

<https://www.news-journalonline.com/opinion/20181217/letters-the-situation-is-critical-and-we-need-to-try-something-different>

December 17, 2018

**LETTERS: “The situation is critical and we need to try something different.”**

### **New respect for panhandling problem**

After hearing the shocking testimonials by local business owners and poliPanhandler encounters dominatece officers about the negative impacts of panhandling (Dec. 13, [“Panhandler encounters dominate”](#)), I have more sympathy for those who support a panhandling ordinance. It may not help, but the situation is critical and we need to try something different.

Also, regarding the problem of public urination and defecation, we need to expand the hours of public toilets, ideally 24/7. After hearing the disgusting accounts of business owners and public employees who have spent countless hours cleaning up urine and feces in public spaces, I can’t help but think it would be easier and less costly to just expand access to public toilets by extending their hours, and also possibly by adding toilets in underserved locations. Locked public toilets are a hassle for tourists and law-abiding locals, not just panhandlers and drug abusers.

**Jenny Nazak, Daytona Beach**

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<https://www.news-journalonline.com/opinion/20181117/letters-i-dont-believe-that-project-supporters-are-all-evil-people-trying-to-destroy-our-environment-but->

November 17, 2018

### **COLUMN’S ‘FACTS’ WRONG**

Cal Thomas in a Nov. 14 opinion piece (“Florida’s fumbles: A national view”) wrote that “a conservative group called Minnesota Majority ... found 1,099 felons, all of them ineligible, had voted” in the 2008 Minnesota Senate race. That claim is false.

Dan McGrath (executive director of Minnesota Majority) did produce a list of 1,099 names that he claimed were those of felons who voted illegally. Hennepin County, Minnesota, Attorney Mike Freeman said that once his office investigated, they found that many of the names submitted by McGrath were incorrect. The county did charge 38 felons who voted before their rights were restored.

Thomas, by repeating this false allegation as fact, perpetuates distrust in our election system and discredits himself.

Even worse were the attempts by President Donald Trump and Gov. Rick Scott to end the ballot counting in Broward and Palm Beach counties. The failure of county election officials to perform their jobs in a timely and efficient manner should never be used as an excuse to disenfranchise voters.

**Dale Harmon, Palm Coast**

*Editor's note: The Minnesota Star Tribune found that 1,099 felons were named but only 38 were charged.*

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<https://www.news-journalonline.com/opinion/20181108/letters-all-police-officers-know-and-accept-challenges-of-job>

**November 8, 2018**

## **THE NEXT STEP**

The Democrats have won control of the House — now what should they do? Here are some ideas:

- Forget about impeachment. It is a waste of time and there are more important things to do.
- Pass a healthcare bill, which provides a public option for Medicare. Anyone would be able to purchase a Medicare plan or a private health insurance plan. Medicare would charge a fee that would cover its expenses; hence, no addition to the deficit. Although, “Medicare for All” has its appeal, it has no chance of passing in the Senate — and as Voltaire said, “Don’t let the perfect be the enemy of the good.”
- Prepare legislation that would allow Medicare to bargain with drug companies to reduce drug prices.
- Revive the bipartisan “Gang of Eight” immigration proposal, which was passed by the Senate in 2013, and blocked by the House.
- Pull troops out of the Middle East. We have been there since 2001; things are not meaningfully better; we destroyed the lives of thousands and spent over a trillion dollars.
- Pass an infrastructure bill — use the Middle East withdrawal savings to help pay of it.

Most Republicans will oppose these ideas, but at their peril in the 2020 elections.

**Thomas Hilburn, Ormond Beach**

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<https://www.news-journalonline.com/opinion/20181028/letters-we-need-to-discourage-sprawl-development>

October 28, 2018

## **“WE NEED TO DISCOURAGE SPRAWL DEVELOPMENT.”**

### **Transit fees could discourage sprawl**

It's a relief the area is recognizing the need to increase impact fees, but so far the discussion has been as a means to pay for new roads (and widen existing ones), while a far stronger reason exists — to reduce incentives for sprawl development, which is creating most of the demand for new roads in the first place.

