unfit for office" (#8, above): any pretext would do. In #31, the group trumpets the pending results of the Mueller investigation with the apparent expectation of damning findings, writing: "We must put aside our predetermined ideas and commit to being open-minded and accepting of whatever truths are revealed by this investigation." The group's verdict had long been in. MWEG has never acknowledged the Special Counsel's finding that there was [no evidence of Trump-Russia collusion](#), as well as subsequent revelations that senior FBI officials knew that [key allegations were fabrications of Democratic operatives](#) and that the [investigation lacked proper predication](#) even before its inception. The MWEG writers were obviously aware that a lack of evidence found by investigation would not, in their mind, offer any vindication. [Claiming to be open-minded when one's stance is predetermined](#) is a propaganda tactic of authoritarians. The group's modus operandi has been to fail to acknowledge the target's vindication when attacks fall flat and investigations come up empty, but merely to pivot to the next line of attack, continuing to "throw everything against the wall and hope that something will stick."

MWEG's repeated inversion of the presumption of innocence for conversion in regard to both Judge Brett Kavanaugh (#17,18,19) and Donald Trump (#39) cannot fail to trouble fair-minded persons. The group then raises the bar beyond the standards of "[a preponderance of evidence](#)" or "[clear and convincing evidence](#)" used in civil trials and beyond even the highest legal standard of "beyond a reasonable doubt" used in criminal trials. MWEG absurdly demands that [innocence of the accused be proved "beyond any doubt."](#) reasonable or not (#18, emphasis mine). The "beyond any doubt" demand has [no basis in American jurisprudence or precedent](#). This impossible demand offers endless indulgence to relentless attacks, politically motivated charges, and leftist conspiracy theories from partisans whose views were never based in fact or evidence.

MWEG's governors, of course, are not ignorant regarding the impossibility of their newly-minted "standards," nor are they oblivious to their selectivity in applying such demands only to conservatives: political enemies who are deemed undeserving of fair treatment. These are not good-faith statements issued arising from impartial ethical concerns but represent efforts to draw gullible readers into an idiot's game of "heads I win, tails you lose" that offers no possibility of vindication for the accused. The goalposts are constantly shifted with verbal sleight of hand. Even a child can tell that such double standards are immoral.

Factual Accuracy and Factual Integrity

Of statements making specific factual claims, 15% contain claims that are either false or mostly false. Another 10% assert "facts" which represent ideological mantras rather than being clearly attested. Most concerning is MWEG's misleading representation of factual claims or withholding of contrary evidence and context in 63.5% of statements making ostensible factual representations. In some cases, the data from news articles cited in the statements present a considerably more fair and balanced view than their representation by MWEG.

MWEG notes that good legislation is "clear, specific, based on verifiable, objective facts, and free from the taint of money from lobbyists or other special interest groups," is not based on "[distorted information,](#)" and that there is "[not a significant likelihood of unintended negative consequences.](#)" Yet time after time, the group ignores its own stated principles to push a far-left agenda.

In evaluating each statement, it is important to consider [not only that which is seen \(or explicitly acknowledged\), but that which is unseen](#) (or not acknowledged). Some appear to engage in misdirection and distraction regarding a "hidden agenda," when taken in the context of the group's other statements. For example, statements regarding asylum (#26,34) and some other topics convey the impression that the illegal immigration challenges are primarily or largely a matter of qualified asylum seekers while failing to disclose broader data and context, including that large numbers of illegal immigrants enter the U.S. and stay indefinitely for each one determined by immigration judges and officials to have a valid asylum claim, or that an activist district court decision hamstring traditional immigration enforcement and "[incentivizes adult migrants to travel with children so they will be released into the country.](#)" These and other underlying issues are never acknowledged or addressed. Instead of working to remedy shortfalls in asylum policies and child detention while offering reasonable protections for border security and against asylum fraud and child exploitation, the group exploits these matters as loopholes to facilitate much larger flows of illegal migration, notwithstanding its obfuscation (#9, #11).

The extent to which MWEG has routinely withheld contrary information and context to promote favored narratives cannot fail to be deeply concerning to fair-minded individuals. In case after case, MWEG lacks the integrity and moral courage to be fair to designated political enemies or to be honest with the American people. The group's devotion to an ideological agenda far exceeds its commitment to fairness or truth-telling, making its claims and statements totally unreliable for nonpartisan information and ethical guidance.

On Language

Political actors have increasingly twisted language as part of [the battle to control the narrative](#). Far-left groups have increasingly [adopted virtuous-sounding names to shield them from criticism](#). Socialist-anarchist groups follow the lead of

Communist-era propaganda referring to capitalism as fascism [while themselves engaging in fascist conduct. To the social justice warrior, capitalism is referred to as systemic racism.](#) A [pro-police rally is dubbed a "white supremacist rally."](#) Those favoring a [regressive worldview rooted in Marxism](#) brand themselves forward-looking "progressives." Beyond its location in the northern Korean peninsula, the "Democratic People's Republic of Korea" is none of those but a Communist dictatorship. Rights of freedom of speech, freedom of religion and conscience, and a host of other ostensible rights and freedoms are promised in the constitutions of authoritarian states and ignored in practice. Doublespeak inverts the meaning of words and creates a kind of political code. The partisan uses political language to frame the narrative in his terms. All the while, the partisan evokes transference and projection to wrongly accuse others of doing what they themselves are doing.

Mormon Women for Ethical Government has frequently employed benign-sounding words and phrases to convey meanings very different from their understanding by mainstream Americans. Some of the group's statements require translation into standard English (#41) for the uninitiated. "Attempting to cross a border without express permission" refers to illegal border crossing. The sentiment that no one is above the law appears to be code for the belief that Republicans and especially associates of the president should be punished more harshly than anyone else (#42), whereas breaches of the law are not even acknowledged for leftist political figures or illegal immigrants. "Otherwise law-abiding" refers to illegal immigrants who have committed felonies, including identity theft and tax fraud. "Bipartisanship" refers to calls for Republicans to support Democratic priorities, and virtually never the reverse. "Transcending partisanship" similarly refers to proselytizing centrists and Republicans to cross over to the political left. "Nonpartisan" refers to leftist talking points couched in moralizing language.

Confucius taught the importance of [clear, honest language](#): "If names be not correct, language is not in accordance with the truth of things. If language be not in accordance with the truth of things, affairs cannot be carried on to success." He further noted that the morally upright man or woman "considers it necessary that the names he uses may be spoken appropriately."

Is MWEG Nonpartisan?

