

Educational Document

Observations on Political Hearings, Human Rights, Fentanyl, and Child Exploitation

By D. Cowdrey

Introduction

Human rights must be applied universally, without exception; this means that institutions and political systems that claim to protect human rights must truly protect the dignity, voices, and safety of all people, especially the most vulnerable; this document examines patterns of discourse in political hearings and the broader context of two urgent national crises, the deadly fentanyl epidemic and the explosion of child sexual abuse material, CSAM, online.

1. Human Rights, Gender Dynamics, and Political Discourse

During Kristi Noem's testimony, I observed behaviors that raise concerns about gender equity and fair discourse in political hearings;

- Frequent interruptions that prevented her from completing answers,
- Hostile questioning that assumed guilt rather than seeking information,
- Condescending tones that diminished her authority,

These behaviors create a dynamic where a woman's voice is repeatedly suppressed, contradicting the fundamental human right of participation in public discourse; human rights doctrine demands respect for dignity, fairness, and equality for all, including women, and institutions that fail to uphold these principles undermine their credibility.

2. Fentanyl Seizures, Facts and Meaning

The fentanyl crisis is one of the most dangerous drug epidemics in the United States; law enforcement agencies such as the U.S. Drug Enforcement Administration, DEA, have reported historic levels of seizures;

- In 2025, the DEA reported seizing 47 million fentanyl pills and nearly 10,000 pounds of fentanyl powder, quantities the agency characterized as equivalent to hundreds of millions of potentially lethal doses removed from circulation, ([dea.gov](https://www.dea.gov)),

- In 2023, law enforcement reported over 115 million fentanyl pills seized across the U.S., a dramatic increase from earlier years, approximately 2,300 times more than in 2017, (nida.nih.gov),

These seizures demonstrate the scale and lethality of the threat; while converting seizures into exact “lives saved” figures is methodologically challenging, the underlying data clearly show law enforcement is removing deadly substances that would otherwise reach communities, (politifact.com); the consequences of fentanyl abuse have been stark, it has become a leading driver of overdose deaths in the United States, particularly among adults aged 18–45, (dea.gov).

3. Child Sexual Abuse Material Online, The Scale of the Crisis

The digital age has dramatically increased the volume of child sexual abuse material, CSAM, reported to authorities;

- In 2023, the U.S. National Center for Missing & Exploited Children, NCMEC, CyberTipline received approximately 36.2 million reports of suspected child sexual exploitation, including more than 104 million files of suspected CSAM, images and videos depicting real abuse, (thorn.org),

These figures represent real victims, children whose abuse was documented, shared, and circulated; counting images or videos illustrates the vast scale of exploitation that law enforcement, advocacy groups, and technology partners strive to address.

4. Fentanyl, Human Exploitation, and Institutional Accountability

Addressing fentanyl trafficking and child exploitation demands courage, diligence, and honest recognition of the problems at hand; leaders like Kristi Noem and her partners in federal and state law enforcement have taken on these challenges directly, advocating for stronger enforcement and policies that prioritize victim protection,

At the same time, political discourse around these issues must be fact-based, respectful, and solutions-oriented; reducing violence and exploitation, whether from drugs or abuse, requires cooperation, and adversarial theatrics that drown out factual testimony and constructive argument undermine these efforts,

Human slavery, in the form of modern trafficking and exploitation, transcends political parties; how each party responds, how hearings are conducted, and how we speak about these issues all go on the historical record.

5. Conclusion, Respect, Reality, and Rights

- Respect for office and person matters, leaders deserve equitable treatment in inquiry, regardless of gender or political affiliation,
- Human rights are indivisible, you cannot champion them selectively,
- Facts should guide policy, fentanyl seizures and the explosion of CSAM reports underscore the scale of threats that require serious, cooperative responses,
- Political rhetoric must not eclipse reality, focusing on extreme claims or politicized narratives, especially when backed by propaganda, undermines the goals of justice and protection,

We know who traffickers are, we have data behind the statistics; now it is incumbent on institutions, parties, and citizens to put victims first, pursue policies that genuinely protect them, and conduct public discourse in ways that elevate truth and human dignity.

The question of the hour; Democrats shame those working to save lives, when will they confront themselves?

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Human Rights, Political Accountability, and the Fight Against Trafficking

By D. Cowdrey

Human rights must be universal and indivisible. Any political party that claims to defend human rights must defend them consistently, including the rights of women to speak, testify, and participate fully in public discourse.

During the testimony of Kristi Noem, I observed repeated interruptions and adversarial questioning that limited her ability to respond fully. Questions were asked, yet answers were frequently cut short. Interruptions, condescension, and aggressive posturing do not strengthen legal inquiry; they weaken it. This type of conduct diminishes credibility and undermines the integrity of the hearing process.

Respect for office should transcend party lines. I was proud to see Kristi Noem in her position. Her campaign messaging was effective and reached me as a voter. Like all campaigns, it involved marketing, yet it was clear and persuasive without being overwhelming. Her campaign earned *my vote*.

Her administration, along with law enforcement partners, has focused on reducing trafficking and violent crime while confronting dangerous political extremism, harassment, and activists

who call for the abolition of the very officers working to combat modern-day trafficking. These positions require candor, resilience, and the ability to manage emotion while confronting some of the most disturbing crimes imaginable, including human slavery and child exploitation.

The fentanyl crisis further shows the seriousness of this work. Federal law enforcement has reported historic levels of fentanyl seizures, removing millions of potentially lethal doses from circulation. These efforts represent real intervention in a deadly epidemic that has devastated American communities.

The scale of online child sexual abuse material is equally staggering. In 2023 alone, over 104 million images and videos of suspected child sexual abuse were reported in the United States, a dramatic increase from approximately 450,000 files in 2004. Behind these numbers are real children and real victims. Addressing this crisis demands strength and unwavering commitment.

Human slavery is a bipartisan issue. How each party addresses trafficking, exploitation, and human rights will be recorded in history. Leadership in this arena requires courage and discipline. It also requires professionalism in how hearings are conducted and how witnesses are treated.

Logical fallacies weaken public trust. Personal attacks, strawman arguments, irrelevant diversions, and interruptions that suppress answers do not reflect strong legal reasoning. They signal politicization rather than principled inquiry.

At this moment, Kristi Noem and her government partners are demonstrating dedication to the American people by continuing efforts to combat trafficking and child exploitation. They are confronting harsh realities directly. Meanwhile, public discourse has become increasingly polarized. When arguments become politicized to the point that victims are sidelined, the focus shifts away from those who most need protection.

The question of the hour; Democrats shame the savior, when will they face themselves?

True human rights advocacy demands accountability across all parties. It demands that victims come first. It demands respect in discourse, integrity in lawyering, and the courage to confront reality without distortion or propaganda.

History will record who stood firm in defense of the vulnerable and who allowed politics to eclipse protection.

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