

What George Wallace and Jerry Brown Have in Common

Who knows where George Wallace went after he left this life, but wherever he is, he must be smiling.

He and the other segregationist governors of the Old South didn't want the federal government telling them how to live their lives. On June 11, 1963 Wallace stood in the schoolhouse door at the University of Alabama to bar two black students from entering.

The other racist governors didn't think much of the civil rights laws either, so they sent in the police to stop black people from eating at lunch counters; they prohibited African Americans from staying at "white" hotels; they wouldn't allow them to sit in the front of the bus or drink from a "whites only" water fountain; and most of all, they wouldn't let black people vote, the surest way to keep them in their place.

Some 50 years later the old "states' rights" argument has resurfaced. But now it's not the governor of a regressive state, but the governor of the progressive state of California, along with his liberal allies in the state legislature, who think they can pick and choose which federal laws are worthy of respect – and which ones may be undermined.

So they've pretty much declared California a sanctuary state. As for federal immigration laws, the *enlightened* politicians in Sacramento don't think any more of them than George Wallace thought of federal civil rights laws.

Last year, California Governor Jerry Brown signed Senate Bill 54, which among other things prohibits state and local law enforcement officials from informing federal officers when an

illegal immigrant who has committed a crime is being released from custody.

Ah, but this is not in the same moral universe, progressives will tell you, as what Governor Wallace and the others did. Wallace shunned federal law to enforce an evil way of life. Jerry Brown and the Democratic legislature want to help people – not hurt them. They want immigrants who are here illegally to feel free to work with the police if they know something about a crime. If they're afraid of being deported they'll stay in the shadows and remain silent.

There's some truth to that. But what about the times when an illegal immigrant is released from custody and federal agents are not informed – and he goes out and shoots and kills a young woman on a pier in San Francisco?

And what about that political stunt in Oakland, California in February when Mayor Libby Schaaf warned illegal aliens of a secret raid by immigration agents? That reckless decision put her citizens in danger by allowing illegal immigrants, many of whom had committed crimes, to avoid arrest.

How is that making things safer for the community?

Now the federal government is suing California, arguing that the Constitution gives the federal government jurisdiction over immigration matters; so states have no right to undercut federal immigration laws with its own state laws. Attorney General Jeff Sessions put it this way: "California is using every power it has – and some it doesn't – to frustrate federal law enforcement."

And several communities in California have taken sides – against the new law.

On March 27 the Orange County Board of Supervisors voted to condemn the sanctuary law and is now working on a way to join the lawsuit on the side of the federal government. "Our

concern is about criminal illegal aliens who are falling through the cracks because our sheriff can't talk to federal immigration agents," as Michelle Park Steele, a supervisor in the county explains it.

Eight days later the city council in Escondido, California followed Orange County's lead and voted to file a brief in support of the federal government against the state's sanctuary cities law.

And the rebellion is spreading. Other California communities are joining the battle: aligning themselves with the federal government.

And let's consider where California's supposed benign thinking could conceivably lead us. What if the Massachusetts legislature decides it doesn't want to grant rights to gun owners on grounds that gun violence is a danger to the people of the state? What if they think the Second Amendment is up for grabs, that states can honor court decisions on guns – or not?

What if Nebraska thinks too much fake news is being passed off as the real thing, that the First Amendment is an irritant and that journalistic bias shouldn't be tolerated or legally protected?

What if Utah decides that human life is more important than some "right to choose" and criminalizes abortion? Would that be OK?

None of this, of course, is likely to happen. The American people, by and large, wouldn't tolerate such state-sponsored anarchy. So why should we tolerate California's decision to make an end run around federal law? *Because Jerry Brown and his allies mean well?*

Sometimes it's important to state the obvious, so here goes: Jerry Brown is not George Wallace. Jerry Brown is a well-

educated thoughtful man. George Wallace was a populist ex-boxer who played to the worst instincts of the people in his state – until he dramatically changed his ways late in life.

Still, Governor Brown is traveling down the same pot-holed road as Governor Wallace once did. Jerry Brown says the federal government is “going to war” against his state. He’s convinced he’s doing the right thing for the right reasons. So did George Wallace.