MWEG publicly represents itself as a politically neutral group formed to promote government ethics generally. However, the group's conduct and history dispute this narrative. MWEG points to the identification of its members as coming from different political parties as evidence of nonpartisanship while withholding evidence of partisanship.

MWEG was organized during the week of Donald Trump's presidential inauguration in January 2017 [during the rise of the Obama Resistance](#). MWEG's website carefully avoids mention of this connection. The group's founder has acknowledged in a national op-ed in the New York Times that [MWEG was organized specifically to oppose Donald Trump](#). She has continued to engage in vocal anti-Trump advocacy boosted and promoted by MWEG members, including public advocacy on social media, including a post of September 5, 2020 shared by over 300 with a point-by-point disputation of conservative positions culminating in the declaration: "I cannot under any circumstances vote for someone like Donald Trump, [the very antithesis of our Savior](#) and of everything that He taught." The group to date has largely been defined by opposition to the Trump administration, including - in its own words - extensive MWEG-sponsored "[Impeachment Advocacy](#)." [Op-eds](#) by MWEG affiliates reviewed to date have been exclusively anti-Trump, with most making explicit attacks, none acknowledging any positives, and some supporting his opponent. Nor have these attacks been confined to Donald Trump. MWEG statements have exclusively attacked conservative positions and figures while rendering no serious critique of Democratic figures, platforms, or policies.

MWEG official statement after statement follows closely on the heels of "action alerts" from leftist activist groups and platform statements by Democratic politicians, including on illegal immigration, the Kavanaugh Supreme Court nomination, climate change, Trump impeachment advocacy, and other topics. For example, the group's statement on climate change (#22) with calls for "radical strategies" to "aggressively and immediately address this worldwide threat" did not follow the release of groundbreaking new evidence or recommendations of nonpartisan experts, but [in the shadow of the election of Green New Deal Democrats spouting alarmist rhetoric in November 2018](#). This subsequent rhetoric included claims by Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez that "[the world will end in 12 years if we don't address climate change](#)," which she then [walked back with allegations blaming those who took her statements literally](#). The informed reader cannot fail to note that many MWEG statements borrow the agenda, narratives, platforms, and language of the left, sometimes with only slight changes, and dress them up in moralizing language.

MWEG was organized specifically to oppose the Republican president, and as its statements demonstrate, to oppose a conservative political agenda more broadly. Bias, polarization, and partisanship are imprinted on the group's DNA. That this cause has attracted some who formerly or even presently identify themselves as independents or Republicans does not change that the group's methods and agenda are innately partisan.

MWEG's members and leaders consist largely of ideological "born again" converts who, however they may describe their political views, have fervently opposed not only Trump, but contemporary conservatism, while uncritically pushing narratives and agendas promoted by the Democratic Party. It would be deeply surprising if a single one of MWEG's directors or leaders voted for the Republican presidential ticket in 2020, even though many or most live in Utah, where the Republican is projected to prevail by a substantial margin.

National party political conventions in 2020 featured a self-identified [Democrat advocating for Republican candidates](#) and self-identified [Republicans speaking for Democratic candidates](#), but such advocacy is neither nonpartisan nor bipartisan. Groups such as Democrats for Trump or Republicans for Biden are partisan groups favoring the eponymous Republican and Democratic candidates, respectively, notwithstanding different nominal self-identification. Former Secretary State Colin Powell identifies as a Republican but [has not voted for a Republican presidential candidate since 2004](#) and thus can hardly be considered a bona fide conservative personality. The activism of a group's leaders is relevant to appraisal of the organization. Planned Parenthood, for instance, is technically designated as a nonpartisan organization, whereas the group's [Political Action Committee and leader are not nonpartisan](#).

MWEG's partisan bias is demonstrated by the group's record and actual advocacy stances. An individual who engages in all-in advocacy for one candidate while describing the other as an anti-Christ is a partisan, even if they describe themselves as a politically unaffiliated centrist. Beyond word games and semantic objections, a group that renders meaningful criticism to figures of only one party while promoting the other party's agenda and failing to scrutinize its candidates is a partisan group, regardless of how its members describe their political viewpoints.

It is further claimed that MWEG is nonpartisan because it does not explicitly endorse or oppose political candidates and that the group does not see itself as versus Republican or pro-Democrat. These objections center on distinctions principally of a legal nature and do not address underlying issues of bias. Support for leftist political issues and candidates through numerous op-eds and intensive lobbying efforts, while opposing conservative individuals and platforms by framing their defeat as a moral imperative, represents partisan engagement that money cannot buy. Such activism is likely more impactful than yard signs, paid political advertisements, and campaign donations.

Obfuscation by MWEG regarding the biases and political agenda of its senior leadership echoes tactics of an MSNBC town hall with Joe Biden in which the network represented individuals [previously identified as Biden voters as undecided voters](#). Politico reporter Marc Caputo observed that "there didn't seem to be undecided voters" and that the broadcast was a "[Biden infomercial](#)," representing a "[town hall \[meeting\] in name only](#)." Similarly, MWEG is nonpartisan in name only. In practice, MWEG has acted as a third wing of the Democratic Party, promoting its narratives and pushing its agenda, engaging in selective outrage against conservatives while never holding Democrats accountable.

The popular children's tale The Emperor Has No Clothes demonstrates the willingness of many to suspend rational judgment in the face of social pressure to maintain a narrative. At the risk of stating the obvious (the emperor has no clothes), nonpartisanship and partisanship constitute a mutually exclusive thesis and antithesis. One cannot categorically ignore offenses of one party, play up those of the other, and credibly claim to be nonpartisan. One cannot compose and disseminate a public election advocacy piece, boosted by hundreds including many MWEG affiliates, engaging in unabashed partisan advocacy and [attack the incumbent president as an anti-Christ](#), then credibly claim that the group's formation and dozens of op-eds invoking the group are principally grounded in faith and ethics. Ethics and partisanship are likewise fundamentally at odds, not different hats that can be donned for one role or circumstance and doffed for another. MWEG commends The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints' political neutrality (official statement #48) and presumably knows what the term means. Nonpartisanship and political neutrality are [synonyms](#).

If MWEG were nonpartisan, it would – like the LDS Church – refuse to permit its name to be used to promote a partisan agenda, and would actively repudiate those who do so. It does not work for the group to model and encourage its members to engage in inflammatory political activism in op-eds and social media (boosted and promoted by other MWEG affiliates) and then deny responsibility with claims of ignorance or helplessness. It is as if we witness an activist throwing bricks through a store window while citing affiliation with the group as moral justification. We are then asked to actively suspend our disbelief as we are told that these activities have nothing to do with the group because the conduct was not explicitly endorsed by the Board of Directors. MWEG is well aware of the accountability of groups and individuals who encourage and incite others, as well as the moral bankruptcy of denying responsibility (see Official Statements #6, 8, 23, 35). Tactics of deception and nondisclosure are beneath any credible group that claims to uphold either normative ethics or faith-based values. Obfuscation digs the hole deeper rather than digging oneself out.