Developers who clearcut forests and wetlands to build sprawl developments, rather than develop within the existing footprint of the city, should pay more for this choice. So should the individuals who choose to build or buy homes in such developments.

Sprawl development causes many problems. Besides clogging the roads, it also, through loss of forests and wetlands, makes us more vulnerable to drought/flood cycles and other weather extremes. It crowds out wildlife and degrades the scenic beauty that draws so many people to Florida. Worst of all, it jeopardizes our water supply. One manifestation of our water crisis is the deadly red tide creeping closer to our shores. Though red tide occurs naturally to some degree, it is greatly exacerbated by runoff of lawn chemicals and other pollutants.

To protect our quality of life, we need to discourage sprawl development. Raising impact fees can help do this. And the extra revenue should be used for public-transit and bicycle infrastructure, and repairing roads within the urban core, rather than paving over more and more of our beloved Florida landscape.

**Jenny Nazak, Daytona Beach**

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<https://www.news-journalonline.com/opinion/20181024/letters-if-amendment-2-fails--there-will-be-nothing-equitable-about-result>

October 24, 2018

## **THE RIGHT EXPERIENCE**

Whatever your political persuasion I implore you to consider voting for CANDO 2-sponsored candidates for Ormond Beach City Commission. I admit dismay when I saw an expensive advertisement in an Ormond Beach paper, with photos of each challenger, claiming they had “no experience.” Was that a statement bordering on libel?

And then I realized, golly, it's true. CANDO 2's candidates have no experience — in taking contributions from wealthy developers, who, defacto, own them and would virtually carpet Granada Boulevard with their political signs.

Experience? Mayoral candidate Rob Bridger has two masters; degrees and 35 years of experience in public administration. As for the commission candidates: Barry du Moulin is a veteran who is experienced in maritime, the corporate world and law enforcement; Kathy Maloney Johnson taught elementary and high school locally for 25 years; Joe Dugan is a local banker and Sierra Club member; and Sandy Kauffmann has been a deputy clerk for Volusia County, including juvenile, for 18 years.

Can anyone imagine a finer combination of private and public sector experience to guide Ormond Beach's ship?

I am so tired of pulling into barren strip mall parking lots — no shade. After a short errand, I return to my sauna of a car. Folks, it doesn't have to be that way. Drive through The Trails, Tymber Creek or Office Depot, where thoughtful developers managed to save trees. Take a ride on Sterthaus Drive and admire the gorgeous oaks before their demise.

That is the Ormond Beach that we all love and want to recapture.

We can do it!

**Linda Kalaydjian, Ormond Beach**

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September 12, 2018

<http://www.news-journalonline.com/opinion/20180912/letters-its-extremely-rare-for-photojournalists-to-receive-public-accolades-or-genuine-show-of-appreciation-from-their-employer>

## **TRADE MATTERS**

International trade is a significant part of the U.S. economy. Since March, the president and his administration has been engaged in efforts to reduce our trade deficit. The U.S. imposed tariffs on steel and aluminum imports; the U.S. and China dealt each other \$50 billion in tariffs; and we have engaged in trading negotiations with Canada, Mexico, China and the European Union. In reaction to new tariffs imposed by the U.S., trading partners have reacted with increased tariffs on U.S. imports. We are in the midst of a "trade war" in which some jobs have been saved (e.g., in steel and metal production), and many others have been threatened (e.g., in the auto industry and agriculture).

Many of the president's tweets on trade have not been helpful, especially those concerning Canada: calling Prime Minister Justin Trudeau "very dishonest & weak"; and saying there is "no political necessity to keep Canada in the new NAFTA deal."

