

AGM and Annual Conference

Saturday 21 May 2021

Royal Air Force Club, 128 Piccadilly, London W1

10.30am to 4.30pm **Admission free**

Guest speakers

Professor David Paton - Does mandatory sex education reduce teenage pregnancies?



David Paton is Chair of Industrial Economics at Nottingham University Business School and co-editor of the *International Journal of the Economics of Business*. His work examining the impact of birth control policy on teenage pregnancy has been published in peer reviewed journals such as the *Journal of Health Economics*, *Social Science & Medicine* and *Demography*. David has acted as an advisor to several Government departments including the Department of Trade and Industry, National Audit Office and HMRC.

Calvin Robinson - Indoctrination due to group-think in education



Calvin Robinson is a public commentator, political adviser and broadcaster. He presents on GB News, writes for the *Daily Telegraph* and *Daily Mail* and regularly appears on Good Morning Britain. Calvin is a Senior Fellow at the Policy Exchange and is currently training as an ordinand in the Church of England. Before moving to seminary, Calvin worked in education as an assistant headteacher, governor and director in state schools, as well as acting as a consultant for the Department for Education.

Additionally we will be running a series of workshops on issues relating to sex education, free speech and gender issues featuring our two speakers as well as psychotherapist and author Stella O'Malley and James Esses of Thoughtful Therapists. We are asking that all participants select which workshop they would like to be part of.

Two-course lunches in the RAF Club's Presidents Room are available at the subsidised cost of £31.00. **To book, please use this link to our website, even if you want to pay by cheque, as this will reserve your place and you can choose which workshop you wish to attend** <https://familyeducationtrust.org.uk/book-now-for-the-family-education-trust-annual-conference-2022/> Alternately, you can send us a cheque for £31.00 made payable to 'Family Education Trust', to reach us before Friday 13 May 2022.

For further information please email Piers Shepherd at info@familyeducationtrust.org.uk or call the office on 01784 242340. Please let us know if you are planning to attend.

In this issue

- AGM and conference
- Scottish committee calls on government to enact 'conversion therapy' ban
- Why Ofsted needs reform
- Taxing families as if they cause harm
- Government response to the Children Not in School consultation
- *Common Sense*
- Welsh government assault on parents

Scottish committee calls on government to enact 'conversion therapy' ban

Little over two months after the Family Education Trust was giving evidence to the Scottish Parliament's Equalities, Human Rights and Civil Justice Committee (EHRCJ) (reported on in our previous bulletin) against a 'conversion therapy' ban, that Committee produced a report calling on the Scottish government to push forward with just such a ban.

The Committee's statement, published on 25 January, opens with the statement:

The Committee agrees that conversion practices are abhorrent and are not acceptable in Scotland. They should be banned. The Committee has heard that current protective legislation is insufficient to prevent these harms taking place.

While the statement recognises the need for more clarity regarding the definition of conversion therapy, it accepts the very broad definition of the UN Independent Expert on sexual orientation and gender identity which describes conversion therapy as:

"an umbrella term to describe interventions of a wide-ranging nature, all of which have in common the belief that a person's sexual orientation or gender identity (SOGI) can and should be changed. Such practices aim (or claim to aim) at changing people from gay, lesbian, or bisexual to heterosexual and from trans or gender diverse to cisgender".

In case there is room for doubt the Committee goes on to state:

Having considered all the evidence presented to it, the Committee agrees that a ban on conversion practices should be fully comprehensive and cover sexual orientation and gender identity, including trans identities, for both adults and children in all settings without exception and include "consensual" conversion practices. The Committee recommends that any ban should also include a ban on advertising and promotion of conversion practices.

This confirms the worst fears of FET and highlights the truth of many of the points we made before the Committee in November regarding undermining of the rights of parents to raise their children in their moral and religious beliefs and the potential criminalisation of a parent or medical professional who attempts to help a child with gender dysphoria.

In a blow for religious freedom, the Committee states that 'talking therapy' carried out within religious settings should also '*fall within a ban*'. However, 'affirmative therapies' '*should be protected under any ban*'. So as long as the therapy affirms LGBT lifestyles that's fine.