Apologists of the Left

One might be inclined to wonder what gross abuses of power, ethical violations, and threats to government integrity, precedent, and separation from powers from the left would be enough to evoke a rebuke from MWEG. Is it Democratic [threats to "pack the Supreme Court"](#)? Threats to [eliminate the filibuster](#), a 214-year old precedent central to America's system of checks and balances? Revelations that the Democratic presidential candidate [seduced his campaign aide's wife and concocted elaborate lies to cover it up](#) that he has told for over forty years? Overreaching national injunctions by leftist activist judges on district courts who are "judicial masters of their districts, [not temporary Supreme Court justices, issuing rulings binding on an entire, vast republic](#)?" [Obama's catastrophic foreign policy failures in Syria](#), contributing to the deaths of hundreds of thousands, the displacement of an estimated eleven million, and genocide against the nation's ancient Christian minority? The Obama administration's improper foreign election interference in a nation of nearly 200 million that locals have blamed for [severely damaging the country's path to progression](#)? Evidence that the party's presidential nominee's drug addict son [peddled access and introduced foreign actors to the vice president](#) that the [nominee has not denied](#) and that fellow-travelers in the media have [tried to censor](#), notwithstanding testimony of senior intelligence officials that the allegations are [not Russian disinformation](#)? After all of MWEG's rhetoric about the need for exemplary, unassailable character, high ethical standards, and inviolable faith-based values, there are no demands for investigation, no calls to action, no [moral grandstanding](#), and no statements breathlessly hyping unsubstantiated allegations as we have seen so many times against conservatives. Indeed, none of these items have even been acknowledged by the group as ethical concerns.

As we have seen, Democratic politicians are never seriously accountable by MWEG. MWEG statements carefully avoid blaming Democrats even for massive human suffering and death (#12), while painting misleading pictures attacking Republicans and never disclosing that the conduct criticized was widely practiced under the prior Democratic administration (#26, 33, 42 and others). Yet the group goes further in acting as an apologist for Democrats, brushing off problematic conduct of Chuck Schumer (#43) and allegations against [Joe Biden](#). The group even presents House Democrats' secretive, closed-door impeachment proceedings abridging basic rights, process, and precedent as an upstanding, patriotic, and virtuous activity fulfilling Constitutional duties (#39). One might be forgiven for thinking that MWEG professed values are, at best, political theater staged by partisan "true believers" unable to distinguish their ideology from neutral ethics, and at worst, a cynical fraud.

Expectations of objections from MWEG to leftist misconduct reveal a fundamental misunderstanding of the group's role. No true voice of conscience crying in the wilderness denounces only the real or perceived transgressions of one political party while credulously spouting the narratives of the other. MWEG is neither nonpartisan nor an arbiter of ethics. Its role is that of a translator and promoter, receiving its agenda as if by direct revelation from the left wing of the Democratic Party, sanitizing and translating partisan talking points into moralizing language, and then advocating for them as ostensible ethical imperatives. MWEG's "ethics" are the one-way curved mirror of an illusionist, producing distorted images of political enemies while gazing into empty space when viewed in the other direction. Only likeminded devotees at the altar of political religion and the truly naïve will find credibility or virtue in the group's pervasive double standards.

MWEG's advocacy for [waiting to fill Ruth Bader Ginsberg's Supreme Court vacancy until after the 2020 election](#) was predictable not because there was any credible ethical predication, let alone mandate. Such vacancies have historically almost always been filled in election years when the same party controls the Presidency and Senate. Rather, it was obvious that MWEG would make such claims because such calls were being made from the far left, and control of Supreme Court vacancies has long been [a key agenda item of Democrats](#). If you want to understand what MWEG will designate an ethical issue and advocate for tomorrow, listen to what far-left Democrats are saying today.

While the prospect of a Republican president and Republican Senate filling a Supreme Court vacancy according to historical precedent in an election year evoked indignant howls from MWEG, Democratic [threats to pack the Supreme Court](#) that have been [in the works since 2016](#) elicited no objection. The Senate filibuster requiring a 60-vote "supermajority" for the passage of legislation is a 214-year old practice (since 1806) that has been an essential element of the American system of checks and balances to prevent "tyranny of the majority." The filibuster is intended to require bipartisan support representing Americans broadly for the passage of legislation. Biden has expressed willingness, in collusion with other Democrats, to [eliminate the filibuster](#) when Democrats control the Senate to cut Republicans out entirely and eliminate the need for bipartisan compromise.

These proposals pose existential threats to the balance and separation of powers, precedent, bipartisanship, and could even pave the way for authoritarian one-party rule, disenfranchising nearly half of Americans from a voice in national government and threatening basic freedoms. Either of these items, if suggested by Republicans, would rightly provoke outrage from MWEG with talk of a constitutional crisis, numerous official statements, calls to action, and a frenzied campaign of op-eds. The group dedicated four statements to allegations against Brett Kavanaugh with no evidence (#17-20), three to dead-end investigations of the Republican president (#4,25,31), and has continued to mobilize to push new leftist conspiracy narratives (#45).

Yet vastly greater threats to precedent, balance and separation of powers, bipartisanship, and the entire American system of government on the road to leftist authoritarianism elicit no concern from MWEG. MWEG's alleged concern for all of these principles has evaporated in the face of gross abuse by Democrats. The group has not mobilized members to write to their government officials to ensure that Democrats do not abuse power for political gain.

The record suggests that when moves by Democrats to pack the Supreme Court and eliminate the filibuster are imminent, MWEG will either maintain silence or, far more likely, issue more of their signature official statements to sanitize and sell these overreaches to the American people, presenting them as virtuous acts, even moral imperatives, through twisted partisan logic. Such conduct appears to arise from the same mindset and worldview that sees the [incumbent president as an anti-Christ and will seemingly say anything](#) to boost his opponent. The likelihood that MWEG will mobilize resources to seriously combat these existential threats to the American system of government is virtually zero. It is difficult to identify any transcendent principles or thread of moral consistency in the group's record and official statements to date that would demonstrate real ethical values, whereas partisan hypocrisy has been pervasive.

MWEG's formal claims of nonpartisanship while pursuing a one-sided agenda only thinly veiled beneath public claims of neutrality, and its informal promotion of extreme partisanship and blatant misinformation on social media, are merely different aspects of the same ideological agenda, each designed to serve partisan aims while claiming to virtuously serve public interest.

