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OUR VIEW

We welcome governor's input on A.G.'s bad call

Missouri Gov. Mike Parson appears to have weighed in on the use of Missouri taxpayer dollars to defend the personal behavior of state lawmakers when they get sued.

"Politicians have to be responsible and have to be held to a higher standard when you start attacking citizens in our state," Parson said this week. "You don't get a free pass just because you're a politician."

That, and his statement that the situation is "problematic," seem to indicate he opposes the indefensible decision by Missouri Attorney General Andrew Bailey. He wants his office (meaning tax dollars) to defend three Missouri politicians who are accused of defaming a man who was wrongfully identified as a suspect in the shooting during the Chiefs' victory celebration in Kansas City in February. They also incorrectly identified him as someone in the country illegally.

The man, who has never been charged with anything and who was born in the United States, is suing state Sens. Rick Brattin, Denny Hoskins and Nick Schroer, as well as a U.S. congressman from Tennessee, claiming they defamed him on social media with their personal posts in the wake of the shooting.

Whether the three Missouri lawmakers — who were acting on their own and using their own social media accounts — stepped over the line is a matter for the Missouri courts to decide.

But, as we said before, this is in no way Missouri taxpayer business, and we are raising our voice again in opposition to Bailey's decision to spend state resources to defend the three state lawmakers. What they either said or didn't say on social media is their problem.

The AG's argument: "The senators were acting in their official capacity when they made their posts on social media. Therefore, they are protected by 'legislative immunity,'" is lame.

Other Republicans have seen through it. "I wholeheartedly disagree with his representation," state Sen. Lincoln Hough, R-Springfield, told The Kansas City Star. "It sounds to me like these claims online were made as individuals, not in their official capacity."

"They just don't want to pay for their own attorneys," he also said. "So they have Andrew Bailey representing them because it doesn't cost them anything, but it costs the taxpayers in Missouri an untold amount."

According to the newspaper, state Rep. Adam Schwadron, R-St. Charles, issued a statement saying he was disappointed by Bailey's decision, and that Missouri "should not serve as counsel for matters not specifically related to official state duties."

"If I or another representative were to get a speeding ticket on our way to session in Jefferson City, could we then go to the attorney general and demand representation?" Schwadron asked.

It sure looks like Bailey's office has opened the door to the state assuming the defense of — and perhaps liability for — other bad behavior by lawmakers.

Parson promised he will have more to say on the matter. We hope so. And we hope Bailey and the lawmakers aren't allowed to get away with this hijacking of our money



Freedom Summer repeating itself

As we approach the 60th anniversary of Freedom Summer, the similarities between that era and today are striking.

Voting rights, the cause that drew about 1,000 white, affluent students from across the country to volunteer in rural Mississippi, remain under assault in state legislatures, including ours. Anti-war protests continue to boil across American college campuses and battalions of police have been sent in to quash those protests. At least a third of Americans have decided that they'd rather destroy our democracy than share the country.

Given the stakes of the fall presidential election, we are in for another summer of struggle and protest.

The Freedom Summer Project began in June of 1964. It chose Mississippi, because the Magnolia State had the nation's lowest percentage of registered African Americans voters. Black Mississippians made up more than a third of the population in 1962 but accounted for only 6.7% of the eligible voters. The volunteers, most of them white and about half of them Jewish, worked with Black Mississippians to register people to vote.

As the project launched, however, three volunteers were kidnapped, killed and buried in the Mississippi clay. The search of the murky swamp land unearthed the bodies of eight other missing Black people.

Volunteers made the trek anyway, determined to join the fight for voting rights.

During the 10-week project, more than 1,000 people were arrested, 80 Freedom Summer volunteers endured beatings,



MARK MCCORMICK

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37 churches were bombed or burned, 30 homes or businesses were bombed or burned, and four civil rights workers were killed. Voting rights remain under attack today.

About a year ago, the U.S. Court of Appeals for the 8th Circuit prohibited private citizens

and civil rights groups from filing lawsuits aimed at enforcing the Voting Rights Act. Now, only the Department of Justice can bring those claims. Such cases typically are brought by individual voters, said Ari Berman, a national voting rights correspondent for Mother Jones, in an NPR interview. Groups such as the ACLU and the NAACP and the NAACP Legal Defense Fund represent them, he said.

Of the 182 successful lawsuits brought in the past 40 years, only 15 were brought by the Justice Department, Berman said.

Meanwhile, college campuses have erupted over the war in Gaza and over efforts to address America's legacy of discrimination.

Riot police have descended on campuses from California to New York, where pro-Palestinian students have demanded an end to the war in Israel that has killed more than 34,000 Palestinians, more than 12,000 of whom were children. This spasm of protest follows horrific Oct. 7th Hamas-led attacks on Israeli civilians that killed 1,200 people and saw roughly 240 people taken hostage. About 130 people remain captive in Gaza.

Also on college campuses, extremists in several states have taken aim at dismantling programs designed to make college campuses more welcoming for minority students.

Here in Kansas, extremist legislators have attacked DEI while struggling to even define it. Worse, the extremists are holding \$36 million of funding hostage until the state's six universities report to Gov. Laura Kelly that they've eliminated DEI policies.

"Universities have chosen to embrace ideologies that discriminate against people who do not hew to their orthodoxy," state Rep. Steve Howe was quoted as saying. That's not what the schools are doing, but that's exactly what he's doing.

The more things change, the more they stay the same. Back in the 1960s, the anti-democratic crowd pushed poll taxes and literacy tests to keep Black people from voting and to keep them off juries. Today, extremists purge voter rolls, close polling stations and erect other hurdles to voting. Today, voting rights opponents still dominate most state governments and annually churn out new and discriminatory voting restrictions.

