



Written by [Thomas Sowell](#) on July 1, 2012

A Political Glossary: Part IV

Nowhere is political rhetoric more shameless — or more dangerous — than in the pious names that politicians give to the legislation they pass. Perhaps the most egregious example is the so-called “Indian Child Welfare Act,” which callously sacrifices the welfare of Indian children.

Time and again, children with some American Indian ancestry, who have been adopted by families that are not of that ancestry, have been suddenly taken by law from the only parents they have ever known and transferred to some distant Indian reservation, to live among strangers in a world they know nothing about.

You might think that the sight of bewildered, desperate and weeping children in court, crying out for mommy and daddy as they are forcibly removed from people who have cared for them for years, might cause those who are seizing them to relent. But no! Such children are routinely sacrificed on the altar to the Indian Child Welfare Act.

The child might be two years old or twelve. But the legal rights of a biological relative and tribal authorities trump the well being of the child, even if that biological relative has been a complete stranger to the child.

Some years ago, the chairman of the Civil Rights Commission visited a 14-year-old girl who had been removed from her adopted parents and was living on an Indian reservation, where she was miserable. But when the story came out, outrage was directed not at those who had ruined this girl’s life, but at the member of the Civil Rights Commission who had dared to intrude on the sacred soil of the Indian reservation.

Similar things have happened to black children raised by white foster parents. There is no Congressional legislation in these cases, but the dogmatism of social workers and so-called social welfare departments can lead to the same results. However, the absence of federal legislation enables those judges who have common sense, and common decency, to prevent similar tragedies in these cases.

What is behind such perverse racial policies? Theories, ideologies and presumptions of superior wisdom and virtue. It has been known for centuries that there are people, especially among the intelligentsia, who love humanity in the abstract but are not all that concerned about what happens to the actual flesh-and-blood human beings who are subjected to their grand visions and policies.

If the vogue of the times is that children should be raised in their own racial culture, that overrules other considerations. As T.S. Eliot said, long ago: “Half of the harm that is done in this world is due to people who want to feel important. They don’t mean to do harm — but the harm does not interest them. Or they do not see it, or they justify it because they are absorbed in the endless struggle to think well of





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themselves.”

But the rest of us need to be on guard against their rhetoric. Nor is the Indian Child Welfare Act the only legislation whose effects are the direct opposite of its title.

The Obama administration introduced legislation called the “Employee Free Choice Act.” What would it do? Destroy the free choice of workers as to whether or not they want to be represented by a labor union.

The National Labor Relations Act of 1935 gave workers the right to a federally conducted secret ballot election, in which they could vote to have a union or not have a union. But, as more and more workers in recent years have voted not to have a union, union bosses have pushed for a law to allow this decision to be made without a secret ballot. This would allow union organizers to use pressure and coercion on those who don’t want to have a union.

Since union bosses contributed both money and manpower to the election of Barack Obama, it is hardly surprising that he was willing to reciprocate with the “Employee Free Choice Act.”

In this case, the Act failed to pass in Congress. But President Obama accomplished some of its goals by appointing pro-union members to the National Labor Relations Board, whose regulations tilted elections in the unions’ favor.

If you can’t be bothered to look beyond rhetoric to realities, don’t complain about bad laws, or even about the degeneration of law itself into arbitrary rule over what was once a free people.

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