What are MWEG's Operational Principles?

Applied principles may be very different from theoretical or alleged ones. A broad corpus of sociological research demonstrates a gap between individuals' professed values, reported conduct, and actual conduct, sometimes referred to as the "social desirability bias." This bias is particularly profound "[when the scope of the study involves socially sensitive issues such as politics \[and\] religion.](#)" Studies have found that Americans overreport "[how often they vote \[and\] how much they give to charity.](#)" One study found that "[the actual church attendance figure is about half the rate indicated by public opinion surveys.](#)" Negative behaviors, too, are underreported, including [alcohol consumption](#) and illicit drug use.

Research in psychology suggests that this bias is not only about perceived social desirability to others but reflects natural psychological mechanisms for preserving self-image. The human psyche tends to rationalize personal conduct while gauging others more harshly. When a relationship fails, for example, research shows a negative retrospective appraisal bias such that individuals "[rated their past relationship quality more negatively in retrospect](#) than they had actually reported at the time." The

psyche revises the narrative for self-justification: instead of breaking up because you neglected your relationship or did not demonstrate the necessary qualities, it posits new “facts” in your favor. This process can provide a useful emotional defense mechanism, be useful as an emotional defense mechanism, but poses difficulties in trying to piece together objective truth from such recollections – especially if the breakup was difficult.

Stephen Covey refers to the gap “between the compass and the clock.” Individuals who claim positive values (“My family is most important to me”) often spend their time in ways that demonstrate different priorities (such as watching television for hours a day with little family interaction). These gaps are sometimes inadvertent. Individuals may sincerely believe that their priorities are what they say rather than what their time allocation shows. Individuals’ self-appraisals are often more generous than their conduct might warrant. This tendency has been dubbed the Lake Wobegon effect, named after Garrison Keillor’s fictional town where “all the children are above average:” a “mathematical absurdity,” but [believed by a large majority of parents](#). This feature of human psychology, in its basic form, should not be viewed as intentionally deceptive or malicious. Nonetheless, actual conduct is a better guide to discerning realities than professed principles.

People often [engage in emotional reasoning and demonstrate confirmation bias, clinging to false beliefs](#) in the face of contrary evidence, at times, [even after conclusively learning that they are untrue](#). [Conflicting parties have “waged a fearsome information war”](#) to control the narrative. [False information often comes to be accepted with repetition](#). The human brain defaults to recalling accessible information, even if untrue, instead of putting in the effort of critical thinking. False claims can thus influence human thinking, behavior, and elections. The impact of suggestion and consensus can be powerful. A surprising number of people parrot and accept statements inconsistent with verifiable factual evidence available to them if those around them convey strong belief. Experts note that [misinformation is “a social condition, like crime”](#) and is unlikely to improve in the coming years. Unscrupulous actors play on these features of human psychology to influence public opinion, push agendas, and consolidate power.

Self-insight is a curiously rare commodity. Research demonstrates that even highly educated people do poorly at identifying personal biases and experience [“almost no improvement in critical thinking”](#) throughout their education in domains of “the capacity to challenge [their] assumptions, identify missing information, and look for alternative explanations for events before drawing conclusions.” Beyond the need for better training focused on developing specific critical thinking skills, this is an important reason why [diversity makes us smarter](#). Groups of like-minded partisans lacking meaningful ideological diversity are particularly prone to such errors.

With this in mind, it should not be a surprise that Mormon Women for Ethical Government’s working principles attested from its record are starkly different from the group’s professed principles. MWEG’s actual or operational principles from the group’s conduct to date may be distilled as follows:

1. Only conservative personalities and policies may be seriously critiqued. (selection bias: serious criticism of Republicans 38, Democrats 0)
2. A code of silence is observed regarding abuse of power, ethical violations, and bigoted or incendiary language from the political left. (selection bias: serious criticism of Democrats 0)
3. Statements are interpreted through the lens of leftist political narratives. Arguments and interpretations which do not support favored narratives are routinely withheld (Interpretive bias: Democrat 39, Neutral 9. Balanced disclosure of interpretations and arguments contrary to leftist positions: 0).
4. Key facts and context which do not support the leftist narrative are withheld (Factual integrity: Misleading/Withholding 19, Accurate 11; Active disclosure of contrary data 0).
5. The presumption of innocence is inverted to place the burden on conservatives to prove their innocence (#17,18,19,39).
6. The burden of proof for conservatives to “prove innocence” is elevated from the highest legal standard of “beyond a

reasonable doubt” to the unattainable bar of “beyond all doubt” (#18), reasonable or not.

As with the prior example of an individual who claims family to be his or her most important priority but spends hours watching television and out with friends while neglecting family time, the discrepancy between MWEG’s professed and actual principles may not in itself reflect conscious deception. Members may be “true believers” of political religion who feel that promoting a far-left political agenda is serving Jesus. Leftist worldviews and gospel teachings may be sufficiently conflated and intertwined such that it is impossible to separate religion from politics without existential harm to deep-rooted conceptions of both.

Yet MWEG has also noted that “only those with exceptional and unassailable character and judgment are permitted to wield the power and privileges” of high public office (#18). Not only to judges of our nation’s high courts and national elected officials should be held accountable to these standards, but also self-appointed ethical arbiters like MWEG which attempt to influence the national discussion by claiming the mantle of moral authority. The gulf between the group’s stated principles and its actual conduct may not be malicious or ill-intended. Partisans of all stripes tend to view themselves as sincere and morally “right,” even when engaging in one-sided behaviors that are offensive to fair-minded people. It does, however, deprive the group of credibility and moral authority. It is appropriate for MWEG to be regarded as an ideologically-based political activist group and not as an authentic nonpartisan faith-based defender of ethics.

Whose Teachings are These?

The operative principles distilled from MWEG’s record are not principally rooted in normative system of ethics, nor in the teachings of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, nor in Christian scripture. MWEG’s operative ethic, as attested in the statements reviewed, is most simply described as partisan hypocrisy. While the group’s philosophy and worldview have multiple influences, two have come to the forefront as I have sought to roots of the operative principles attested above.

First, MWEG’s conduct observes the rules of strong-form partisanship akin to Omertà, the mafia code of silence. Right and wrong are defined not on the basis of transcendent ethical principles, applied impartially, but by ideology. No good can be spoken of designated enemies, nor can sins of favorites be brought forth for reckoning. That which supports a favored agenda or tears down opponents is deemed good and morally justified, regardless of the transgressions involved. Concealing the crimes of fellow-travelers and impeding their accountability is viewed as necessary and even virtuous.

