

Duquesne University

Duquesne Scholarship Collection

Hallowed Secularism

The Collective Works of Bruce Ledewitz, Adrian
Van Kaam C.S.Sp. Endowed Chair in Scholarly
Excellence and Professor of Law

11-6-2016

November 6, 2016: "Nobody Believes the Numbers Anyway"

Bruce Ledewitz

Duquesne University, ledewitz@duq.edu

Follow this and additional works at: <https://dsc.duq.edu/ledewitz-hallowedsecularism>



Part of the [Constitutional Law Commons](#), and the [Law and Philosophy Commons](#)

Repository Citation

Ledewitz, B. (2016). November 6, 2016: "Nobody Believes the Numbers Anyway". Retrieved from <https://dsc.duq.edu/ledewitz-hallowedsecularism/1047>

This Article is brought to you for free and open access by the The Collective Works of Bruce Ledewitz, Adrian Van Kaam C.S.Sp. Endowed Chair in Scholarly Excellence and Professor of Law at Duquesne Scholarship Collection. It has been accepted for inclusion in Hallowed Secularism by an authorized administrator of Duquesne Scholarship Collection. For more information, please contact beharyr@duq.edu.

Title: "Nobody Believes the Numbers Anyway"

Date: 2016-11-06T06:18:00.001-05:00

11/6/2016—Despite the last minute frantic leaks from the FBI, which Republican politicians will eventually decide they also must deal with as worrisome to civilian control of the government, and despite the fact that some of the allegations are absolutely true—if Chelsea Clinton received classified emails, that is much more serious than the other email charges and Clinton Foundation influence peddling is only marginally less than a crime—and despite the fact that I am now not certain that a President Clinton can actually govern unless President Obama grants her a general pardon to stop all the criminal investigations, which he would not dare to do, I assume Hillary Clinton will win on Tuesday and become the next President.

And that is really a good thing. Of course Donald Trump would be dangerous as President, as most conservative newspaper columnists have said all along in a display of honorable conduct that no Democrat seems to appreciate.

But, all that aside, Donald Trump exemplifies the nihilism at the heart of American life so completely that it is frightening. With him around, let alone as President, what would life be like?

In response to Friday's jobs report—a pretty good one, with 161,000 jobs added, wages up 2.8% over the prior year, unemployment down to 4.9% and the labor participation rate stable if not up—Trump's response was to call the report "an absolute disaster" and, more importantly, adding, "nobody believes the numbers anyway." [[New York Times story here](#)].

Now, of course, Trump undoubtedly did mean that the unemployment rate does not tell the whole story of President Obama's poor economic performance. It is a partial measure. But ever since Jack Welch said much the same thing in a tweet back in 2012 about a jobs report: "Unbelievable jobs numbers..these Chicago guys will do anything..can't debate so change numbers," [see [here](#)] a Republican idea has been that you can't trust government numbers on employment. And that is just one more charge on top of the allegations of pretty much nonexistent vote fraud or other unspecified issues.

As I hope I have said many times on this blog, this kind of destructive skepticism is not partisan. Progressive parents make dark noises about lying government officials on the link between autism and vaccines and otherwise normal African-American leaders speak of government collusion in the crack epidemic.

And just when you think conspiracies are crazy, you have the example of the Pennsylvania legislature manipulating the ballot question for judicial retirement and then lying about it.

It is hopeless to imagine a better world if people assume that everything is a lie and no one acts with good faith. A full page ad run in newspapers by a tea party group says "drain the Washington swamp"—they are not all corrupt in Washington.

So, we live in X-Files world. But I don't want it to get worse. So I will be happy if Trump loses and goes away. Then we have to deal with the situation he merely represents.