

THURSDAY MORNING: TWO TOO GOOD

I would post this video every week if I could get away with it. It's a favorite in my household where three of us play string instruments. I've blown out speakers cranking these guys up as far as I can (shhh...don't tell the dude in charge of speaker maintenance here).

You'll note this post is pushed down the page as Marcy's last two posts about #AppleVsFBI (here and here) have been picked up by several news outlets. Let's let new readers have the rail for a bit.

NC and GA state legislatures wreaking bigoted havoc

Regressive bills allowing open practice of anti-LGBT bigotry have been working their way through states' legislatures in the wake of *Burwell v. Hobby Lobby Stores, Inc.* Indiana and Arizona are two examples where bills using a template based on the federal Religious Freedom Restoration Act (RFRA) have been passed. Arizona's governor Jan Brewer made an unusually rational move and vetoed the bill. Indiana did not, and many organizations protested until an amendment was passed modifying SB 101's worst component.

Georgia's legislature passed their own spin on RFRA, The Free Exercise Protection Act; the bill is now in the hands of Gov. Nathan Deal, who has until the first week of May to sign it into law. The state has an emerging film and TV production industry, home to popular shows like AMC's *The Walking Dead*. Disney and its subsidiary Marvel yesterday announced they would yank production out of Georgia if Gov. Deal signed the bill. AMC followed suit and announced it too would pull out of Georgia. Other corporations with business interests in GA, like The Dow Chemical Company, are also unhappy. How many more companies will it take before Deal wises up and vetoes the bill or demands amendment?

Sadly, North Carolina's GOP-led legislature rushed through a bill yesterday with a slightly different spin – like a proof-of-concept for the rest of the states where RFRA bills have been unable to gain traction while avoiding the potential for boycotting leveraged against the governor. Anti-transgender fear-mongering was used to force HB2-Public Facilities Privacy & Security Act through while avoiding “religious freedom” as a promotional feature. It was signed into law yesterday by NC's jackass governor, Pat McCrory, who tweeted,

Ordinance defied common sense, allowing men to use women's bathroom/locker room for instance. That's why I signed bipartisan bill to stop it.

I signed bipartisan legislation to stop the breach of basic privacy and etiquette, ensure privacy in bathrooms and locker rooms.

Except that HB2 not only overturns local ordinances protecting LGBT persons, it prevents transpersons from using the facilities appropriate to their transgender, and it allows businesses to post notices they will not serve groups. Welcome back, Jim Fucking Crow.

The bill was not truly bipartisan, either. Although 14 idiotic state house Democrats voted for the bill, the entire Democratic state senate caucus walked out in protest rather than vote on the bill at all. Methinks NC Dem Party discipline needs a little work, and state house members need a little less bigotry.

Speaking of which, DNC was typically ineffectual, offering a bunch of jargon instead of straight talk about NC's discrimination. Are there any groups at all the DNC under its current leadership will really extend any effort except for corporations?

The speed at which the bill passed through NC's legislature during an “emergency” session – because making sure the body parts align with

the identity on the bathroom door is an emergency! – may have prevented the state's largest employers from responding appropriately. Let's see if NC's largest employers, including University of North Carolina, Time Warner Cable, Duke Energy, Bank of America, Wells Fargo, Merrill Lynch, and the many sci-tech companies of Research Triangle, will wise up and demand an end to the ignorance and bigotry of Public Facilities Privacy & Security Act.

Finished digging out here after a late season snow storm, now serving up a hot dish brunch casserole made with a mess of oddments.

- Diebold buys German competitor Wincor Nixdorf (Bloomberg) – wonder how this industry shakes out as mobile payment systems become more popular and more widely accepted.
- Speaking of mobile payment systems: Apple Pay expected to expand to apps and websites before Christmas shopping season (FastCompany) – expected to take a bite out of PayPal's market share, but if transactions are conducted online, this could eat into other payment processing systems. Need the importance of encryption be pointed out yet again, too?
- Apple's new, smaller iPhone SE available for pre-orders today (BusinessInsider) – also iPad Pro. Already

hearing strong interest from a lot of women about the smaller phone; they've been unhappy with the increasing size of iPhones.

- Nielsen TV ratings data will begin tracking streaming equipment brands (FastCompany) – their data will be based on 40,000 households, though. Apparently sales of streaming equipment like Apple TV, Chromecast, Roku aren't granular enough for firms acquiring content consumption data. Wonder how long before Nielsen itself is replaced by network sniffing?
- Related? Funny how Iran is the focus of the first, but not mentioned in the second:
 - USDOJ charging Iranian hackers for alleged cyber attacks on banks and Wall street (Bloomberg); and
 - U.S. military wants additional cybersecurity for nuclear and other WMDs (Bloomberg)
- AI-written novel survives first round in Japanese literature contest (DigitalTrends) – and you

thought it was just the news
that was generated by
robots.

That's a wrap, catch you tomorrow morning!