

INSIGHT

The Gazette Editorial Board

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Letters guidelines

Length limit: 250 words
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GUEST COLUMN | IOWA DEMOCRATIC ACTIVISTS

We can take action on gun violence

We are mothers. We are grandmothers. We are aunts. We are horrified by the massacre of 19 children and two teachers in Uvalde Texas, the 27th shooting in a school in 2022 as reported by National Public Radio.

The May 19 issue of the New England Journal of Medicine reported that in 2020, firearm-related injuries became the leading cause of death in children ages 1 to 19 in the United States. There have been more than 200 mass shootings already this year, according to the Gun Violence Archives, an independent data collection and research group.

We are grieving. We are angry. And we repeatedly ask ourselves, "What can we do in Iowa and in the nation to improve gun safety and reduce gun violence?"

Ask candidates for local, state and federal offices where they stand on

common sense laws to reduce gun violence and improve gun safety. This includes universal background checks for gun sales, including at gun shows and for internet sales, and red flag laws that allow police to temporarily take weapons from people deemed to be a danger to themselves or others.

The U.S. House passed two bills expanding background checks for internet and gun show purchases and lengthening the waiting period for gun buyers who are flagged by the National Instant Criminal Background Check System. We are greatly disappointed that Iowa Sens. Chuck Grassley and Joni Ernst are among Republicans who have blocked the bills since 2019.

Let all candidates know you support, and expect them to support, efforts like these bills to limit access to guns by people who may be likely to

misuse them. Then vote for candidates who support gun safety measures.

In addition, this fall Iowans should vote against a proposed constitutional amendment that likely would prevent any future gun safety laws from being passed. This extreme measure would force judges to apply a legal standard called "strict scrutiny" to "all restrictions" of the right to keep and bear arms.

We do not need this extreme standard, which goes beyond the Second Amendment in the U.S. Constitution and prevents all future elected officials from taking gun safety actions that they and their constituents want.

Use your voice and your vote in 2022 to halt escalating gun violence.

Bonnie Green, Terri Hale, Pam Kenyon, Mary Riche and Laura Sands are longtime Democratic activists in central Iowa.



24-HOUR DORMAN
TODD DORMAN

Trump's endorsement is an 'honor'

Over the weekend, Gov. Kim Reynolds and U.S. Rep. Ashley Hinson were endorsed by Donald Trump. This was hardly a surprise, considering how tightly Iowa Republicans have tied themselves to the twice-impeached former president and his policies.

Reynolds declared the endorsement an "honor." Hinson enthusiastically tweeted "President Trump is on Team Hinson."

The timing of these endorsements is interesting, considering that the congressional committee investigating the Jan. 6, 2021, riot at the U.S. Capitol, instigated by Trump, is beginning its public hearings this week. All the sordid details of the brutal attack on American democracy in the service of a president seeking to overturn a free and fair election will be displayed for public scrutiny.

I know, we're not supposed to care about this anymore. Move on, Republicans insist, even as voting restrictions and other mechanisms for undermining the next presidential election are being put in place. It's less dramatic than sacking the Capitol, but the objective is the same.

In accepting Trump's endorsement, Reynolds and Hinson are, at best, saying they don't give a damn about Trump's push to upend democracy in a desperate bid to hold power. At worst, they're endorsing it. But hey, Trump is popular in Iowa. Nothing else matters.

Trump called on thousands of his supporters to march on the Capitol. Once there, they assaulted dozens of police officers with baseball bats, pipes, flagpoles and other weapons. About 140 officers from the Capitol Police and D.C. metro police were injured. The protesters started chanting "Hang Mike Pence!" after the vice president refused to stop the certification of electoral votes cementing Joe Biden's victory.

It was a horrifying spectacle that played out live before our own eyes. It was an act of domestic terrorism striking at the heart of our government. But in the aftermath, Reynolds said, "You know what we need to do is stop pointing fingers, and we need to move forward."

Hinson later voted against the bipartisan investigation.

Now, Reynolds and Hinson are receiving their rewards for being loyal Trumpists. They're being endorsed by a former president who lied or made misleading claims more than 30,000 times over the course of his presidency. Trump carted off top secret documents to his country club and, according to staff, often tore up documents or attempted to flush them down the toilet. But her emails.

According to his former defense secretary, he inquired about the prospect of shooting Black Lives Matter protesters in the legs. He called John McCain a "loser" and was "furious" when flags were lowered to half-staff after his death. The list goes on and on.

"Donald Trump not only sought to destroy the electoral system through false claims of voter fraud and unprecedented public intimidation of state election officials, but he also then attempted to prevent the peaceful transfer of power to his duly elected successor, for the first time in American history," wrote Bob Woodward and Carl Bernstein, who know something about presidential corruption, Sunday in the Washington Post.

