

O P I N I O N

AS PRESIDENT, HOW WOULD YOU DEAL WITH ISIS?



Letters to the Editor...

The Nugget welcomes contributions from its readers, which must include the writer's name, address and phone number. Letters to the Editor is an open forum for the community and contains unsolicited opinions not necessarily shared by the Editor. The Nugget reserves the right to edit, omit, respond or ask for a response to letters submitted to the Editor. Letters should be no longer than 300 words. Unpublished items are not acknowledged or returned. The deadline for all letters is noon Monday.

To the Editor:

In response to Dave Marlow's March 23 letter to the editor on a \$15-per-hour minimum wage, I agree 100 percent.

We're seeing an unprecedented number of goodies that liberal Democrats are promising without a single thought given to unintended consequences. Liberals' new "purchase votes initiatives" include \$15 minimum wage, free college, free medical, and entitlement to what they determine as their fair share.

My first job at 12 years old picking beans paid .025 per pound, and you made what you worked for. There was no splitting up the total at the end of the day to make sure everyone was entitled to "his or her fair share." When I turned 16, I was able to land summer jobs at minimum wage of \$1 per hour to \$1.25 per hour. Of course that was 50-plus years ago. However, I NEVER imagined minimum wage was going to entitle me to a "living wage," buy a house, raise a family, and live the American dream.

America is the greatest country in the

world when it comes to self-directed opportunity. The stories are endless of those who made good choices, worked hard and "earned" their success. Oprah Winfrey is one example. How is it that I'm entitled to one cent of what she worked hard for in the name of fairness? Michael Jordan is also very rich, and he earned it by hard work and utilizing his God-given talent. So help me understand why I'm entitled to one cent of his fortune in the name of fairness? Bill Gates and his partner started Microsoft from nothing. Today it's a multinational company providing thousands of high-paying jobs. Again, tell me why I would be entitled to one cent of their amazing accomplishment in the name of fairness.

Those aiming to turn our country upside down in the name of fairness and entitlement may have noble goals, but the results will be disastrous. What our country needs is competent leadership that will unleash the power of free enterprise by eliminating stifling

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Sisters Weather Forecast

Courtesy of the National Weather Service, Pendleton, Oregon

Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday	Sunday	Monday
Sunny 57/28	Sunny 65/35	Sunny 68/38	Chance Showers 58/34	Partly Sunny 61/37	Partly Sunny 50/na

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Rachel Marsden

American Voices

What do you get when you ignore a hotbed of jihadism located just a few miles from the base of European

governance? Tragedy. Belgian authorities have labeled as terrorism a series of attacks March 22 in Brussels that killed more than 30 people and injured dozens of others. Not long after two explosions ripped through the Brussels airport, there was a rush-hour explosion at the Maalbeek metro station near the driver's seat of Europe itself: the European Commission, where meetings were canceled as soon as this political boomerang crashed through the window.

It's not a stretch to imagine that this latest wave of attacks had something to do with the arrest of Salah Abdeslam, 26, a suspect in last year's coordinated Paris terrorist attacks that killed 130 people and injured hundreds more. Following the attacks, authorities reportedly believed that Abdeslam, whose brother detonated a suicide bomb at Le Comptoir Voltaire restaurant, had fled to Syria.

Although I'd like to think the admission that a dangerous terrorist had somehow dropped off the radar of authorities was just a ruse to make the suspect think they'd lost his scent, perhaps it's not wise to attribute to wile what could be easily ascribed to incompetence.

Abdeslam was arrested less than a half-mile from his mother's house in the Brussels neighborhood of Molenbeek, a notorious jihadist nest that was temporarily placed under martial law in the wake of the Paris attacks. Molenbeek has been tied to a number of terrorist attacks, including the 2004 Madrid train bombings and last year's Thalys train attack that was thwarted by several passengers.

The mayor of Molenbeek from 1993 to 2012 was Philippe Moureaux, a member of the Socialist Party known for his hands-off approach to the radical jihadism that was festering right under his nose. Socialist policies often seem designed to not make local minority

populations feel uncomfortable — which in itself is an

inherently racist worldview toward law-abiding citizens who happen to be minorities. By not imposing the sort of safety standards that are common in other municipalities, Socialist leaders expose law-abiding minorities in the area to a greater threat. Why should they have to suffer the consequences of policies that pander to the criminal element?

But it's not just socialist policies that have fed the jihadist threat in Molenbeek. European policies and the incompetence of the Belgian government are also to blame. (Belgian politics, much like Belgian society, is so fractured that the nation went 589 days without an official government in 2010-2011 because opposing parties were unable to form a coalition following the federal elections. Nothing says "hey, we've got this" quite like being unable to form a government.) After French President Francois Hollande indicated that some of the Paris attackers were from Belgium, Alain Chouet, the former head of France's foreign intelligence service, was widely quoted as saying that the Belgians aren't up to snuff in terms of security efforts.

Belgium's proposed solution to terrorism is to just jack up the budget. Last year, shortly after the Paris attacks, the Belgian government announced a plan to reach into taxpayers' wallets for 400 million euros to combat the threat. Instead, Belgian leaders might want to consider taking a stroll down the street to European Union headquarters and explaining that the nation's security resources have been stretched to the breaking point by European EU policies that effectively erase national borders and sovereignty, and by the perpetual push to import even more newcomers from terror-ridden countries.

Brussels has become a point of convergence for jihadism, socialism and government ineptitude — with tragic results. The city also now serves as a cautionary tale for other places sliding in the same direction.

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