EHRCJ chair Joe Fitzpatrick MSP

The Committee explicitly denies that anyone can properly consent to conversion therapy and makes outrageous comparisons with domestic abuse and female genital mutilation:

The Committee is anxious to ensure that, in a similar way to legislation that exists to protect victims of domestic abuse or female genital mutilation, the definition makes it clear that consent to such practices can never be informed and should not be available as a defence to those undertaking conversion practices.

Many FET supporters will be aware that the UK government recently finished consulting on a conversion therapy ban. However, the UK government's proposals, in the view of the Committee and the Scottish government, '*do not go far enough*' and the Scottish government aims to bring in its own legislation before the end of 2023. An Expert Advisory Group will attempt to

work out how the law will be implemented.

The Committee is giving strong consideration to LGBT activist Jayne Ozanne's recommendation of a '*whistle blowing mechanism*' and has also stated that, along with an educational campaign to '*raise awareness including information in schools*', '*Consideration should also be given to providing a separate and distinct reporting mechanism for children.*' Will children be encouraged to report their parents for failure to affirm particular sexual or gender identities? Interestingly the Committee's statement quotes FET senior researcher Piers Shepherd specifically raising any legislation's potential to harm parental rights:

Piers Shepherd had particular concerns about the potential impact on children of a ban. He said "The law needs to protect the right of parents to bring up their children in a way that is consistent with their moral and religious beliefs. Parents must not be reluctant to discuss issues around sexuality and gender with their children for fear of being accused of conversion therapy".

But it then goes on to state:

The Committee acknowledges the view expressed by Piers Shepherd. However, it believes there is a clear distinction to be made between parents having the right to bring up their children in line with their morals and values and having the directed intent to change their child's sexuality, or gender identity. Some of the survivors we heard from told how they experienced conversion practices from within the family. In the Committee's view, that is a clear crossing of a line.

It is clear then that the Committee's proposals if accepted and passed into law would pose a serious threat to parental rights and freedoms and to the integrity of the family. The Committee's statement confirms that a conversion therapy ban is what we have always said it is, not so much an attempt to end abusive practices as the effective criminalisation of any reluctance to affirm same-sex sexual relationships and transgender identity.

Why Ofsted needs reform

By a representative of the Positive Reform for a Trusted Ofsted campaign

The schools' watchdog, Ofsted, has an incredibly vast remit. In fact, its influence across the education sector is staggering. From being given an initially narrow scope in 1992 to conduct school inspections based on the achievement of pupils and the quality of teaching, Ofsted has gradually amassed additional responsibilities. This includes the oversight of early years children, adoption and fostering arrangements, child protection, and further education. There are now calls for it to also start overseeing home education.

Today, Ofsted's remit is unrecognisable from its initial conception and there are increasing examples emerging of it acting beyond its delegated authority in school inspections. For Christian-ethos or more traditionally-minded schools, this remit expansion is becoming increasingly problematic.

For, in interpreting its duty to regulate the provision of education, Ofsted has the opportunity and authority to significantly shape the entire education sector as well as to drive policy and classroom-based cultural change. The academic curriculum may be set by schools, but the culture of teaching, learning, societal appreciation and pupil development is increasingly subject to the narrow views of Ofsted inspectors.

To govern the inspection of state-funded and many privately-funded schools, Ofsted inspectors use the criteria outlined in a Framework. The criteria are fourfold; 'the quality of education', 'behaviour and attitudes', 'personal development'; and 'leadership and management'. Following a 2-day school inspection, inspectors will produce a written report which includes a binding opinion on the impact of the provision for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development, and a Judgement on

overall effectiveness of the school.

Concerningly, it is becoming increasingly apparent that Ofsted inspectors are focusing heavily on the Equality Act 2010 during inspections and downgrading schools for not explicitly teaching controversial topics like gender reassignment. While schools are required by law to ensure that pupils and staff do not face any discriminatory treatment, inspectors are gradually expanding these requirements to the extent that they expect pupils to have an active understanding of LGBT relationships in order to be "personally developing" in accordance with "life in modern Britain", and be developing the right "behaviour and attitudes". In practice, this means that schools which are reticent to teach sexualising materials which make many parents feel uncomfortable, can be easily downgraded.



Now that schools are required to teach sex and relationships education, many teachers are concerned that inspectors will focus on these topics to an even greater degree.