Second, MWEG’s relentless attacks against conservatives without regard to merit while giving leftists a “free pass” is the epitome of Marcusean “repressive tolerance” grounded in Marxist ideology. Conclusions are determined by ideology, not evidence or transcendent moral principles. Facts are played up or misrepresented as needed to serve the agenda and obfuscated or withheld when not. Language is not intended to tell the truth but to sell a narrative. The partisan’s “truth” is what serves the cause, not objective reality.

Just as a partisan providing false testimony is a poor role model for an ostensible faith-based ethical advocacy group (#38 above), neither are worthy principles derived from the ideology of partisan codes and Marxist revolutionaries.

It is not my impression that MWEG’s advocates are ill-intended so much as ideological zealots lacking deeper principles. Fair-minded centrists or independents willing to stand up for the fair treatment of all parties and for basic factual accuracy have been conspicuously absent, to say nothing of the neglect of conservative perspectives. With no real ideological diversity to provide checks, the “positive feedback loop” of like-minded partisans has led to adverse selection, amplifying and reinforcing biases while inhibiting fairness and balance. MWEG has become an “echo chamber” conflating partisanship with virtue while rendering core obligations of fairness and basic factual accuracy impossible. Thus a group ostensibly organized to advocate for normative ethics has repeatedly found itself in opposition to them.

What of Jesus' Teachings?

MWEG claims to support and uphold the teachings of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. While MWEG's stated principles sound virtuous, they bear little resemblance to the group's actual conduct.

Did Jesus teach his disciples to engage in one-sided partisanship, relentlessly attacking those with other viewpoints to serve an agenda? Did Jesus teach his disciples to suspend moral judgment entirely in regard to their own conduct and that of favored groups? Did Jesus justify his disciples in presenting one-sided narratives and withholding contrary data? Did Jesus weaponize faith for political gain?

In the best case, MWEG's teachings reflect the conduct of "cafeteria Mormons" taking a la carte servings of favorite dishes while leaving the proverbial vegetables untouched. Christian discipleship was never for those who pick and choose ([Luke 14:27-33](#)), who militate against others while failing to remedy glaring deficiencies in their own conduct.

Jesus was [not a political partisan](#). Instead, Jesus taught His disciples the importance of truth, justice, and accountability:

"Ye are the salt of the earth: but if the salt have lost his savour, wherewith shall it be salted? it is thenceforth good for nothing, but to be cast out, and to be trodden under foot of men." ([Matthew 5:13](#))

"But I say unto you, Love your enemies, bless them that curse you, do good to them that hate you, and pray for them which despitefully use you, and persecute you; That ye may be the children of your Father which is in heaven: for he maketh his sun to rise on the evil and on the good, and sendeth rain on the just and on the unjust. For if ye love them which love you, what reward have ye? do not even the publicans the same? And if ye salute your brethren only, what do ye more than others? do not even the publicans so?" ([Matthew 5:44-47](#))

"To this end was I born, and for this cause came I into the world, that I should bear witness unto the truth. Every one that is of the truth heareth my voice." ([John 18:37](#))

"For with what judgment ye judge, ye shall be judged: and with what measure ye mete, it shall be measured to you again." ([Matthew 7:2](#)).

"And why beholdest thou the mote that is in thy brother's eye, but considerest not the beam that is in thine own eye? Or how wilt thou say to thy brother, Let me pull out the mote out of thine eye; and, behold, a beam is in thine own eye? Thou hypocrite, first cast out the beam out of thine own eye; and then shalt thou see clearly to cast out the mote out of thy brother's eye." ([Matthew 7:3-5](#)).

Latter-day Saint scriptures teach:

“Wherefore, let every man beware lest he do that which is not in truth and righteousness before me.” ([D&C 50:9](#)).

“Wo be unto him that lieth to deceive because he supposeth that another lieth to deceive, for such are not exempt from the justice of God” ([D&C 10:28](#); see also [2 Nephi 28:8-9](#)).

“I would that ye should remember that God has said that the inward vessel shall be cleansed first, and then shall the outer vessel be cleansed also.” ([Alma 60:23](#))

“And who overcome by faith, and are sealed by the Holy Spirit of promise, which the Father sheds forth upon all those who are just and true.” ([D&C 76:17,53](#)).

“Be not partial towards them in love above many others, but let thy love be for them as for thyself; and let thy love abound unto all men, and unto all who love my name.” ([D&C 112:11](#))

“And that law of the land which is constitutional, supporting that principle of freedom in maintaining rights and privileges, belongs to all mankind, and is justifiable before me. Therefore, I, the Lord, justify you, and your brethren of my church, in befriending that law which is the constitutional law of the land.” ([D&C 98:5-6](#))

In a Washington Post editorial, [Michael F. Bird summarized concerns](#) I share:

As a scholar of the New Testament and a professing Christian, I simply do not recognize the plethora of American “Jesuses” spawned by the political left and right. What I see is neither the Jesus of Nazareth I know from history nor the Christ of faith that I know from my church.

To begin with, I am not remotely convinced by the Jesus of American conservative culture. A Jesus who sounds like a deified version of Ronald Reagan. A Jesus who believes that God helps those who help themselves. A Jesus who rejects biological evolution but ostensibly believes in an economic contest of survival of the fittest.

Then, among progressives, their Jesus is often described in ways that would probably best fit the long-lost love child of Lenin and Lady Gaga who grew up to become an Antifa activist. The industry of progressive politics trades in a secular Jesus sanitized of anything that sounds too religious.

I understand that everyone wants Jesus on their political side. In fact, I find it heartening that Jesus is still the endorsement that everyone wants! But there are immense costs being paid when politicians and pundits claim Jesus for their own side...

Now, there are good reasons for and against gun control, as well as how to balance economic growth and environmental protection, and religious texts and religious ethics can contribute to those discussions. But claiming that Jesus supports one view and not another is simply outlandish and irresponsible...

Plus, there's the enduring trope of Jesus the Marxist as if 18th-century European politics and economics is the right setting to locate Jesus within. What we see here is the image of Jesus being constantly twisted and contorted in unbearable fashion.

MWEG's partisan Jesus is unrecognizable to me, millions of other Latter-day Saints, and countless Christians worldwide. Selected religious teachings are cited merely as window-dressing to an ideological agenda. The result is neither faith nor ethics, but only a rebranding of partisanship. MWEG's partisan ethics channel Herbert Marcuse over Martin Luther King, Jr., Adam Schiff over Gandhi, Karl Marx over Jesus Christ.