There are disparities in our trade balances with other countries, but the 2017 \$18 billion deficit with Canada is one of our lowest (China has a \$375 billion deficit; Mexico, a \$71 billion deficit; Japan, a \$69 billion deficit; Hong Kong a \$33 million surplus, Australia a \$14 million surplus). Canada is our largest trading partner and closest ally. I hope the president can calm down, negotiate in good faith, and stop bullying and insulting our neighbor to the north.

**Thomas B. Hilburn, Ormond Beach**

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<http://www.news-journalonline.com/opinion/20180808/letters-that-money-would-have-been-better-spent-buying-out-and-razing-eyesore>

**August 8 2018**

### **BEACONS OF SAFETY**

I am too much of a rule follower to drive with flashers on during a rain storm, but I am incredible grateful when the driver in front of me has his flashers on. I recently was on Interstate 95 during an extremely heavy storm that had all drivers down to 35 miles per hour. There was not even one driver in the left-most of the three lanes. The car in front of me had his flashers on, so every second or so I could see that he was still there, that he was still a safe distance ahead, and I could relax and follow his lead.

Thank you, rule breaker. I think you made the road a safer place.

**Harriet Anderson, Ormond Beach**

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<http://www.news-journalonline.com/opinion/20180713/letters-chitwood-is-not-one-to-apologize>

**July 13, 2018**

### **HISTORY AND RELIGION**

The July 1 issue of The News-Journal contained an advertisement indicating that our Founding Fathers were conventional religious Christians. Following are examples of why that is not quite true.

\*Thomas Jefferson, using a cut-and-paste procedure, constructed his own version of the Bible's New Testament. He included all of the positive social and moral features of the

philosophy of Jesus. Excluded was anything related to supernaturalism or superstition, including virgin birth and resurrection.

\*Sometimes the personal correspondence of our leaders better represents their beliefs than some of their public statements. Jefferson is an example here. A letter to John Adams, April 11, 1823 states, "The day will come when the mystical generation of Jesus, by the supreme being as his father in the womb of a virgin, will be classed with the fable of the generation of Minerva in the brain of Jupiter." To his nephew Peter Carr, Aug. 10, 1787: "Question with boldness even the existence of a God; because, if there be one, he must more approve of the homage of reason than that of blindfolded fear."

\*John Adams made a clear statement regarding separation of church and state in the 1797 treaty with Tripoli: "The government of the United States is not, in any sense, founded on the Christian religion."

Historical evidence indicates that many of our early leaders were deists, or what today would be called agnostics. They were greatly influenced by the 17th and 18th century Enlightenment thinkers.

**Dan Kennedy, Ormond Beach**

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<http://www.news-journalonline.com/opinion/20180709/letters-on-weekend-its-impossible-to-get-on-our-beach>

**July 9, 2018**

## **THE LAW IS ALIVE**

In [Tuesday's Cal Thomas](#) column, he argued for replacing Supreme Justice Anthony Kennedy with someone who believes in "originalism." The originalism concept is an approach to interpreting the meaning the U.S. Constitution based on the perceived original intent of the framers of the Constitution. Thomas quotes the late Justice Antonin Scalia: "It means, today, not what current society, much less the court, thinks it ought to mean, but what it meant when it was adopted."

In the Supreme Court case of Citizen United v. Federal Election Commission, the conservative justices' majority opinion (including Scalia) argued that the First Amendment's free speech clause not only applies to individuals, but also to campaign contributions by corporations and unions. I doubt this was the "original intent" of the adopters of the First Amendment.

The problem is that the Constitution is not written with clear, precise language. Constitutional terms like "general welfare," "natural born citizen," "take care," "cruel and unusual punishments," "excessive bail," and "due process of law" are open to different interpretations. The meaning of such terms depend on how they are viewed in the mind of

those who apply and interpret them, and hence, will vary with the times. We expect courts to give due consideration for legal precedence and avoid legislating from the bench; but, it seems to me that an “originalist” view is not practical and that the idea of a “living Constitution” is in the spirit of the “We the people ...” preamble to the Constitution.