On multiple occasions, the parliamentary overseer, the Education Select Committee, has accused Ofsted of acting with a secularist agenda and being biased towards schools with a faith-ethos. In fact, Christian, Jewish, and Muslim schools have all raised concerns to Parliament about the negative consequences of inspections in their schools. As inspectors have turned their attentions further away from exam results and towards pupil cultural development, these concerns have only become more acute.

It is therefore troubling to many educationalists, school managers, and

teachers, that Ofsted faces very little accountability in how it operates and what it feels important to be judged in schools as indicating 'progress'. In fact, it is unprecedented for a non-ministerial department which is funded by the taxpayer, especially one with so much authority, to have such limited checks and balances.

Yet, neither Amanda Spielman, the Chief Inspector, nor the management board of Ofsted have indicated any willingness or proactiveness to fight off the critiques with a programme of reform.

The Positive Reform for a Trusted Ofsted campaign seeks to draw public attention to the overstep of the education watchdog and to call upon it to undertake a strategic review of policies, processes, and practices so that it can return to its original remit and priorities to raise education standards. To do this, it is imperative that schools are given greater opportunities to challenge reports which they believe to be unfair, and that Ofsted operates with greater transparency when it reports to Parliament. Without these reforms, Ofsted will continue to grow in powers and pursue whichever interests the management or inspectors decide; and at the moment, this is to the detriment of faith schools.

The Positive Reform for a Trusted Ofsted campaign is looking for signatures from teachers, parents, educationalists, and academics for its open letter to Ofsted. It calls upon Ofsted to be more collaborative with teachers, families and the community; seek to become more 'trusted' by those it inspects; and be more transparent in how and why it issues certain grades to schools. Ofsted should celebrate the variety of schools which operate in England and should encourage pluralism and diversity in how schools teach children in accordance with legal requirements.

To read more about the problems with Ofsted and to sign your name, please visit:

<https://www.positiveofstedreform.com/>

Taxing families as if they cause harm

By Philip Booth, Professor of Finance, Public Policy and Ethics, St. Mary's University, Twickenham



It is common amongst politicians and economists to suggest that we should tax bad things and subsidise good things. It is on these grounds that, for example, we have sugar taxes and cigarette taxes. The justification for taxing “bads” becomes stronger if the ill effects are felt more widely through society and not just by the consumers.

Anybody looking at our tax system, with this principle in mind, might well conclude that our political class believes that families with two parents, and those families where one parent works part time or works entirely in the home bringing up children or looking after ageing parents, were a very bad thing. After all, we strongly penalise such arrangements in our tax and welfare systems.

In the United Kingdom, tax rates rise with incomes, but assessment for tax is based on individual and not on household or family income. This penalises families that have an uneven split of incomes between the adults – this will mainly apply where you have mothers undertaking caring responsibilities.

Take, for example, a couple where both adults earn £12,500 per annum. They will pay no income tax – liter-

ally, no income tax at all. If the same couple is a single-earner couple with one of the adults earning £25,000, they will pay income tax of £2,500. To have the same net income, the single-earner family would have to earn an extra £3,125. This blow is softened, marginally, by the married couples allowance, but this has little effect and it is quickly withdrawn as incomes rise. When you take account national insurance, things get worse. The dual-earner couple actually pays lower national insurance contributions than the single-earner couple, yet the dual earner couple will earn the right to two pensions rather than just one pension (though, in certain circumstances, the second adult in the single-earner couple can accrue state pension rights).

A sum of £3,125 is a lot of money to a couple with children on a low income. Earning this additional sum at the minimum wage would involve the main earner working an equivalent of eight extra weeks across the year. If this is a family with a stay-at-home mum, the father will hardly see his children.

It gets worse. When one of the earners within a couple reaches £50,000 per annum, child benefit is withdrawn. This policy almost seems to be designed to penalise single-earner families. More generally, the progressive nature of the tax system, together with some additional quirks, means that the tax system penalises single-earner families more and more as earnings rise. A single-earner family with three children earning £70,000 a year would pay £8,000 more in tax than a dual earner family with an even split of earnings. To make up this gap, the single-earner family would have to earn an extra £14,000. There are some circumstances in which the single-earner family would need to earn an extra £30,000 a year.