Future Directions: MWEG Op-Ed Pilot Survey

If needed, a future direction will include a review of every published MWEG-affiliated op-ed or editorial piece that can be located. MWEG's op-eds are part of the public dialogue and are appropriate for evaluation and critique. The op-ed review would catalog each piece by newspaper or periodical, URL, date, title, and author initials, and would evaluate adherence to domains of nonpartisanship, ethics, and LDS Church teachings for each piece. Specific items of charged or inflammatory language, non-factual claims, partisan narratives, and bias would be identified for each and tabulated similar to the above review of MWEG official statements. Shared language and narratives promulgated within the group would be identified.

A pilot survey of 10 MWEG op-eds demonstrates that 100% of these op-eds push partisan agendas, contrary to the group's professed nonpartisanship. Similarly, the core narratives of pieces surveyed derived from partisan ideology and talking points rather than equitably-applied ethical principles or faith-based values. Most contain charged, inflammatory language and withhold contrary information and perspectives. Many make non-factual partisan claims. Of MWEG-affiliated op-eds surveyed to date, ALL promote a leftist partisan agenda; none are politically neutral. While each piece will be evaluated individually, there is no reason to believe that more exhaustive evaluation will not confirm strong partisan bias, shared narratives, and specific political agendas.

Newspaper editors have typically accepted MWEG's claims of being a nonpartisan faith-based ethical advocacy group in good faith, being unaware of MWEG's partisan record and agenda. Many of MWEG's actions appear more akin to the conduct of an [unregistered political committee](#) than a bona fide ethics group.

Concerns Regarding Nonprofit Status

The [National Institute for Civil Discourse](#), co-founded by former U.S. presidents Bill Clinton and George H.W. Bush, is a truly nonpartisan group dedicated to civic engagement and respectful dialogue. Its subsidiary [CommonSense American](#) is devoted to finding common-sense, mainstream, centrist solutions to matters of public policy. [Human Rights Watch](#) is a true human rights organization monitoring human rights issues around the world. HRW is a generally nonpartisan group that finds supporters across the political spectrum. While observers have noted some concerns of bias, on the whole, HRW appears to engage in fair-minded, bona fide efforts to hold violators of human rights abusers accountable, without regard to political agenda. NICD

and HRW are both authentic nonpartisan organizations that live up to their 501(c) designation. Sadly, the contrast of MWEG with these groups could not be starker.

MWEG's official public statements to date have principally criticized only Republicans (Versus Republican: 38 statements, Versus Democrat: 0 statements). MWEG's narratives consist of partisan talking points representing Democratic views (39 statements) with no conservative perspectives (0 statements) and very few of which are neutral. The group routinely presents data in a misleading fashion and routinely withholds key facts and data that would undermine the favored narrative (19 statements). Such conduct is remote from nonpartisanship in the common understanding of the term.

MWEG's "[Principles of Nonpartisanship](#)" claim that "MWEG will not...privilege one party over another" in its public activities. The group's record does not support this claim. Privileging of one party over another does not only involve waving of political banners and explicitly instructing others to vote for or against a candidate (which MWEG's founder and countless members have done as part of the group's social media activism, promoted and shared by numerous other MWEG members, which the group describes as an essential part of its mission). It includes unequal treatment advantaging one party over another, for example, by criticizing only figures and policies of one political party while ignoring equally or more serious conduct from the other. Privileging includes repeating narratives of one party while ignoring arguments of the other, or selectively playing up or withholding facts to promote one party's narrative and to disadvantage the other. MWEG has engaged these behaviors on a widespread, systematic basis, virtually without exception. If the privilege of one party and disfavor of the other were stripped away, very little would be left of MWEG's advocacy.

MWEG operates [both 501\(c\)\(4\) and 501\(c\)\(3\) nonprofit organizations](#). The 501(c)(4) is a social welfare organization, whereas the 501(c)(3) appears to be used primarily for fundraising. 501(c)(4) and 501(c)(3) nonprofit organizations must satisfy specific criteria to qualify and maintain their status. Otherwise, their status may be revoked, and they may be subject to penalties. IRS criteria note that "the promotion of social welfare does not include [direct or indirect participation or intervention in political campaigns](#) on behalf of or in opposition to any candidate for public office" with [very limited exemptions](#). MWEG does not appear to "conduct its activities in a nonpartisan manner." The group's official statements, opinion pieces, op-eds, and grass-roots activism all seethe with partisan zealotry. MWEG engages in "substantial lobbying activities" which have been almost exclusively partisan, privileging one party. Its activities do not appear to be "primarily 'educational,'" given their hyperpartisan nature and focus on selling a political narrative rather than providing neutral, accurate information. This conduct may [not qualify for exemption under IRC 501\(c\)\(4\)](#)" or [501\(c\)\(3\)](#). The IRS code notes that "all section 501(c)(3) organizations are [absolutely prohibited from directly or indirectly participating in, or intervening in,](#) any political campaign on behalf of (or in opposition to) any candidate for elective public office." MWEG's highly partisan conduct raises serious concerns regarding its compliance with the terms of its nonprofit status.

The statements evaluated in this review all come from MWEG's documented online public advocacy, where one would expect the group and its members to be on their best behavior. In this context, questions are raised regarding MWEG's voter registration, "voter education," and similar activities that occur away from the bright lights and public accountability. Is it credible to think that formal and informal outreach in other venues is conducted in a strictly nonpartisan fashion when the group's official statements overwhelmingly favor Democratic narratives and target Republicans? When the group has repeatedly represented its public activities as nonpartisan while demonstrating severe partisan bias? When leading members of the group [lack the discipline in public postings on almost any political topic](#) to refrain from pivoting to "Carthago delenda est" attacks against designated political enemies? When, as we have seen, MWEG repeatedly uses the nonpartisan as a code for leftist platforms couched in moralizing language?

Concerns about Mormon Women for Ethical Government

While representing itself as a nonpartisan, faith-based ethical advocacy group, Mormon Women for Ethical Government has engaged in the following conduct:

1. MWEG has taken its agenda principally from an extreme of the political spectrum and not from a neutral assessment of needs, centrist agenda, or a bipartisan mix of priorities.