**Thomas Hilburn, Ormond Beach**

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**June 30, 2018**

<http://www.news-journalonline.com/opinion/20180630/letters-open-competition-and-transparency-are-most-likely-elements-which-will-help-lower-health-care-costs-in-future>

## **SEE BIG PICTURE**

The continued trauma of separation of more than 2,000 children from their parents, standing alone in court proceedings at borders, is unimaginably horrific. As a former therapist helping countless adults to heal from childhood trauma, I shudder at the long-term consequences of this mass barbarism. But for the grace of God, my young grandchildren living outside the country have an American parent and can soon move to Texas.

Late at night I wrestle with a few reflections.

All white Americans are descendants of mostly Christian immigrants. What has happened to the Golden Rule?

Ancient Hindu scriptures teach that world events happen in cycles of peace and destruction. Sometimes dramatic turmoil is needed to disrupt the status quo in order to enable gradual positive change. The tremendous unrest of the sixties has brought lasting changes for women and African-Americans in this country.

I pray that protests locally and nationwide remain peaceful, and help facilitate immediate help for these children as well as enduring positive change in the months and years ahead.

**Marilyn Sapsford, Ormond Beach**

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**May 22, 2018**

<http://www.news-journalonline.com/opinion/20180522/letters-the-planning-process-has-proven-to-be-doing-job>

## **TORTURE FAILS**

I am responding to the [pro-torture letter](#) of May 18.

Those who advocate the torture (“enhanced interrogation”) of people to obtain actionable information make fundamental errors in judgment. The first error is to assume that the person being questioned actually has useful information. Torturing an innocent person is immoral, criminal, and a complete waste of time. The second error is to assume that the person, usually described as a “lunatic” or “terrorist,” will tell the truth. Instead, if they talk, they are far more likely to lie. The final error is to assume that the questioner will be able to tell what is the truth from the lies. The result, after torturing a person who may not even know anything of value to the point in which they talk, is to obtain nothing useful.

Torture is good for obtaining confessions. Totalitarian regimes use torture for this reason. Even in the USA, despite the Fifth Amendment, there are many documented cases of “confessions” by innocent people as the result of prolonged harsh questioning.

We as Americans have a clear choice. We can choose to follow the rule of law, our Constitution, and ethical religious standards and refrain from torture. The alternative is to become that which we claim to fight against.

**Dale L. Harmon, Palm Coast**

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**May 3, 2018**

<http://www.news-journalonline.com/opinion/20180503/letters-the-children-who-are-diverted-from-school-to-prison-pipeline-will-not-be-ignored>

YOUTH DIVERSION MAKES SENSE

The reader who wrote the letter titled “[The wrong direction](#),” published on April 29, seems to assume that all “disadvantaged youth” whose misbehavior in a classroom might result in being suspended from school or arrested are potential mass murderers, but that argument is based on faulty logic and false information. He claims that the killing of 17 people at a Parkland high school in February is an example of what happens when criminal behavior by students is ignored, and asserts that school and law enforcement officials in Broward County have “blood on their hands” because they followed policies designed to reduce the number of suspensions and arrests and close the “school-to-prison pipeline.”

(READ: [Officials support civil sanctions for Volusia youths](#))

Nikolas Cruz, the individual who carried out the massacre at the school, was not a student there; he had been expelled. He is not a “disadvantaged youth;” he is 19 years old and white. His behavior was not ignored; he had come to the attention of law enforcement, including the FBI, many times, as well as the Florida Department of Children and Families and the mental health system. All agreed that he was a severely disturbed young man who needed mental health treatment. However, there was no legal mechanism to confine him or to confiscate his guns.

The proposals proposed by F.A.I.T.H. are intended to help children in Volusia County schools, including elementary schools, who are at risk of being suspended or arrested because of minor and nonviolent offenses. The children who are diverted from the school-to-prison pipeline will not be ignored; they will be monitored and will be expected to make restitution. These children will be less likely, not more likely, to be involved in further disruptive behavior or criminal activity. Turning their lives in a positive direction will make our schools and our communities safer.

