THE WISDOM, WIT AND IMPACT OF JOHN MCCAIN

JARRAR REMAINS OFF CAMPUS AS FRESNO STATE CLASSES START

GOV. BROWN SIGNS BILL ENDING BAIL BEFORE TRIAL
As Her Fresno State Classes Start

Controversial Fresno State professor Randa Jarrar has yet to return to the classroom.

The embattled English department professor is scheduled to teach two classes this semester, starting today (Aug. 27). However, the university confirmed Monday that she remains on leave. “The professor is still scheduled to return to teaching this fall after having been on approved leave since last spring,” said university spokeswoman Patti Waid. Substitute teachers will fill in for three classes: Masterpieces of American Literature, Advanced Writing of Fiction, and Arab-American Literature classes.

The Tweet That Launched 1,000 Protests

Jarrar is an award-winning author of such books as “A Map of Home” and “Him, Me, Muhammad Ali.” While already known among academic and literary circles, Jarrar’s name exploded on the national radar following the death of former First Lady Barbara Bush last April. After tweeting that Bush was an “amazing racist,” Jarrar became a lightning rod of criticism and the fulcrum of debates about academic freedom and good taste. She followed up the remarks with more negative posts about Bush and her family.

At the time of the tweets, Jarrar was already on personal leave. Jarrar continued to engage with social media followers, mentioning her salary and job security status. She then switched her Twitter account to private. Currently, her Twitter account indicates that she resides in Los Angeles. At one point, she tweeted out a phone number for people to call her with criticism. It turned out to be a crisis hotline number at Arizona State. Following the uproar, and threats from the Fresno State community that they would withhold donations because of Jarrar, university president Joseph Castro announced she would not face discipline. Castro reiterated those remarks last week, as students returned to class. While he disagreed with Jarrar, Castro cited free speech and the fact she uttered her remarks on a private social media account as the reason the school wouldn’t take action.

Other Opinions Emerge

Since the April revelation of the Bush tweets, other Jarrar remarks surfaced, regarding her opinion of Valley farmers. “A lot of the farmers now are Trump supporters and just f—ing stupid,” Fox News reported about her comments in a YouTube video. “Can’t f—ing stand the white, hetero-patriarchy,” Regarding white editors, Jarrar reportedly posted: “At some point, all of us in the literary community must DEMAND that white editors resign. … It’s time to STEP DOWN and hand over the positions of power. We don’t have to wait for them to [expletive] up. The fact that they hold these positions is [expletive] up enough.” Despite the backlash, many free speech and academic groups rallied to her aid.

Correction, 8/27/18: the original story said that a third Jarrar class was canceled. School officials say that she is indeed scheduled to teach the class.

August 27, 2018 | David Taub

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IN A SMALL SPACE, SAROYAN IS REBORN

August 27, 2018 | Bill McEwen

It was well above 100 degrees on the afternoon I visited the William Saroyan House Museum a couple blocks from where I grew up. Sweat poured from electricians and carpenters racing against a tight deadline to transform the 1,228 square-foot home built by Oscar Spano in 1964 into a suitable tribute to the literary giant. The museum’s opening is set for Friday, Aug. 31, on what would have been the 110th birthday of the Pulitzer Prize and Academy Award winner.

I was there because, like many people around the world, I admire the humanity of Saroyan’s writing. And his zest for life. “Try as much as possible to be wholly alive, with all your might, and when you laugh, laugh like hell and when you get angry, get good and angry. Try to be alive. You will be dead soon enough,” he wrote in the preface to “The Daring Young Man on the Flying Trapeze.” (Read Fresno author Mark Arax’s memories of William Saroyan at this link.)

How Did You Present a Life This Big in a Small House?