This situation cannot be justified. Governments measure inequality

and poverty by looking at household income and not individual income. It would be absurd to regard an individual as poor if they do no paid work whilst being married to somebody earning £4million a year. So, if it is the resources of the family or household that matter for measuring inequality and poverty, why do we not tax families on the basis of the household income – or at least on the basis of the income of the two main adults, with all the rates and allowances being applied at that level? Two households with the same income should pay approximately the same amount of tax regardless of how that income is split between the couple.

Of course, it is clear in Judaeo-Christian thinking that the family is the basic cell of society. In Genesis 2:24 it is stated that “...a man leaves his father and mother and is united to his wife, and they become one flesh.” But secular philosophers such as F. A. Hayek thought that way too.

The UK tax system can be seen in a worse light if we consider how it interacts with the welfare system. A non-earning mother with a child will be given welfare benefits. If she marries, or even lives with, the father of that child she may lose those benefits if he has a job. And yet, there is no compensation in the tax system for the fact that his, possibly meagre, resources now have to be spread across three persons rather than just one.

Quite simply, our tax system penalises – in a substantial and explicit way – family formation and caring in the home. Families on similar incomes are treated far more harshly, simply by virtue of the fact that one parent might look after a parent or child. It does not have to be like this. The tax systems in Germany and France, treat families fairly. They tax families on the basis of family income. We should do the same.

Why the Government's response to the Children Not in School consultation is a matter of concern

By Randall and Mary Hardy



On 3 February the Department for Education (DfE) published its response to a consultation about the introduction of mandatory registers for "children not in a school."

Essentially this sought views about four proposed duties: a duty on all English local authorities to maintain a register of children not registered at specified types of school; a duty on parents to register their child if not enrolled at such schools; a duty on proprietors of certain educational settings to respond to enquiries from local authorities, and a duty on local authorities to provide support for parents who educate children at home.

The consultation attracted almost five thousand responses, mostly from parents. A large proportion of local authorities also responded. Several children's charities were 'strongly supportive of the proposals.' A generic press release and a DfE blog post were published on the same day. A fuller comment with links to all source documents is available on the HE Byte website at the following link <https://he-byte.uk/england/the-long-awaited-response-to-the-cnis-consultation/>

The original consultation closed in June 2019 and should have been responded to in short order. With nothing forthcoming, members of

both Houses of Parliament continued to press the Government about it. Pandemic pressures no doubt contributed to the extended delay.

Many home educating families are concerned that the introduction of these registers will eventually lead to the monitoring and assessment of their children. Parents and children constituted 74% of the respondents. However, due to the way the data was analysed and presented, home educators found themselves frustrated that their concerns were played down in favour of the 6% of responses from local authorities, schools, teachers and third sector organisations.

Lip service, of course, was paid to those 'dedicated parents' who work hard in home education, and some slightly reassuring adjustments were made to some of the proposals. Such statements are welcome, but they are very hard to guarantee should a future administration seek to remove the safeguards. Better to have no such register in the first place than one which could be used to impose totalitarian oversight of children when the political climate changes.

Taken as a whole, however, the intention seems to be to press forward on a course which endangers educational freedom. Without some pushback, it is likely that these registers will result in parents losing their *liberty* to bring up their own children as they believe is best for them, and see it being replaced by a *licence* to teach them only what the state approves.

But it is also important to ask ourselves why the topics addressed by this consultation are of such interest to politicians and those bodies represented in the 6%.

The press release, for instance, cites the Children's Commissioner's concerns about the excessive number of children who 'have not come back to school or are not attending consistently and regularly.' In her view,

this justifies linking the Children Not in School register with her recently declared desire for a national register.

Frank Young, editorial director of the Civitas think tank, certainly doesn't agree. He recently posited "Giving every baby an ID code is a bad idea."

Falling school attendance is just one of many problems within the state education system which has been unjustifiably conflated with elective home education - the consultation closed over six months before Covid-19 first crept into the news.

Many parents find the Children's Commissioner's emphasis on *our* children rather chilling. The implicit transfer of oversight of children from parents to the state is a theme which recurs far too regularly in pronouncements from public servants. No longer, it seems, can parents be trusted to raise their own children. Are children really safer in the hands of the state?

The intention to introduce local authority registers of children *not in school* rather than those *not in education* is in fact at odds with the primacy of parents in education, as guaranteed by article 26 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, "Parents have a prior right to choose the kind of education that shall be given to their children".

