

OUR OPINION

Poll reflects love of parks

Polls, regardless of the subject, never are definitive. Even when well-crafted and accurate, a poll is a snapshot of the moment in which it is conducted. People change their minds; events mitigate viewpoints.

Some polls inherently are suspect when they are conducted by a party with skin in the game who advocates a particular policy outcome, rather than by a third-party pollster more interested in accurate data. An interested party isn't about to release a poll that contradicts its policy goal.

So it wasn't surprising when 66% of respondents to a recent poll by the Pennsylvania Parks and Forest Foundation responded positively to the proposition that "funding for outdoor recreation facilities, such as parks, trails, lakes, and overnight visitor facilities in parks and forests, should be considered a priority by the state government."

But the poll closely reflects what Pennsylvanians already have demonstrated in the real world. During 2020 and 2021, amid pandemic restrictions, they flocked in record numbers to Pennsylvania's 121 state parks and 20 state forests covering more than 2.2 million acres. Some parks don't keep specific visitor records, but the state Department of Conservation and Natural Resources reported that park visits were about 36% higher in 2021 than in 2019, the last pre-pandemic year.

And the turn to the outdoors was not reflected in park visits alone. Industry figures show that bicycle sales in Pennsylvania increased by more than 100% in 2021 and kayak sales rose by 85%.

So no poll is needed to advise state lawmakers on what to do on the basis of empirical evidence. They should agree with the Pennsylvania Parks and Forest Foundation and use \$125 million of the state government's \$7.2 billion in pandemic recovery funds to address the \$1.4 billion in overdue state park infrastructure work that has been identified by the DCNR.

It would be hard to identify a better or more broadly effective use for that money. It not only would improve state property, but improve the environment and public health while supporting the growing fitness and tourism sectors.

And, from the politicians' perspective, supporting state parks would be good for their own poll numbers.

Keep nuclear power in mix

Part of the reason that Germany continues to help Vladimir Putin fund his war in Ukraine, by buying large amounts of oil and gas, is that it nearly has eliminated its nuclear power industry.

Germany had 17 nuclear power plants in 2010, but had just three — still producing more than 13% of the country's power — after three were decommissioned at the close of 2021 under a phase-out plan. The remaining three are scheduled to close this year but that has come under review amid pressure to find alternatives to Putin's oil.

That illuminates the Biden administration's decision to hold off the closure of nuclear power plants in the United States as it, too, seeks alternatives to oil for strategic and environmental reasons.

Using \$6 billion from the \$1.2 trillion infrastructure program, the administration will establish a credit program to bolster power generators that otherwise would close nuclear plants for financial reasons.

