

## VOICES

## Hiding facts

I have studied the writings of Laurie Goodstein in the New York Times and several facts come out to show that indeed there is a marked interest in hiding whatever facts show beneficial to Pope Benedict and publishing only facts that, taken out of context, will show him as the villain in this story. The last allegation has to do with the pope's stalling to have the case reviewed. In an ecclesiastical court, just as in any legitimate civil court, due process has to be observed or else the whole process may be lost by mistrial. It has to start with the presumption of innocence of the accused. The only priests that can be defrocked immediately are those who declare themselves guilty. Pope Benedict has done so with clerics who have admitted culpability.

In the case of Murphy, who was interviewed by a social worker wrote she got Murphy to admit molesting youths, Murphy himself kept denying having done so, thus causing the delay because Monsignor Bertrone, Secretary of the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith, could not proceed without evidence. Goodstein chose to delete certain facts from her statement, for example that another priest had been accused the same time Murphy had been, but this other priest confessed in the presence of three witnesses and he was immediately defrocked. In spite of this fact that Goodstein chose to ignore, she decided to give her article the title of "The Vatican refused to defrock a priest from the United States who abused children in order to avoid scandal and sully the good name of the Church."

The truth is the Vatican did not hesitate to defrock the other priest because it had the evidence. No doubt Murphy was guilty, but neither the police in Milwaukee nor anyone else bothered to proceed with the case in the name of the victims. Goodstein does not choose to tell that Monsignor Weakland of Milwaukee opened an administrative case immediately to prevent Murphy from serving as a priest. Goodstein does not say that all these facts had been made public by the victims themselves in a civil demand to the diocese. Goodstein only wants to sully the image of the pope, so she zeroes in on the fact that a year before his death, again she does not mention that he is not practicing, he asks for the demands against him not be put in effect because he is very sick and close to death.

**Teresa Livoti**  
**San Germán**

## One way or another

I want to offer my well wishes to Mr. Robert McCarroll, a frequent Voices contributor, who recently underwent emergency surgery and is recovering.

Even while recovering, he writes to Voices about the 2010 Census. With that kind of dedication, I have no question that he will recover quickly. As for his comments on the census, I do not agree with him that there is some ulterior motive by the U.S. government wanting to keep Puerto Rico speaking Spanish only.

The reality is that Puerto Rico is first and foremost, a Spanish country (I use that term loosely, as it is used by politicians at times). The absence of English forms bothers me, as I have to think that the Census Bureau should have such information. If they don't, I would suggest for the 2020 census that a new question be placed on the form — is English spoken in your household? Choices would be Yes, always; Yes, sometimes; or Never. I am willing to bet that for Puerto Rico, the "Never" answer would appear on 95 percent of all forms submitted. My guess may be a bit low.

So yes, Mr. McCarroll, the U.S. Census Bureau, i.e., the U.S. government, does care and thus sent out Spanish forms to a Spanish country. And, no, Mr. McCarroll, those of us who speak English as the primary language, also care and will find one way or another to fulfill our citizenship responsibilities and will fill out the census forms, come hell or high water.

**J. D. Aragon**  
**Old San Juan**

## Are un-trusted public servants abusing federal funds in P.R.?

The headline: "Office of Inspector General investigating UPR, sources say" (Daily Sun, April 5). It seems that almost weekly there is a news report about the federal authorities investigating wrongdoings in Puerto Rico, especially with abusing federal funds earmarked for specified purposes. It appears that most of the big abuses of federal funds happen in the Puerto Rico Education Department. And we wonder why there are not sufficient funds to educate our children in public schools. Sufficient funds are so unavailable for public schools that children need to bring their own toilet paper to school. Are un-trusted public servants getting rich on the backs of our children in need of a decent public education?

Puerto Rico has a sad, greedy, dishonest history of abusing federal funds and it is still going on. Perhaps, more than ever before. This abuse is not only being blatantly done by the commonwealth government agencies but by the municipal governments as well.

For example, \$800 million of federal stimulus money was given in August 2009 to the Municipality of Carolina to build new bus shelters. Many bus shelters in perfect condition were quickly removed by the Municipality of Carolina. However, we are still waiting in the rain and hot sun for the new shelters to be installed. Could the mayor of Carolina be using the stimulus funds for new bus shelters to balance the general non-federal municipal budget? I always felt that stimulus funds should be used immediately to stimulate the economy as soon as possible and not to balance a non-federal general budget, which most likely was mismanaged.

I could never understand why all federal funds given to Puerto Rico are not more carefully monitored by the federals to see that they are properly used for the federal purposes intended.

One major area of abuse of federal funds is in the area of medical funds to help those with HIV and AIDS. Former Gov Sila Calderón received sizeable AIDS funding to give to patients to buy desperately needed medical care to relieve their suffering. She did not release these funds until six months later. From January to June, she used federal funds for AIDS patients, to balance her non-federal general budget and make her look good.