By contrast, the repeated use of the phrase '*our children*' by politicians and public sector employees arises from a belief that the state, rather than the parents, has priority in deciding not only the information children are taught, but the philosophical values which are to shape their minds and hearts.

It is against this prevailing 'child of the state' ideology that we should assess the government's proposals. The real threat, it seems, is coming from a ubiquitous world view that seeks to redefine *your* sons and daughters as *their children*.

Common Sense: Conservative Thinking for a Post-Liberal Age

The Common Sense Group, 139pp, Available for free download from <https://www.thecommonsensgroup.com/>



This book is a series of essays on public policy issues mostly written by Conservative MPs. But whatever one's political affiliations or beliefs there is much within this book that is hopeful and positive and which will appeal to supporters of the Family Education Trust.

The book highlights the importance of the family and the reintroduction of a moral compass into society in addition to a number of other areas of interest.

The book's introduction by Bishop Michael Nazir-Ali sets the tone for the whole in criticising the philosophy that puts freedom of the individual above all other social arrangements and justifies any act as long as 'no harm' is done:

Freedom cannot be the minimalist 'no harm' to other individuals position but must also take account of vital social institutions, such as the family, and of our responsibilities within that rich fabric of social relations which makes us the persons we are.

Calling for support for the family, the bishop states:

The strengthening of families...will do much for the better performance of children in education and in the reduction of juvenile crime. The provision of and encouragement for proper preparation for marriage and adequate tax incentives for married couples will help more children having both parents at home during crucial stages in their development.

An essay by Gareth Bacon MP is titled 'What is Wokeism and How Can it be Defeated?' Bacon describes the important role that the corruption of language has played in advancing 'woke' culture with a particular focus on transgender ideology:

...words that have been universally understood for millennia, such as 'man' and 'woman' are now emotionally charged and dangerous: in recent NHS public-information campaigns, women have been called 'people with a cervix' to avoid offending transgender activists; recent maternity guidance has suggested replacing 'breastfeeding' with 'chestfeeding' and some corporations have begun spelling 'women' as 'womxn' because this new word explicitly includes non-cisgender women and is therefore more inclusive and progressive. When feminists such as Germaine Greer and J. K. Rowling point out that non-cisgender women are men, that people who give birth are women and that the enforcement of trans-rights often mean a loss of rights for women, they are shouted down, abused, no-platformed and threatened with violence.

Bacon notes the woke assault on freedom of speech and illustrates how the Equality Act has been harmful in this respect:

... judicial interpretation of the Equality Act 2010 has had the effect of enshrining the notion that if one says one has been offended on grounds of race, religion, sexuality, gender etc., then one almost automatically has been. This gives huge power to activists and forces the leaders of organisations to fight endless fires of grievance, stifling freedom, embittering the workplace and sowing division.

Bacon calls for this Act to be amended in order to defend freedom of speech.

A chapter dealing with media reform touches on some of the themes raised by Robin Aitken in his address to the 2021 FET conference. The authors note there is now a growing public awareness of the BBC's biased reporting and increasingly demands for the licence fee to be abolished:

...trust in the BBC in particular has plummeted. In February 2021, a Redfield and Wilton survey found that 56 per cent would support and 19 per cent would oppose getting rid of the BBC licence fee and having the BBC switch to a private subscription-based model; 55 per cent think the BBC is not impartial and balanced. Among those who hold this view, 60 per cent think there is a need for another news channel to offer a different perspective.

But the authors go further and call not just for getting rid of the licence fee but for the breaking up of the BBC 'to allow more rivals and different providers in the broadcast market including different perspectives.'

They also call for the repeal of ‘hate speech laws’ which they claim have ‘a direct impact on the freedom of the press to operate and inform.’

The theme of so-called ‘hate crime’ laws is expanded on in a chapter called ‘Taking Politics out of Policing’ by the MPs Chris Loder and Tom Hunt. One of the most sinister aspects of these laws is the invention of what are called ‘non-crime hate incidents’. The authors state:

...by definition these incidents do not constitute a crime. All it takes for such incidents to be logged against a name is the perception by the ‘victim’ – or anyone else – that the action was motivated by hostility or prejudice towards race, religion, sexual orientation, disability or transgender identity, irrespective of whether there is any evidence to identify the ostensive hatred.