**Ellen Nielsen, Ormond Beach**

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April 25, 2018

<http://www.news-journalonline.com/opinion/20180425/letters-lack-of-state-and-federal-support-for-deland-station-is-due-to-its-remote-location>

## **RIGHT OR PRIVILEGE**

In a recent letter to your paper, it was stated that voting in our country is a right, not a privilege. If we want to know whether voting is a right or a privilege the letter suggested we “read the Constitution.”

Unfortunately, the youth of today may not be able to read the Constitution because cursive writing is not taught in schools today. Sad.

Fortunately, if reading and Roman numerals are still taught, our students may be able to read the 19th Amendment. Amendment XIX states “The right of citizens of the United States to vote shall not be denied or abridged by the United States or by any State on account of sex.” Still, I think it is important that citizens should be able to read the original just in case it is translated into the printed word incorrectly by mistake or on purpose.

**Barbara Sandberg, Ormond Beach**

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<http://www.news-journalonline.com/opinion/20180416/letters-it-smacks-of-trickery-and-deceit>

April 16, 2018

## A DECEPTIVE PROPOSAL

The Constitution Revision Commission is finalizing the constitutional amendments that will appear on November's ballot. Currently, the CRC is considering a proposal reflecting Tallahassee politicians' attempt to hide their agenda to undermine and privatize our public schools. This time, they are using the CRC to put forward an amendment that connects three different proposals — mandating school board term limits; mandating civics education; and granting power to an unelected, unaccountable state board to oversee charter schools.

This nebulous state board would replace the locally elected school board and would have free rein to create new charter schools whenever and wherever it wants. In a clear effort to mislead the public, the amendment does not mention charter schools explicitly but “permits the state to operate, control, and supervise public schools not established by the school board.”

Why? So that private for-profit charter companies can drain more tax money from our public schools and put it into their own pockets. It's a massive power grab by Tallahassee politicians and for-profit charter companies.

If such a radical change stood alone on the ballot, there's little question voters would reject it. That's why the politicians are packaging it with a mandate for civics education and term limits for school board members. We don't need a constitutional amendment to require civics instruction — it is already required. The decision to retain or dismiss school board members should remain in the hands of the local electorate.

Tell CRC commissioners to protect our local schools and stop wasting our time and money with deceptive proposals.

**Carla Christianson** Ormond Beach Christianson is first vice president and voter service chair of the League of Women Voters of Volusia County.

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<http://www.news-journalonline.com/opinion/20180408/letters-we-watched-superlative-teachers-present-difficult-material-with-students-totally-involved->

April 8 2018

## PUBLIC SCHOOLS' VALUE

The use of taxpayer money to fund charter schools and private schools is certainly part of a concerted effort to privatize K-12 public education. The basis for this started in the 1990s with the K-12 school reform movement, whose leaders were talking about cooperation with “the private sector.” There is ample evidence of big money from various sources (e.g., Wall Street hedge-fund people) being used for this purpose.

The claim that U.S. public education is a failure is used to justify the privatization movement, usually using performance on international tests as criteria. High-scoring nations tend to have relatively homogeneous student populations relative to socio-economic stratification, while the U.S. is quite diverse. Also, there's inverse correlation between the international test scores and GDP of nations, which is certainly not supportive of the idea of widespread school failure in the U.S.

We need a well-educated citizenry to maintain democratic governance. Free K-12 public schools serve this purpose best — developing critical thinking, for example. Private schools tend to have strong social, economic, political and religious agendas, which is just the opposite of what is needed to develop critical thinking. Also, 80-85 percent of private K-12 schools have religious affiliations, raising serious issues about church-state separation.

All taxpayer funding for K-12 education should go to Florida's public schools. The way to help schools do the best job of which they are capable would be to have much less Tallahassee-centric control and much more local school district autonomy.