There are too many other stories of Puerto Rico's un-trusted public servants misusing or abusing federal funds. What disturbs me is that they are allowed to get away with it.

**Robert McCarroll**  
**Carolina**

## Wounds of privatization

It's horrific for Medicare and college loans to be handled by bankers and merchants. The soft underbelly of community exposed to the biting of wolves!

It happens again and again that private insurers, one in particular, phone my octogenarian mom — how did they get the number? — telling her they're social security officials, that they're sending her some documents that she only need sign and send back in the enclosed envelope, an outrageous scam that federal and local authorities have chosen to allow.

And banks — sporting monikers like Bernice or Mary Lou — have contrived various set-ups to bilk on student loans. They're called consolidation, rehabilitation, reinstatement, refinancing, each with its own flavor of trickery. And because college kids are harder to fool than the elderly, these ploys are mostly of such complexity they require an unavailable amount of time for even the sophisticated to figure out.

The sudden unexpected advent of Barack Obama is like Hope on the bottom of Pandora's Box. Or so one hopes.

**Agustín Manzano**

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## The federal government considered relocating viequenses to St. Croix

During the first years of World War II, the U.S. Navy expropriated most of the island of Vieques for military use. By 1944, the Navy decided that it would have no need for some of the expropriated land, and considered a request by the government of Puerto Rico to release some of it for agricultural use. However, the Navy kept the title to any and all of the land partitioned for this use.

The newly created Puerto Rico Agricultural Company, or PRA-CO, was given jurisdiction for the lands the Navy ceded to the local government. PRACO was committed to preparing an elaborate plan for the resettlement of former Vieques residents, and for experimenting with pineapple growing and cattle raising. At that time, 1947, Vieques had 15,000 residents.

Even as this land was being leased to the Puerto Rican government, there were rumors that the Navy planned to take it back and acquire the rest of the privately owned lands so that the whole island would belong to the Navy. According to Admiral Daniel E. Barbey, Commander of the Tenth Naval District, who lived in the now demolished house in what is today Paseo Caribe, the Navy had canvassed the South and Central American coasts, and the Atlantic seaboard, and found that only the Vieques met the Navy's requirements to simulate land maneuvers. Admiral Barbey stated that Vieques was critical for the "interest of national defense." He understood, however, that to carry out this plan, he must have Congress' approval and a substantial appropriation. He was prepared to request both.

In order to make up for the loss of agricultural land, the Department of the Interior proposed that the present population of Vieques be transported and resettled in St. Croix. Then-Department of the Interior Acting Director Irving Silverman said St. Croix is "entirely agricultural and sparsely populated," the island could support not only the 15,000 people living in Vieques, but substantially more from mainland Puerto Rico. Note that at no time were the viequenses consulted on this proposal.

In a 1947 memo, Silverman stated that St. Croix would benefit from growing pineapple, grazing cattle, and growing sorghum. These activities would provide more employment than the sugar cane industry currently provided under the auspices of The Virgin Islands Company. In any case, the operations of The Virgin Islands Company had never been profitable and depended on federal subsidies and the rebate of the rum tax from sales in the U.S. However, at



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**Commentary**

this time, rum sales had fallen (in Puerto Rico as well), so the sugar operation, according to Silverman, was no longer justified.

The federal government's proposal required that the relocation and resettlement of the 15,000 viequenses to St. Croix be done with funds from the Puerto Rican government, specifically through PRACO and the Puerto Rico Industrial Development Company. The Navy would have to put up some money in order to acquire additional lands in private ownership. Also, the Navy might be asked to transport the Vieques residents to St. Croix, and provide some small vessel to be used as a ferry between Puerto Rico and St. Croix.

Gov. Jesús T. Piñero received this proposal with great enthusiasm, pointing out that there was more land on St. Croix than on Vieques, that the pineapple operation would furnish more employment than the sugar industry, and that there was already a sizeable number of Puerto Ricans living on St. Croix. The plan would also serve to overcome some of the overcrowded conditions in Puerto Rico. Gov. Piñero added that there did not appear to be any other practical alternative, as something must be done about the people who will be taken off Vieques by the Navy, and "it is certain that they cannot be accommodated on the main island in anything approaching a satisfactory manner." In any case, Gov. Piñero was in no position to take on the U.S. Navy.

U.S. Virgin Island Gov. William H. Hastie, the first African-American to hold this position, was not consulted on this matter, as Gov. Piñero, the Navy and Silverman imagined that there would be some reluctance on the part of the Virgin Islanders and specially of the St. Crucians to this widespread influx of Puerto Ricans. Fortunately for all those involved, this plan was never implemented.

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