2. MWEG has rendered serious critique exclusively regarding the personalities, policies, and platforms of the disfavored party.
3. MWEG has failed to meaningfully scrutinize or hold accountable members, policies, and platforms of the favored party on any issue.
4. MWEG has systematically promulgated partisan narratives and interpretations of the favored party while using faith-based principles as little more than window dressing.
5. MWEG has systematically withheld key facts and contrary arguments in order to promote partisan narratives.
6. MWEG has inverted the burden of proof for members of the disfavored party, requiring no evidence for criticism and then demanding that they exculpate themselves.
7. MWEG has raised the burden of proof for members of the disfavored party to exculpate themselves to the impossible and legally nonexistent standard of “beyond any doubt.”
8. MWEG leaders and affiliates have promulgated narratives on social media, denying any moral or rational basis for others to support the group’s designated political enemies or not to support the group’s favorites.
9. MWEG has failed to disclose biases and conflicts of interest of senior leadership, notwithstanding representations of nonpartisanship.
10. MWEG has engaged in political advocacy opposing disfavored candidates and supporting favored candidates both directly and indirectly, contravening requirements of the group’s nonprofit status.
11. MWEG has lobbied coreligionist elected officials to support a partisan agenda while representing their concerns as ethical and faith-based rather than partisan.
12. MWEG has represented itself as adhering to the teachings of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints while cherry-picking church statements and ignoring inconvenient teachings.
13. MWEG has appropriated the Mormon label to push a partisan agenda.
14. MWEG has routinely violated its own professed principles.
15. MWEG has routinely violated principles of normative ethics.

Response to Criticism

Many criticisms I have received to date have been from those who have read only brief fragments and have fired off lists of objections that are already answered in the text. Others materially misstate data and arguments in the review. It is not necessary to dignify such criticisms with a response. Selected items are addressed below.

1. MWEG selects issues for advocacy because they are the moral and ethical issues of our day.

Logical Fallacy: Circular Logic

This response obfuscates the vast personal opinion and bias in the group’s selection and treatment of advocacy topics by presenting them as self-evident. The problems with these claims have been addressed in the treatment of individual items above.

2. MWEG’s advocacy stances have seriously critiqued individuals of only one party because these are the ethical issues, as determined by the group’s experts.

Logical Fallacy: Appeal to Authority

MWEG's record shows unequal and biased treatment along partisan lines, with figures and policies of one party frequently criticized with unsubstantiated claims. In contrast, figures of the other are never held to account even in the face of serious, confirmed misconduct. Appeals to ostensible experts are irrelevant. This review is based on the group's record and work products, not the resumes of its officers.

3. MWEG's stated principles are good; therefore, the group is good.

Logical Fallacy: Misdirection

Determinations are made based on the group's record rather than its theoretical statements of principle. MWEG has set forth an admirable set of public principles, many of which it has ignored in practice. Much like the empty promises and guarantees set forth in the constitutions of authoritarian states, MWEG's stated principles have been used more as a public relations tool than as operational principles. See "What are MWEG's Operational Principles?" above.

4. Some or many of MWEG's leaders are politically unaffiliated or identify as Republicans; therefore, the group is nonpartisan.

Logical Fallacy: Non Sequitur, Misdirection

Nonpartisanship is demonstrated by conduct over affiliation. Nonpartisan conduct does not depend primarily on individuals' descriptions of themselves as independent-minded or conservative-leaning centrists but by their actual (current and recent) advocacy stances.

What was (or will be) the percentage of MWEG leadership voting for the Democratic and Republican presidential candidates in the November 2020 election? My money is on 100% Democratic and 0% Republican presidential votes for this ideologically "diverse" and "nonpartisan" group, notwithstanding many or most living in Utah, a state expected to be carried by the Republican candidate by a wide margin. MWEG official statements issuing censure show the same spread between statements meaningfully censuring Democrats (0%) and censuring Republicans (100%). What a surprise. Nothing to see here, no bias or partisanship, according to MWEG.

5. MWEG is nonpartisan because it has praised Republicans.

Logical Fallacy: Misdirection

MWEG has praised Republicans only when they have supported Democratic agenda items, such as Donald Trump's impeachment (#41) or increasing the debt ceiling without meaningful concessions on spending (#28), while criticizing the same individuals when they have promoted conservative platforms (#11) or have not supported the Democratic party agenda (#41). MWEG has never specifically criticized Democrats for failing to compromise, nor has it called out Democrats with the [farthest-left voting record and the lowest rate of support for bipartisan legislation](#) even when running for the Vice Presidency. MWEG's "bipartisanship" goes only in one direction. One-directional bipartisanship does not support the "bi-"; it is simply "partisanship."

6. MWEG doesn't have favorites and isn't opposed to anyone.

Logical Fallacy: Ipse Dixit

Wow.

7. Your criticism of MWEG is wrong because you think the group should criticize Democrats and Republicans equally. Most violations have been on the Republican side.

Logical Fallacy: Straw Man

I have repeatedly noted the importance of equal treatment, or consistent standards, for wrongdoing by figures of both political parties. Comparing the number of critiques of individuals, policies, and platforms of both parties may identify concerns for potential bias, but bias can be confirmed only by demonstrating discrepant treatment for figures and policies of different parties. MWEG's bias has been extensively demonstrated throughout this review. I have also acknowledged that many criticisms of Republicans are appropriate, whereas others are exaggerated or unsubstantiated. MWEG engages in hypercriticism of conservatives while failing to meaningfully hold any Democrats accountable for similar or worse conduct.

8. You only critique MWEG because you are (insert allegation of prejudice here).

Logical Fallacies: Straw Man, Ad Hominem

False. The concerns raised here reflect the group's breaches of ethics, public misrepresentations, and biases, and not any innate characteristics. The staff at MWEG are skilled organizers, highly intelligent, articulate, and very capable. The group's work products are refined and appealing. Similarly, statements of both the Republican and Democratic National Committees are carefully crafted by educated, intelligent, and experienced individuals of both genders and diverse backgrounds. Their

statements are deficient by the same metrics of balance, fairness, and disclosure. My critique has nothing to do with religious affiliation, gender, educational level, employment, legislative experience, or reported past political affiliation. I'm also aware that, while formal MWEG membership is gender-exclusive, the group offers supporting roles to [affiliates of both genders](#). Rather, the concerns reflect matters of the group's bias and agenda. The polishing of language in an echo chamber of like-minded individuals accepting shared narratives and assumptions is very different from a robust process to ensure nonpartisanship, fairness, and neutral ethics.

9. Why do you oppose MWEG for doing good things? You should do something that good instead of destructive.

Logical Fallacies: Straw Man, Misdirection, False Dichotomy

A false dichotomy is posed between uncritical acceptance and complete rejection: the group is accepted as virtuous while its negative conduct is ignored. As we have seen (see "Partisanship as an Evil" above), this is the mentality of the partisan.

Nothing good that MWEG has done is criticized here. Pushing one-sided narratives, withholding contrary information, engaging in public misrepresentation, playing up allegations against designated political enemies, giving a free pass to political favorites and even serving as their apologist, and presenting a political agenda as a moral imperative are not "good things" – not unless one accepts that partisan's code of Omertà. This conduct is antithetical to normative ethics and teachings of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints.