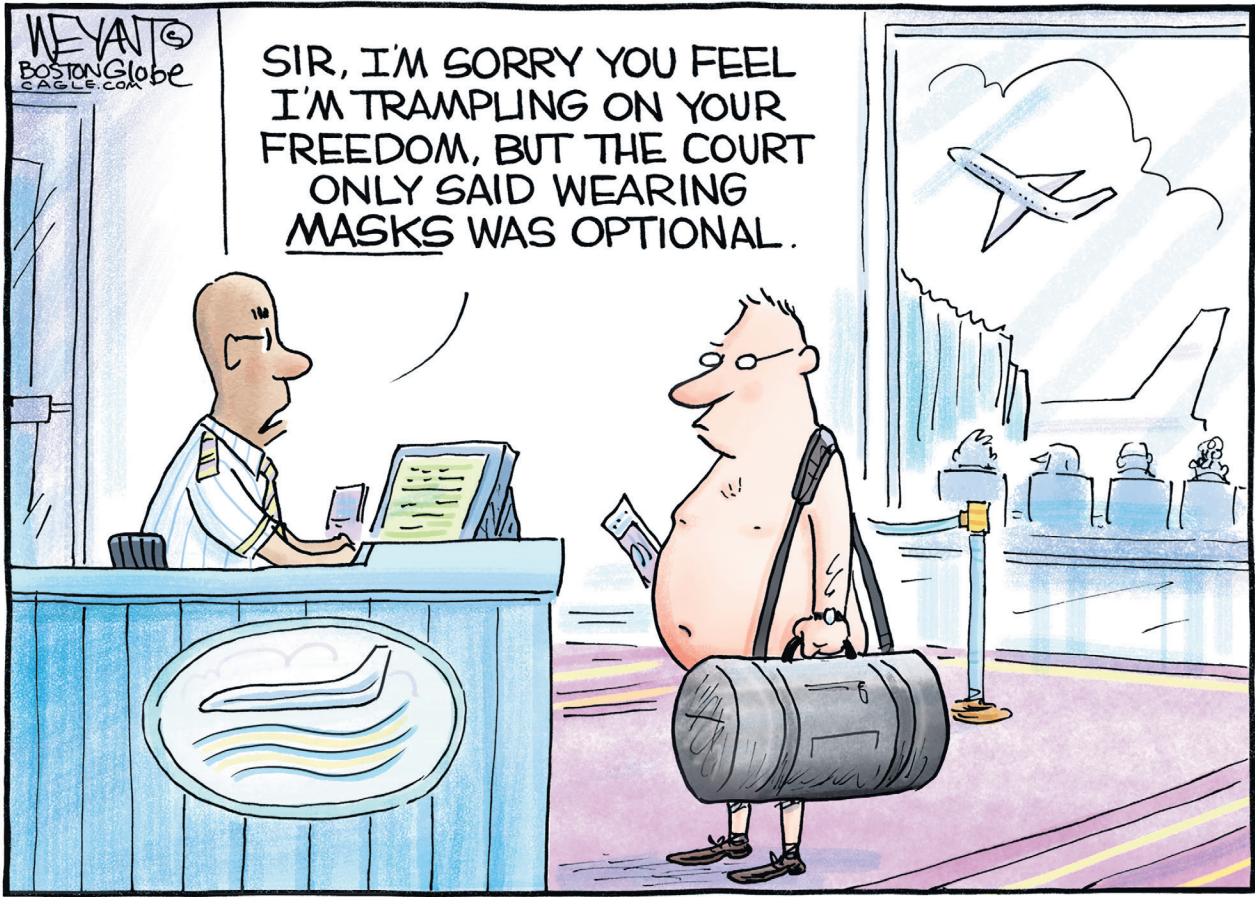
The nation's 94 nuclear power plants produce about 20% of the country's electricity and more than 50% of its carbon-free electricity. No other carbon-free source can produce electricity on demand in the volumes that nuclear generations produce.

Federal policy should be not only to preserve current generation but to foster the development of more safe nuclear generation for environmental and energy security reasons.

The principal environmental concern with nuclear generation is safe disposal of spent fuel. The federal government finally should follow through on building a safe central repository for that material.

And it should embrace construction of a new generation of reactors with designs that enhance safety and partially answer the disposal problem.

Beyond the current energy security crisis, nuclear power should be a much bigger part of the global solution to atmospheric warming.



YOUR OPINION

Democratic hijinks raise questions

Editor: I read with amusement — and disgust — the April 16 Random Notes column on the Lackawanna County Democratic Party.

As a Republican, I have no skin in the game of such machinations. But, I read and reread the article and cannot help but see how this chicanery appears to be, at best, hush money and at worst, an out-and-out bribe. The Jim Rodway/Chris Patrick egos are too big to fit in one room.

Attorney Chris Munley brokered a \$12,000 per year stipend plus a spurious appointment deal to Rodway. Let's face it. The folks these gentlemen endorse must sign an ethics form once elected. Did we forget the tree from which the poisoned fruit comes?

A quick review of the party's website reveals no bylaws to read, which conveniently would be amended to suit the new position created for Rodway. How are any county Democrats OK with any of this? What is the source of the supposed \$1,000 monthly payment Munley recommends to Rodway? Can the party treasurer account for the revenue? Will an IRS Form 1099 be issued?

Transparency demands the party's bylaws be posted for public review. Had the Lackawanna County Republican Party proposed such actions, a Salem-style witch hunt would be underway. Why doesn't the Republican Party address this, for that matter? Roderick Random needs to write

follow-up columns. There are far too many loose ends I wish were addressed; too many questions unanswered that pique my interest, as they should the county Democratic Committee. Alas, I am but an outnumbered Republican from Lackawanna County with no skin in the game.

FRANCIS X. KRANICK JR.
DUNMORE

Leftist politics stifles responses

Editor: In a March 31 letter ("Judge hews to leftist dogma") I addressed Judge Ketanji Brown Jackson's appearance before the Senate Judiciary Committee pursuant to her nomination to the Supreme Court.