They continue:

Despite these incidents being ‘non-crimes,’ and even non-evidenced, they are often not without consequence for those accused. They are formally recorded by many police forces and can show up during DBS checks when applying for work, thus ruining careers. And in certain cases, they have led to intrusive police investigations of those who have said or written something which falls below today’s ‘woke’ standards of political correctness. In the widely-reported Harry Miller case in 2019, Mr Miller had a police officer visit his place of work to ‘check his thinking’ and suggest he may face prosecution after a Twitter user complained he had made a transphobic remark.

The authors are concerned by proposals of the Law Commission to expand the definition of hate crime that would even cover comments in the privacy of one’s own home.

The authors identify the College of Policing’s Hate Crime Operational Guidance (HCOG) as a facilitator of the use of non-crime hate incidents to attack opponents. They call for this guidance to be jettisoned and for greater public scrutiny of the College of Policing. They note that the Metropolitan police has spent £12,500 on Stonewall initiatives since 2017. The authors conclude by quoting the commentator Darren Grimes who said the police ‘should stop policing tweets and start policing streets’.

Several chapters in the book argue the case for strengthening marriage and the family. Robin Millar MP in a chapter on combatting poverty states:

Family breakdown and family instability is a key contributing factor to poverty. The outcomes for children from such situations are stark (particularly children in care), and demonstrate the importance of strong, stable families. Much like the physical need for shelter, the love and support of a loving family provides a strong foundation upon which a child can explore and develop in safety.



Harry Miller, victim of ‘woke’ policing

Fiona Bruce MP and former MP David Burrowes expand on this in a chapter on family policy. Family breakdown, they state, is a ‘national emergency’ and the government needs to champion families. They state:

‘...building a stronger society starts with the family. Families are the basic building block of society...Our families teach us our values, shape our identity and nurture our sense of responsibility to society...It is within the family unit that we first learn about obligation, sacrifice, loyalty, and compassion.’

The authors express concern that over a million children have no meaningful contact with their fathers, and almost half of 15-year-olds do not live with both parents. The cost of family breakdown exceeds £51 billion. They go on to catalogue the economic effects of family breakdown especially on mothers.

Among the proposals that Bruce and Burrowes put forward to strengthen families are establishing a Cabinet lead and Office for Family Policy, a statutory Family Impact Assessment for all domestic policy and reforming the Marriage Tax Allowance to ‘help make the option of marriage more accessible to poorer households where marriage rates are lowest.’

This book advances a thoughtful and positive set of policy proposals which if implemented might make life for families and individuals in our society better.

Welsh government assault on parents

Welsh smacking ban becomes law



On 21 March 2022 the Children (Abolition of Defence of Reasonable Punishment) (Wales) Act, passed by the Welsh government in March 2020, will come into force making Wales the second part of the United Kingdom, after Scotland, to pass a ban on parental smacking.

In 2018 when the Welsh government was consulting on this legislation the then minister for Children, Older People and Social Care, Huw Irranca-Davies, was asked whether parents would be prosecuted for smacking their children. Mr Irranca-Davies responded: *'We hope not, but you can't rule it out.'*

And the Welsh government has not ruled it out. On the contrary, recent guidance published in advance of the legislation coming into force calls on those who witness a parent smacking their child to call the police or social services. The guidance states in no uncertain terms that parents who use a light and loving smack *'will be breaking the law'*, risk *'being arrested or charged with assault'* and *'may get a criminal record, which is the same for any criminal offence'*.

Guidance for social services states that any type of physical punishment *'could be harmful for children'* and confirms that a parent who smacks may be charged with *'common assault'*.

The Welsh government has pushed forward with the legislation in spite of polling revealing strong public opposition. For example, a 2017 ComRes poll which interviewed 1019 Welsh adults between 13 and 25 found that 76% did not believe that parental smacking should be a criminal offence with only 11% supporting a ban. 68% agreed with the statement that *'It is sometimes necessary to smack a naughty child'* and 85% admitted to having been smacked by a parent or guardian. The Welsh government is going to have a massive job on its hands in enforcing this legislation.

This law represents a massive blow to parents and to the integrity and independence of the family. While the present British government has stated that it opposes such a ban for England, parents and others must be especially vigilant in ensuring that what has happened in Scotland and Wales does not become the norm for the whole of the UK.

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