Ethical arbiters, including self-appointed ones, are must demonstrate high and consistent ethical standards. As we have repeatedly seen, MWEG has routinely violated its own professed principles as well as normative ethics and also fails to apply ethical standards consistently. The group lacks credibility and moral authority. MWEG's attempts to tip the balance on issues of national importance through unethical tactics should concern all Americans.

I would like nothing more than for MWEG to live up to its principles. While I sincerely hope that I am wrong, the record to date offers no basis for optimism. MWEG was born as a partisan group; its leaders are profoundly partisan; its record is partisan; it does not respect its own stated principles. I can identify no thread of moral consistency in the group's official statements and record; only the code of the partisan. See "Partisanship as an Evil" above.

10. "This makes no sense to me at all. You are attacking a group of political activists for being political activists. Their point of view is not only obvious, it's their whole point."

- George Pyle, Opinion Editor, Salt Lake Tribune.

Thank you, Mr. Pyle, for your unexpected candor in acknowledging the obvious: MWEG is a partisan political activist group, and in no way a nonpartisan faith-based defender of ethics. Approaches based in personal opinions and pervasive partisan "double standards" are indeed obvious and the group's "whole point." But this approach is antithetical to the mantles the group claims.

There would be no objection if these facts were acknowledged publicly by the Tribune. Yet the Salt Lake Tribune has provided an ongoing platform for MWEG's misrepresentations of itself as a nonpartisan faith-based ethics group that allegedly eschews the weaponization of faith, pledges not to "privilege one party over another," and presents its agenda to the public and co-religionist elected officials as moral imperatives of faith and ethics. As we have seen, the group's stances are based in partisan ideology and agenda, and not in transcendent ethics or faith-based virtue. The Tribune has been a party to these misrepresentations. These concerns should make sense to anyone as matters of journalistic integrity.

Mr. Pyle's acknowledgment thus raises other questions. Why does the Tribune continue to publish MWEG op-eds and additional coverage with false claims of being a neutral ethics-based actor instead of a partisan one, when the paper is well aware that these claims are false and cannot withstand scrutiny? Why does the Tribune laud the group's "reputation for fairness" when its record is anything but fair? Why does the Tribune object to holding the group accountable for misleading claims, published repeatedly within the paper's pages, that are demonstrably false?

MWEG's claim to the three mantles of nonpartisanship, ethics, and faith, and framing of its perspectives as matters of public interest rather than partisan agenda, have promoted the group's ready access to the editorial pen, other media coverage, and public credibility. MWEG is certainly welcome to its opinions and to have its voice heard, but this should be done without deception or misrepresentation. There would be no objection if the group were named consistent with its conduct to date, as "Women for Democratic Socialism" or something similar. But the deception of claiming the Mormon brand and the mantle of ethics to spread a partisan agenda is serious. Either MWEG is a partisan group subject to the same treatment and disclosure requirements as other partisan organizations, or it is a nonpartisan ethics-based group accountable to standards of ethics and nonpartisanship.

11. Someone had to say it. Thank you.

Many Mormon women, like this respondent, have been concerned that MWEG does not represent their faith and values in any way. MWEG has acknowledged that [numerous others have written to express concern for the group's double standards](#). While many people wanted to give MWEG the benefit of the doubt (I for one would have eagerly welcomed a true nonpartisan faith-based ethics group), the group's record makes clear its hyperpartisanship and ideology. Many thoughtful and fair-minded individuals have been troubled by MWEG's bias and agenda which contrast sharply with professed principles, and are not concealed by clever language and denials.

Conclusion

Mormon Women for Ethical Government's conduct is inconsistent with the obligations of an ostensibly nonpartisan arbiter of ethics. The group weaponizes selective "ethics" to bludgeon political opponents with hyperpartisan narratives while suspending ethical scrutiny entirely in regard to favored candidates and causes. MWEG's unequal and discriminatory treatment would be unlawful if committed by any public agency. The group represents itself as a self-appointed ethical arbiter yet exempts itself from the standards, transparency, and accountability of public institutions.

Nonpartisanship, ethics, and faith-based advocacy all require the consistent implementation of specific principles. These mantles impose specific duties and are defiled when appropriated to serve a political strategy. Nonpartisan impartiality requires equal treatment, not privileging narratives and agenda of one party over those of another. The ethicist's duty is to be fair, not to sell a narrative. Selective "ethics" are not ethics at all. The partisan's creed of ideologically-based agenda and pervasive double standards is anathema to Christian discipleship. These principles cannot be invoked or ignored as convenient, turned "on" or "off" at will as part of a political strategy. To attempt to do so subverts everything they represent.

Vox co-founder Ezra Klein observed, "A lot of debates that sell themselves as being about free speech are actually about power. And [there's *a lot* of power in being able to claim, and hold, the mantle of free speech defender.](#)" Similarly, MWEG's claims to the mantles of ethics, nonpartisanship, and faith-based values appear to be primarily about empowering the group's

political agenda rather than any actual loyalty to professed principles. MWEG's use of the Mormon name to push a partisan agenda while engaging in conduct contrary to the teachings of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints and normative ethics is troubling. Far from being a bastion of ethics and faith-based values, MWEG is demonstrated by its record to be an unscrupulous political actor.

MWEG professes to be nonpartisan and ethically-based as a way to gain public support, influence elected officials, and receive free publicity and editorial authorship to which a partisan group would not be entitled. Media outlets that choose to provide MWEG an unpaid platform for political advocacy should understand that the group's claim of being a faith-based nonpartisan ethical arbiter is based on a fundamental deception. The vision of the world advocated by MWEG is, in aggregate, neither more just nor more ethical, but only more partisan.

One MWEG statement notes: "We believe we more closely approach Zion when we respectfully allow others to act according to their conscience and ensure that our religious spaces are free from the acrimony of politics." Yet MWEG group's systematic attempts to discredit the views of Mormon acquaintances whose political opinions diverge from the "party line," intensive lobbying of co-religionist elected officials to support a political agenda under the guise of religious and moral imperative, and similar conduct -- all while neglecting its professed principles of nonpartisanship, fairness, and factual integrity -- are nothing if not the weaponization of faith for political gain. Another MWEG statement pointing to American society ironically acknowledges "[how selectively we adhere to our own professed ideals](#)," even as the group lacks basic insights into its own conduct.

Mormon Women for Ethical Government is a partisan political activist group and not an authentic and impartial faith-based defender of ethics. MWEG's efforts to tip the balance on issues of national importance through the use of unethical tactics should concern all Americans.