I was there, too, because I wanted to see how this modest tract home at 2729 W. Griffith Way—one of two side-by-side Spanos houses Saroyan owned—could be transformed into a museum worthy of his name. Understand: I know the layouts of these houses like the back of my hand. My friends lived...
Hyperlink: Ending Bail Before Trial

Lt. Gov. Gavin Newsom, who is pitted against Republican John Cox in the race to succeed Brown, said that a "person's checking account balance should never determine how they are treated under the law. Cash bail criminalizes poverty and with Governor Brown's signature today, California has opened the door to pursue and perfect a just pre-trial system." During his campaign, Cox has said that he opposes changes to the bail system. The bail industry also opposed the bill, labeling it as extreme.

"I think the bail industry and the research shows we do our best work, in terms of reducing long-term fugitive rates and returning people to court when they flee, in high-risk felony cases," Jeff Clayton, director of the American Bail Coalition, a trade group, told NPR last year. "We don't prevent people from committing crime, but neither do any of the other types of release."

Other states such as New Jersey and New Mexico have overhauled their bail systems, although neither state has completely eliminated bail. The Judicial Council is the policy-making body for California's courts. It creates rules and procedures to ensure consistency across the state.

GOV. BROWN SIGNS BILL

August 28, 2018 | AP News and GV Wire

SACRAMENTO — California will become the first state to eliminate bail for suspects awaiting trial under a bill signed Tuesday by Gov. Jerry Brown. The bill will replace bail with a risk-assessment system, although it's still unclear how the system will work. It will take effect in October 2019.

Brown's signature gives the state's Judicial Council broad authority to reshape pretrial detention policies. "Today, California reforms its bail system so that rich and poor alike are treated fairly," Brown said. Each county will use the council's framework as a basis to set its own procedures for deciding whom to release before trial, potentially creating a patchwork system based on where a suspect lives. Most suspects arrested for nonviolent misdemeanors will be released within 12 hours of being booked under the new law. Those facing serious, violent felonies will not be eligible for pretrial release.

"We don't prevent people from committing crime, but neither do any of the other types of release." — Jeff Clayton, director of the American Bail Coalition

24 Hours to Determine Release

The legislation gives officials 24 hours to determine whether other suspects should be released before trial. That time can be extended by 12 hours if necessary. Some criminal justice reform advocates worry defendants will spend weeks in jail while their lawyers try to prove they deserve to be set free. Opponents of the legislation say it gives judges too much power.

Some worry dangerous people will go free and won't return for trial. Supporters, including the Judicial Council headed by the state Supreme Court's chief justice, say the change will end the unfair practice of imprisoning people simply because they are poor. Incarceration should instead depend on the risk a defendant poses if they are released, they argue.

Newsom and Cox on Opposite Sides

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The modest wait times of DMV customers seemed to catch John Cox off-guard. The Republican candidate for governor visited Fresno on Friday afternoon, talking to motorists at the office on north Blackstone Avenue. This was not the first time Cox had visited a DMV office to observe the wait lines in person. He’s traveled up and down California doing so.

Cox expected to see people in long wait times. Most of the people he spoke with said they were waiting 30 minutes to an hour. Cox noted it must have been a light day in Fresno. He that said at other stops, he’s seen much worse. “It’s hit or miss. I talked to somebody in there who was in the Madera office, who was waiting eight hours,” Cox said.

One frustrated motorist in the Fresno office said he had been waiting more than four hours to take care of a motorcycle license issue.

Brief Meet and Greet
The Rancho Santa Fe businessman made the campaign stop to highlight the dysfunction in the California government. He spent 20 minutes working the room, handing out water bottles in the process. “It’s a shining example of what’s been happening in Sacramento,” Cox said. “Our politicians are not devoting the resources. On top of that, (the DMV) are not submitting to audits of what they are doing with our...”

