

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Bravo to FSU College of Medicine

Last Saturday morning I spent one of the most reassuring hours I've experienced in my six years on the Leon County Commission – and before. That was in seeing the rock-solid, real, not just talked-about, and soon-to-be dramatic improvement in the lives of some of our least cared-for citizens in south and southwest Leon County.

The FSU College of Medicine's new Primary Health clinic offers so much. It adds physical beauty and stability to this neglected area with the wonderful new building, which says "we're here to stay."

Inside, the fascinating technology coupled with the big heart of the College of Medicine's students, faculty and unique mission make for a powerful message about health care as we all hope it will be: accessible, smart and caring. It was great to see the neighbors come out to visit their new health and wellness center and to meet Dr. Daniel Van Durme, Dr. George Rust, "Dr. Jo" Brown Speights and others who will be their primary care docs.

Politically, and as a community of businesses, nonprofits and neighborhoods, we talk a lot about "what can be done" to help raise the standard of living, health and safety in struggling areas.

Each of us plays a role, but I appreciate so much this massive improvement that FSU is providing through Primary-Health. It's one of the greatest town-and-gown statements I can imagine.

Mary Ann Lindley, Leon County Commissioner,
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Kimbrough column brought back memories

I was excited to read the story of John Kimbrough in the paper. I met the Kimbrough family when the twins were toddlers: Jocelyn in all her fun and fully active days, and John, who would fight through one challenge only to encounter another.

I had a front row seat to see him grow and develop into the man he is today. Losing his sight never stopped him. Losing his hearing in one ear never stopped him from hearing with his heart and mind. John would always try.

Learning to read, sing, laugh and enjoy life were things that kept him positive. (I also know a secret about him driving!) To see him graduate from college is one of those stories that may seem to be too good to be true. I am delighted that he did not use his circumstance as an excuse to check out of life. Congratulations, John, on your achievement, and best wishes as you enter the next part of your journey.

Nancy K. Samuel, Lawrenceville, Georgia,
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Protect home health for America's seniors

Across the U.S., more than 3.5 million seniors rely on Medicare home health services to remain in their homes and receive necessary skilled health care services, including nursing and therapy. However, a new Medicare payment model is threatening to risk access to care for our most vulnerable seniors. This new payment model would cut Medicare home health by 6.42% – equaling

more than \$1 billion in 2020 – based purely on assumptions about changes in provider behaviors under the new system.

Fortunately, our lawmakers in Congress are taking action to protect home health. The Home Health Payment Innovation Act (S.433 & H.R. 2573) would fix problems with this new payment system to ensure seniors don't lose access to the care they need and prefer. I urge our state's members of Congress to join in support of this vital legislation.

Scotti Holm, Tallahassee, scottih1@gmail.com

Gillum's voter registration campaign should also include voter education

Andrew Gillum is making it a point to get Floridians to register to vote. This is a good thing – this is our right as citizens of the USA.

But it is also his responsibility not to tell these individuals what party to register as, and especially not what party to vote for.

It is also his responsibility to explain that you do not have to vote only for the party you are registered under. Voters are to vote based on the issues and what's best for all, not the few. Voters are not to vote based on color, gender or religion.

This undertaking is a big responsibility and should include a little explanation and or education.

Annette Mastermaker, Tallahassee,
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Keep our oil reserves where they are

Re: 'Offshore development can peacefully co-exist with military operations,' May 11 U.S. energy security is not increased by increasing access to oil and natural gas in the Outer Continental Shelf. In fact, if you want energy security for our children, the oil and natural gas in the Outer Continental Shelf should be left alone as a reserve for our children and grandchildren. The smart strategy is to use up foreign oil first so our children have a domestic supply of oil and gas when they need it.

If you want true energy security, America has to develop renewable energy resources so we don't depend on others for our energy needs.

Eugene D. Watkins, Crawfordville

School choice helps some, harms more

The idea behind school choice is admirable, but ideas and realities are two different things. For the sake of our children and my grandchildren we need to stop the political feuding and find a workable solution.

School choice leaves the rest behind. When Jeb was governor, my dyslexic granddaughter entered the first grade. She was zoned for a D school. I brought her to my house so she could go to a better school in my zone. Come second grade, they said it wasn't where her mother lived and would not enroll her.

So much for school choice. It is only available to some, not all. And therein lies the problem.

The number of vouchers is limited, good charters are full, can't afford private schools, public school is failing – what do you do?

Many Florida charters have closed in the last 10 years. Leon High school has stood since 1831.

Who came up with the idea that an educational system with splintered funding, varying curriculums, non-certified teachers and a shareholder base is going to work for our children?

Let's speak the truth about guns

We beat around the bush when we talk about gun violence, but the root of the problem is as obvious as the nose on our face: guns, guns, guns. The U.S. has, by a shockingly conspicuous margin, the highest number of guns per capita of any nation on Earth; we are the only nation on the planet where there are more guns than people. The reasons for this – and the various proposals to control guns – are too complex to address here, but let's just ask ourselves one simple question: Are we safer in a country with more guns or fewer guns?

Craig Reeder, Tallahassee

New abortion laws ignore reality

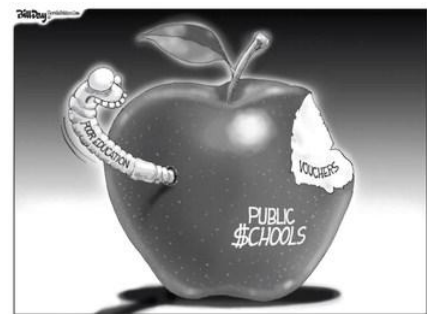
Reproductive rights are under attack. Alabama just passed the most extreme abortion ban since before Roe v. Wade, which goes hand in hand with restrictive legislation from states like Ohio, Georgia, Kentucky, Missouri and Mississippi. This goes beyond political posturing: These laws will have dire consequences for people who can get pregnant in these states. This is state governments interfering in a decision that should be between patients, their health care providers, their families and their faith.

No anti-abortion laws passed in Florida during legislative session, but we are not removed from this fight because these laws are an attempt to ban abortion totally throughout the United States.

Legislators want their case to reach the Supreme Court in an attempt to overthrow Roe v. Wade – an act that would not stop abortions, but rather shroud them in secrecy and make them dangerous.

Legislation like this ignores reality. One in four women in this country will have an abortion in her lifetime. We all love someone who has had an abortion. It is time to start listening to women and showing our support for those who are already affected by volunteering in our communities and donating to abortion fund networks.

Patricia Singletary, Tallahassee



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