**Dan Kennedy, Ormond Beach**

*Kennedy is a retired psychologist and educator.*

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**April 4, 2018**

<http://www.news-journalonline.com/opinion/20180404/letters-sentiment-is-growing-toward-major-change>

## **ORMOND RESIDENTS' VOICES WILL BE HEARD**

I tried to accept the words of Ormond Beach Mayor Bill Partington in his March 25 column, "[Opening paths to participation](#)." But right from the get-go, he claims to recognize that "active civic engagement" is essential to our city's success. That is a blatant attempt to pacify the public. He didn't come up with the idea to involve Ormond Beach residents in city planning — until very recently, we have been ignored. But due to the efforts of CANDO2, there's hope for our future.

The public has not been heard with respect, going back to the New Britain Avenue debacle. I attended that meeting and my three minutes. It is amazing what I learned. The mayor and commissioners appeared listless and inattentive to people who were desperately pleading for the status quo. It was obvious from body language that a final decision had been made.

A similar scenario presented itself almost a decade ago, regarding building height limits. But we had a different (more attentive) commission, and a different result.

Sentiment is growing toward major change in the way development is governed — both how, and who. It's not coming from the top, but from responsible, level-headed visionaries within the general public ranks. I implore commissioners to put a self-imposed hiatus on any future development in the city until a bona fide organization is formed that truly represents the population of Ormond Beach.

The purpose of this new entity would be to provide better control of the pre-decision phase of development and planning. We cannot afford any more changes to our environment, like that which created the eyesore at Granada Boulevard and Tomoka Avenue. Any input on that project from the public was ignored resulting in yet another political blivit. Enough is enough!

**Ed Kolaska, Ormond Beach**

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**March 28, 2018**

<http://www.news-journalonline.com/opinion/20180328/letters-on-marches-guns-and-youth--readers-react>

## **COMPELLING NUMBERS**

The recent gun control debate has been emotional and often partisan — I guess no different from earlier ones. I would like to chime in with a few facts and ideas.

The number of guns and the number of gun deaths varies a great deal by country. The U.S. has 101 guns per 100 people and 10 gun deaths per 100,000 people — the highest among industrial countries. The closest is Switzerland with 24 guns per 100 people and 3 deaths per 100,000 people. The lowest is Japan with fewer than 0.06 guns per 100 and 0.6 deaths per 100,000. There is a strong correlation between the number of guns and the number of gun deaths. There is also evidence that states with stricter gun laws have a lower gun death rate.

So it seems if we reduced the number of guns, we could reduce gun deaths. Many would argue that our Second Amendment would not allow for such a reduction. But consider the following: in *D.C. vs Heller*, Justice Antonin Scalia's majority decision argued the Second Amendment is not unlimited, and it is not a right to keep and carry any weapon whatsoever in any manner whatsoever.

In 1986, fully automatic weapons were banned. In 1994, Congress enacted a 10-year ban on semi-automatic guns, and many states restrict the size of ammunition magazines — none of these has had a successful court challenge. So, if we had the will we could make changes that would reduce gun deaths — however, not likely.

**Tom Hilburn, Ormond Beach**

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**February 27, 2018**

<http://www.news-journalonline.com/opinion/20180227/letters-it-is-time-to-stop-short-funding-what-development-costs-community>

## **REALITY, GROUNDED**

In response to the Feb. 17 letters claiming that the theory of evolution is false, I wish to provide information as to the basic concept of evolution. It is well established that life has existed on Earth for billions of years. The biological code, DNA, upon which life is based, is not frozen or fixed, but is subject to random mutations (changes). The vast majority of mutations are harmful, and if expressed are removed because of their adverse effect on reproduction. Otherwise, they accumulate. As a result, DNA contains a lot of mistakes, duplicates, and junk genes. Sexual reproduction allows genes to be combined in various ways. The result, in a species with millions of breeding individuals over tens of thousands of years, is trillions of possible combinations. Any combination, no matter how slim the odds, which is beneficial to reproductive success will multiply and will spread throughout the species. Evolution within any single species is thus mathematically certain.