August 24, 2018 | David Taub

NEW IRS RULE ON DEDUCTIONS HITS SOME HIGH-TAX STATES HARD

August 25, 2018 | AP News

CHERRY HILL, N.J. — New rules unveiled by the IRS undermine some states’ attempts to help residents keep a version of a popular federal income tax deduction. Last year’s Republican tax overhaul put a $10,000 cap on deductions for state and local income taxes, which could affect some high-earners in high-tax states. A handful of high-tax states sued the administration earlier this summer over the Republican tax law, which they say was in part politically motivated to attack Democratic-leaning states. Republicans have said those states should reduce their taxes instead of fighting the administration. Here are questions and answers about the IRS rule announced Thursday, what it means for states and how high-tax states might respond.

Why Is the Deduction so Important in These States?
The SALT deduction is popular and widely used in high-tax states, including California, New Jersey and New York...
Sen. John McCain wrote the book "The Restless Wave" with friend and speechwriter Mark Salter knowing he might be near the end of his life. The recently published book ends with McCain paying tribute to America. He writes that the fundamental ideals on which this nation was founded “though they may be assailed, they can never be wrenched.” And he calls on us to end our political rancor and “recover our sense that we are more alike than different.” Here are the final six paragraphs of The Restless Wave.

(Editor’s Note: Headlines for each paragraph have been added by GV Wire.)

Americans Need Each Other
"My fellow Americans. No association ever mattered more to me. We’re not always right. We’re impetuous and impatient, and rush into things without knowing what we’re really doing. We argue over little differences endlessly, and exaggerate them into lasting breaches. We can be selfish, and quick sometimes to shift the blame for our mistakes to others. But our country ‘tis of thee.’ What great good we’ve done in the world, so much more good than harm. We served ourselves, of course, but we helped make others free, safe and prosperous because we weren’t threatened by other people’s liberty and success. We need each other. We need friends in the world, and they need us. The bell tolls for us, my friends, Humanity counts on us, and we ought to take measured pride in that. We have not been an island. We were ‘involved in mankind.’"

We Are More Alike Than Different
"Before I leave, I’d like to see our politics begin to return to the purposes and practices that distinguish our history from the history of other nations. I would like to see us recover our sense that we are more alike than different. We are citizens of a republic made of shared ideals forged in a new world to replace the tribal enmities that tormented the old one. Even in times of political turmoil such as these, we share that awesome heritage and the responsibility to embrace it.

Whether we think each other right or wrong in our views on the issues of the day, we owe each other our respect, as long as our character merits respect, and as long as we share, for all our differences, for all the rancorous debates that enliven and sometimes demean our politics, a mutual devotion to the ideals our nation was conceived to uphold: that all are created equal, and liberty and equal justice are the natural rights of all. Those rights inhabit the human heart, and from there, though they may be assailed, they can never be wrenched. I want to urge Americans, for as long as I can, to remember that this shared devotion to human rights is our truest heritage and our most important loyalty."

I Want to Feel the Sun on My Shoulders
"Then I would like to go back to our valley, and see the creek run after the rain, and here the cottonwoods whisper in the wind. I want to smell the rose-scented breeze and feel the sun on my shoulders. I want to watch the hawks hunt from the sycamore. And then take my leave, bound for a place near my old friend Chuck Larson in the cemetery on the Severn, back where it began."

I Leave Without Complaint
"‘The world is a fine place and worth the fighting for and I hate very much to leave it,’ spoke my hero, Robert Jordan, in Ernest Hemingway’s ‘For Whom the Bell..."

That’s the view of the Fresno Democrat, reacting to a series of import tariffs imposed in recent months by President Donald Trump. Those tariffs have sparked retaliation from countries such as China, impacting Valley agriculture. Trade policy is one of several issues Costa discussed recently in an interview with GV Wire News Director Bill McEwen.

Costa has spent the month of August in his home district during the summer congressional recess. He acknowledge that China “has been a bad actor for years” and has repeatedly violated international trade agreements. “But I think the challenge here is that the administration doesn’t seem to have a strategy,” Costa said. “All of us who care about this don’t understand what the end game is going to be.”