The letter's point was that adherence to leftist political dogma requires otherwise intelligent people to lie under oath. Jackson, a Harvard-educated lawyer and federal judge, was asked to define "woman" and to state when life begins. Seated within feet of her daughter, her answers were, "I can't" and "I don't know..." respectively.

A response ("Life-beginning inquiry devious," April 8) referred to my "polemic intent" and did not concur with my assertion. Yet that's exactly what it did. The writer referred to the question about life as "nonsensical" and that "only an idiot would venture an opinion on that subject."

The fact is, Jackson was under oath and did not accurately answer the questions as required by law. To do so would render her an "idiot." If that wasn't

enough, the writer provided her answer to the question that the unborn are not people.

Fair enough, but in doing so she conceded a female egg is "sort of alive since the mother was a fetus." Such a statement illustrates the reason those on the left cannot answer such questions. They might inadvertently say what they actually think, which in this case contradicts their stated leftist politics. There is no tolerance for that on the left.

BEN CLARK
CLARKS SUMMIT

Prohibit radar use by local police

Editor: All Pennsylvania governments are in desperate need of more income and some may see radar as their salvation.

The straw man of a "speeding crisis" is the basis for the push to give radar to municipal police. There is no speeding crisis. PennDOT says that Pennsylvania's roads are the safest they ever have been.

A U.S. Department of Transportation study finds that only 5% of crashes are caused by excessive speed. There is no speeding crisis, but improperly posted speed limits turn safe drivers into "speeders."

A highway safety engineering principle called the 85th percentile speed determines the safest speed. About 90% of the limits in Pennsylvania are posted 8 to 16 miles per hour below the safest speed, turning drivers into offenders and making it easy

for authorities to write tickets. That's how radar boosters make money. It's an unfair tax.

How can the Legislature put the financial well-being of the radar lobby above the safety of taxpayers? A law mandating that all limits be 85th percentile speed limits, not radar, would make the roads safer.

Taxpayers and their wallets are put at grave risk by people they elected to prevent such stuff. Tell your senator and representative to vote no on speed trap legislation, House Bill 606 and Senate Bill 419.

TOM MCCAREY
BERWYN,
CHESTER COUNTY

Money corrupts genders equally

Editor: Women rapidly are catching up to wealthy and powerful men they have been chasing for a long time.

But an aspect of this race is not so cool. As women rise up the ladder to get money and power, they often imitate the sins of men. We want them to bring that special loving feminine personality to the table, but do they really?

The problem is that money and power corrupt women just as men. Money is the root of all evil, no matter the gender. Power corrupts whether you are a suit or a sweetie. Gender protects no one from the perils of oppression.

So, girl power is not the slam-dunk good thing that many advertisers portray it to be. It is all too often a mask for the same old tyrannies that have been around from the beginning.

KIMBALL SHINKOSKEY
WOODS CROSS, UTAH

Taylor library fan

Editor: Would readers like a mental health booster?

Stop by the Taylor Community Library for a brief respite from weight of this weary world. It's a great library with a wonderful ambience. The staff is friendly and helpful and always helps you find what you are looking for, whether to read or just to spend quiet time.

Add to that an inviting children's corner and a terrific large-print collection of books and you'll find something for everyone.

MARTHA KIER
TAYLOR



ASSOCIATED PRESS FILE

Police Officer Randall Clement watches his radar speed readout in November 2007 in Orem, Utah. A writer says legislators should reject bills that would allow local police to use radar.

E.J. Lynett
Editor and Publisher, 1895-1943

William R. Lynett
Editor and Publisher, 1943-1946

Elizabeth R. Lynett
Publisher, 1946-1959

Edward J. Lynett
Editor and Publisher, 1946-1966



The Times-Tribune
A Pulitzer Prize-Winning Newspaper

Publishers Emeriti
Edward J. Lynett Jr.
George V. Lynett
William R. Lynett

James Lewandowski
Chief Executive Officer
and Publisher

Larry Holeva
Executive Editor
570-348-9120

Joe Butkiewicz
Managing Editor
570-207-3467

Patrick J. McKenna
Associate Editor
570-348-9113

LETTER GUIDELINES

Letters to the editor must include the author's name and town of residence for publication, and a daytime telephone number for confirmation. Letters are subject to editing; brevity is advised. **Mail:** Letters to the Editor, The Times-Tribune, 149 Penn Ave., Scranton, PA 18503 **Email:** letters@timeshamrock.com **Fax:** 570-348-9135