When a species is divided into separate breeding groups by physical barriers such as mountains or oceans, genetic changes accumulate in each group separately. Eventually they become more and more genetically different until they are each a separate species.

Life today is the end result of these processes occurring in every species of life for over 3 billion years. The real objection to the theory of evolution is not with the science, but rather that it contradicts the special creation story of humans in the Book of Genesis.

**Dale Harmon Palm Coast**

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**February 10, 2018**

<http://www.news-journalonline.com/opinion/20180210/letters-now-they-want-to-take-our-homes-and-businesses-if-we-dont-meet-their-standards>

## **WHO'S HAPPY NOW?**

The author of a recent letter to the editor, "[Avert socialism](#)," celebrated the recent GOP [tax cut](#), marveling at how his [tax bill](#) will decrease next year by \$2,000. He doesn't mention

that cuts for individuals are temporary, expiring in 2025 — conveniently, right after the 2024 congressional and presidential election. Of course, for corporations, the far more generous GOP tax cuts are permanent.

The letter writer castigates Democrats, claiming without evidence that they are “trying to shut down the economy” and “push us toward a socialist country ... I don’t want to end up like that.” Maybe he should look beyond his prejudices and check out “socialist” countries in Scandinavia. According to U.S. News & World Report, the World Happiness Report ranks Norway as first in the world in standard of living, education, healthy life expectancy, and perceived freedom to make life choices.

In contrast, the U.S. scored 14th. The report cited a deteriorating educational system, increasing mortality rates and economic inequality as well as perceived governmental and business corruption.

Other countries in Scandinavia top the happiness charts as well. Finland ranks highest in stability and safety, with the least-corrupt judicial system. Finland and Denmark have the freest and fairest elections, according to The Electoral Integrity Project at Harvard University. The World Economic Forum ranks Norway, Sweden and Denmark among the top five strongest democracies while listing the U.S. as a “flawed democracy.” According to the Rule of Law Index 2016, Denmark and Finland are also the best in protecting fundamental human rights.

**Carolyn West    Ormond Beach**

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**February 7, 2018**

<http://www.news-journalonline.com/opinion/20180207/letters-for-long-time-knowledge-has-become-very-specialized-and-compartmentalized>

## **PRESERVE LEGITIMACY OF SCIENCE EDUCATION**

A big “thanks” is due to Brandon Haught for his [excellent Community Voices essay](#) on Jan. 3 defending legitimate science education. Among other issues, he noted that within mainstream science the term “theory” is only used when an idea is strongly supported by substantial evidence, and that biological evolution meets this criteria while creationism does not. The purpose of this essay is to expand on the critical importance of legitimate science education.

Thus far in human history, Western civilization science has provided the greatest understanding and knowledge of how the universe in general and the life on our planet work. That in turn has provided many practical spinoffs, improving human well-being over the centuries. Some would point out that science has also led to such things as an atomic bomb. Are we to blame science because the influence of philosophy and religion on

morality, ethics, and human values has not kept pace with advancements in science and technology?

Back to the importance of science education, current concerns within mainstream science regarding our natural environment are of major importance. The overwhelming opinion of the scientific community is that human factors are definitely contributing to a probable coming crisis in regard to climate change, global warming, and human use of natural resources.

For a long time, knowledge has become very specialized and compartmentalized, and likewise for most of those who use it. A number of prominent scholars in recent years have been calling for more knowledge generalists, seeing this as part of a path to a better world — a more stable, safer, equitable, and peaceful world. The generalists are especially seen as needed for leadership in their various career fields (e.g. governance, business, science, religion). The recommended means of achieving this is liberal arts education — a combination of the humanities and science, which would also be important for students in general.

Has there ever been a period in human history when a K-12 science education adhering to mainstream science has been more important?

**Dan Kennedy Ormond Beach**

*Kennedy is a retired psychologist and educator.*