Costa: Immigration Fixes Unlikely This Year

Costa also talked about the ongoing battle over immigration. “If every proposal to fix a broken immigration system is defined as amnesty,” he said, “then it’s pretty hard to fix parts of it — let alone a comprehensive effort.” Costa does not...
GENEVA — Three experts working for the U.N.'s top human rights body say the governments of Yemen, the United Arab Emirates and Saudi Arabia may have been responsible for war crimes including rape, torture, disappearances and "deprivation of the right to life" during 3½ years of battling Yemeni rebels. In their first report for the Human Rights Council, the experts also point to possible crimes by the Iran-aligned rebels, known as Houthis, who have been fighting the Saudi-led coalition and Yemen's government in a civil war since March 2015.

The experts documented some 6,475 deaths from March 2015 up until June of this year, but said the "real figure is likely to be significantly higher." Other groups have estimated that more than 10,000 people have been killed. The experts also chronicled the damage from coalition airstrikes, the single most lethal force in the fighting, over the last year. A coalition airstrike struck a bus in northern Yemen earlier this month, killing more than 50 people, including 40 children, and wounding dozens.

Refrain From Providing Arms

They urged the international community to "refrain from providing arms that could be used in the conflict"— an apparent reference to countries, including the United States and Britain, that help arm the coalition, as well as Iran, which the coalition has accused of arming the Houthis. The experts visited some but not all parts of Yemen as they compiled the report. "(We have) reasonable grounds to believe that the governments of Yemen, the United Arab Emirates and Saudi Arabia are responsible for human rights violations," the report said. It cited violations including unlawful "deprivation of the right to life," arbitrary detention, rape, torture, enforced disappearances and child recruitment. Saudi, Emirati and Yemen officials did not immediately respond to requests for comment Tuesday. On Twitter, Emirati Minister of State for Foreign Affairs Anwar Gargash wrote that the UAE "must review it, answer its merits and review what it says about the horrors of the Houthis."

Saudi state media later said its coalition had received the U.N. report and forwarded it to its own lawyers to review before it "will take the appropriate position." The Associated Press reported last year that the UAE and its allied militias were running a network of secret detention facilities, beyond the control of Yemeni government. In June, the AP revealed that hundreds of detainees had been subjected to sexual abuse and torture.

Refugees’ Rights

The U.N. report accused the "de facto authorities"— an allusion to rebels that control some of the country's most populated western and northern areas— of crimes, including arbitrary detention, torture and child recruitment. Human rights advocates have faulted the Houthis for planting land mines and targeting religious minorities and imprisoned opponents. Kamel Jendoubi, a Tunisian human rights advocate who chaired the group of experts, said they compiled a "confidential list" of people suspected of committing international crimes, which was being handed over to the office of the U.N. human rights chief on Tuesday. His team refused to indicate how many or which people or groups were on the list — whether on the government...
IRAN ASKS UN’S HIGHEST COURT TO SUSPEND US SANCTIONS

The Hague, Netherlands — Iran warned Monday that re-imposed U.S. sanctions would cripple its economy and plunge the volatile Middle East deeper into crisis as it urged the United Nations’ highest court to suspend the Trump administration’s economic pressure on Tehran.

In a written statement about the case at the International Court of Justice, U.S. Secretary of State Mike Pompeo called Iran’s claims “meritless” and defended the sanctions as a way of keeping Americans safe. The world court’s wood-paneled Great Hall of Justice in The Hague is the latest backdrop for Washington and Tehran’s high-stakes dispute about Iran’s nuclear ambitions. President Donald Trump said in May that he would pull the U.S. out of a 2015 agreement over Iran’s nuclear program and would re-impose sanctions on Tehran.

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In a written statement about the case at the International Court of Justice, "One cannot simply wish 5 million people away," Krahenbuehl, commissioner of the U.N. Relief and Works Agency, said in an interview with The Associated Press. In January, the U.S., the largest donor to the agency, slashed some $300 million from its annual contribution to UNRWA, prompting what Krahenbuehl called an unprecedented financial crisis...