But Trump's endorsement is an "honor." At least to the dishonorable.

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COMMUNITY LETTERS

Coe College senior loves ranked choice voting

A recent column in The Gazette dismisses plans under consideration to potentially move Cedar Rapids' elections toward ranked choice voting, describing it as an option that "will never be a clean or simple process."

With ranked choice voting voters just rank candidates from their most preferred to least preferred. Any candidate who receives a majority of the first-preference votes wins automatically. Otherwise, the candidate with the fewest first-preference votes is eliminated, and those who voted for her have their votes cast for their second-preference candidate. This continues until a candidate has won a majority of votes.

Maybe ranked choice sounds complicated at first, or maybe it doesn't. Regardless, voters overwhelmingly find it easy in practice. In Minneapolis' 2017 mayoral election, 92 percent of voters said that RCV was easy. Similarly, in New York City's 2021 mayoral election (the city's first use of RCV), 95 percent of voters described it as "simple," and 77 percent wanted to use it in their future elections.

This isn't to discount the experi-



Editorial cartoonist Joe Heller is based in Green Bay. Comments: Hellertoon.com

ence of people who might have difficulties adjusting to ranked choice, but to highlight that it can be accessible and offer the suite of benefits local proponents cite. The 52 U.S. cities that use RCV have all made successful efforts to educate voters.

We can equitably transition to a

voting system that gives us all more voice in our democracy. After all, shouldn't our ballots let us more accurately express how we feel about the candidates? This is why I love ranked choice voting.

Evan Perry
Coe College senior

GUEST COLUMN | CHRIS HAGENOW AND GROVER NORQUIST

A historic victory for Iowa taxpayers

Iowa taxpayers are the big winners of the 2022 legislative session. Thanks to the new tax law enacted by Gov. Kim Reynolds on March 2, Iowans are set to receive the largest tax cut in state history.

Once fully implemented in 2026, Iowa's new tax law will streamline the income tax to a flat rate of 3.9 percent. Every income taxpayer will receive a tax cut.

For the second year in a row, the U-Haul Growth Index finds Texas, Florida and Tennessee were the top growth states in 2021, meaning they experienced the greatest net gain of one-way U-Haul trucks. These states do not impose individual income taxes.

More states are working to reduce and eliminate their income taxes. Nearly a dozen states either have or are working to provide income tax relief. This includes Mississippi and Kentucky, which are now moving to flat income tax rates of 4 percent as the first step toward eliminating their income taxes completely.

Reynolds and legislative leaders

understand that lower tax rates are necessary to create a more competitive economic climate.

Even after Iowa's previous tax reform package would have been fully implemented in 2023, Iowa still would have been home to one of the highest income tax rates in the country. Its top marginal income tax rate — the part of the income tax that is most often used to make decisions about investment — would have been reduced from 8.53 percent to 6.5 percent. Still higher than Massachusetts and Illinois.

Reynolds, Senate Majority Leader Jack Whitver, House Speaker Pat Grassley and many other legislative champions worked tirelessly this year to make their state competitive.

Iowa's income tax will be reduced to a flat income tax of 3.9 percent in just four years. This will make the Hawkeye State even more attractive to businesses looking to expand and families looking for greater prosperity. This investment will bring new jobs and opportunities for households across Iowa.

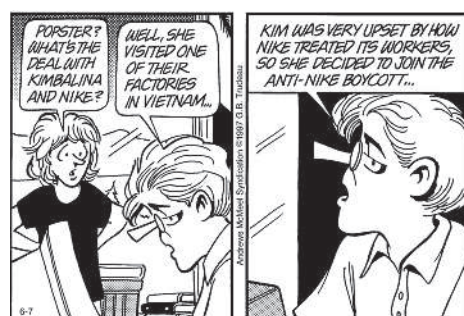
The new tax law also will protect all Iowans from future tax increases by moving to a flat rate. While graduated income taxes divide taxpayers into small groups, allowing politicians to rob them one by one, flat taxes require politicians to justify tax increases to every single income tax filer. It is harder for politicians to increase a single-rate income tax.

This tax cut would not have been possible had Reynolds and the Legislature not committed to a policy of fiscal conservatism by adhering to prudent budgeting. Keeping spending levels low facilitates a sound pro-growth tax policy.

The new tax law is a huge win for all Iowans. Individual taxpayers and families will be able to keep more of their hard-earned money, business across Iowa will have more resources to invest in new jobs and higher wages, and Iowa will be better positioned to compete with the no- and low-income tax states.

Chris Hagenow is president of Iowans for Tax Relief. Grover Norquist is president of Americans for Tax Reform.

DOONESBURY | GARRY TRUDEAU



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