

Priorities.

Last weekend half of the country was mourning the indefensible assassination of a racist, and the other half was wringing their hands over the temporary suspension of a comedian. Over 3.5 million people attended college football games and 70% of the US population watched the NFL. On the *Next Door* app, 45.9 million active users read and commented on their neighbor's concerns about things like a black person ringing a doorbell, a stray cat on the loose, the new HOA fees, or that Bob cuts his lawn too short. 880,000 conservative Christians were making plans for the rapture.

Of course, none of this had an impact on most folks everyday lives. Here's something that did.

Daniel is head of bio-informatics at the Mayo clinic. He leads a team that does ground breaking cancer research. The results of this work are undeniable, Daniel's team is preventing cancer and saving lives. However, due to the threat of funding cuts that will amount to an estimated loss of between 50 and 200 million dollars to Mayo, Daniel's administration staff has been reduced by 50%, forcing scientists and researchers to become payroll clerks and bookkeepers. Research has ground to a halt.

Furthermore, pressure is being placed on Daniel to add more Americans to his team; Daniel's team is 80% international. Daniel has explained to the higher-ups that bio-informatics is a niche field of science and you can't just plug anyone into the job. Because universities in this country have been slow to offer bio-informatics as part of their curriculum, the best training in the field is done in India. Since the best jobs are still in the US, trained Indian researchers and scientists come to the US to ply their trade. It's been a win-win situation for everyone.

Then, Trump signed a proclamation to add a \$100,000 fee on skilled foreign H-1B visas, effective immediately. Daniel's phone blew up. A member of his team whom lives in this country was in India helping out sick parents. What if she can't get home? What if Mayo lets her go because they don't want to pay the \$100k for her visa? If she's terminated, can she be deported at any time? Her dog is in a kennel, whom will care for it? Her car is in long-term parking at the airport, will it be impounded?

The rest of Daniel's team had the same type of questions. They called Daniel because they trusted him, they have learned not to bring these type of questions up to HR so not to be seen as troublemakers. If an international worker is in the US on an H-1B visa and is terminated, they have 90 days to find a job or they will be deported. So they stay quiet.

Daniel was troubled. He listened but didn't have many answers. The Indian members of his team are some of his best, he personally hired most. Many are in this field because they had family who were afflicted with cancer and they want to make a difference. One team member told Daniel during the interview process that "I will be your best employee because this is personal to me, I want to honor my father." These folks love the US, the country gave them a path to meaningful work, an opportunity for a better life. They came to Mayo because of its

reputation as the best diagnostic hospital in the world. Now the rug was being pulled out from under them. Thankfully, saner heads prevailed and the \$100,000 fee for H-1B visas was rolled back for foreign workers already in the US. For now.

In the midst of this turmoil, Daniel was approached by a private company with a lucrative job offer. Daniel has been approached with these kind of job offers before, but he wasn't interested. He loves the work he is doing, proud of his team, passionate about the mission of the Mayo Clinic.

He listened this time, was offered and accepted the job. He knew there would be no counter offer from Mayo, under the guillotine of funding cuts they could not afford to keep him. So he will take his talents to a for-profit company that hopefully will continue to support his efforts in preventing cancer. A good thing for Daniel, a terrible blow to the Mayo clinic and all whom work there. A life altering situation for anybody that is afflicted with cancer, has a loved one that has cancer, or is at risk to develop cancer. That would be everyone.

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Charlie Kirk's death, Jimmy Kimmel's suspension, college football, the NFL, what's happening on the *Next Door* app, the upcoming rapture or anything spouting from *Facebook*, *Tic-Toc*, *X*, *Instagram*, ad nauseam, is just noise. It just doesn't matter.

However the situation with Daniel, Mayo, and the H-1B visas does. But most Americans don't care. The latest PEW survey says an all time low number of Americans, less than 31%, pay any attention to current events. That's right, 69% of Americans are not aware and just not interested, of what is going on in this country. Don't believe me? Ask your friends and family about the H-1B visa situation and see what they say. Then ask them about *Golden Bachelor*. Thinking more will know about *Bachelor*.

So what to do?

What you pay attention to becomes the priority so prioritize things that matter. Find the facts about issues that are personal to you and develop an informed opinion. Then when nonsense is spewed in your presence, get out of your comfort zone and challenge it. Don't be intimidated and don't back down. It's past time that sane people start paying attention to the things that matter, wake up, speak up and counter the noise coming from the insane on the far left and the far right. Silence is compliance.

But hey, Season 5 of the "*Golden Bachelor*" starts this week.

We do have our priorities, don't we?

That's all I'm sayin'

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