And as in the 1960s, today's young adults have raced into these conflicts, raising their voices and putting themselves on the line.

Freedom needs a refreshing summer renewal. Maybe this one will last longer than 60 years.

MARK MCCORMICK is the former executive director of The Kansas African American Museum, a member of the Kansas African American Affairs Commission and deputy executive director at the ACLU of Kansas.

Is it deja vu all over again? Not so fast

Pulitzer Prize-winning historian Doris Kearns Goodwin has given us another gift, entitled "An Unfinished Love Story: A Personal History of the 1960s." Engrossing as always, beautifully written as always, it is several stories simultaneously, but at its core that of her late husband, presidential counselor, renowned speechwriter and activist Richard Goodwin. Goodwin began the 1960s as a junior aide to presidential candidate John F. Kennedy and ended it as an influential strategist in the movement to end American involvement in Vietnam.

The book is also timely, as we are increasingly called to remember 1968, spurred by questions about whether the fractures within the Democratic Party will hand the White House back to a GOP able to portray Democrats as the party of chaos, crazy and Columbia University. At a minimum, there are superficial similarities between recent college demonstrations over Israel's war with Hamas and the anti-war protests of 1968.

There are also differences. The Vietnam protests were against American troops dying in an offensive war against a defenseless Vietnamese population that was not waging war on anyone. By 1968 they constituted a mass movement whose size befitted its moral high ground.

Presently, the anti-Israel protests on certain American campuses

are much smaller, confined in numbers from a few dozen to a few hundred, organized in some measure by off-campus operators.

Polling suggests that Americans are unsympathetic to the demonstrators, who chant slogans supportive of a genocidal jihadist

group that gleefully slaughtered 1,200 innocents dancing at a peace festival or sleeping in their beds, and which pledges to repeat the slaughter endlessly until their goal of ethnic cleansing is complete.

This is not exactly the cause that Dick Goodwin and millions more were drawn to in 1968.

But there's plenty about 1968 to reflect upon as we approach an election that will determine whether the America we know crashes and burns, or survives. Donald Trump makes Richard Nixon look like Abe Lincoln, but the hard left seems perfectly willing to torch the country in service of its demands.

There's little doubt that the violence during the 1968 Democratic National Convention in Chicago and the left's refusal to support Democratic presidential nominee Hubert Humphrey enabled Nixon to cast Democrats as the party of the untethered and thereby nar-

rowly win the election. President Joe Biden faces comparable jeopardy, already trailing in the polls behind a presumptive Republican nominee who is patently unstable if not fundamentally impaired, four times criminally indicted and certifiably fraudulent — and that's just for starters.

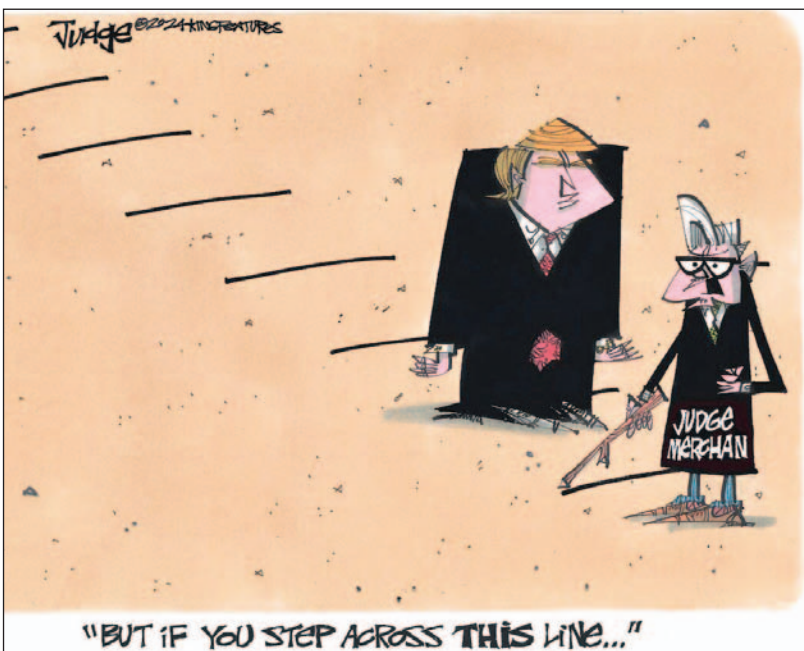
Nevertheless, Hamas' remarkable constituency in the Democrats' far left can be counted upon to torch America's future, just as Hamas has torched Palestinians' future. After all, it was the Bernie Bros who made Trump president in 2016.

This summer's Democratic convention, again in Chicago, threatens to be a political bloodbath, generated by those who either don't seem to grasp that they are lining up behind an equivalent of the Islamic State group or don't care.

There will be chants that border on the lunatic and scenes of chaos, and this may well turn the Oval Office over to a one-man wrecking ball.

Biden, a good man and a successful president, finds himself battered by extremists on either side of him: MAGA on the right and "From the River to the Sea" on the left. Navigating between the crazies will be a tall task. And the country's future hinges on his ability to pull it off.

JEFF ROBBINS is a former assistant United States attorney and United States delegate to the United Nations Human Rights Council in Geneva.



Verse

'Pay to all what is owed to them: taxes to whom taxes are owed, revenue to whom revenue is owed, respect to whom respect is owed, honor to whom honor is owed.'

Romans 13:7

OUR MISSION is to be an essential part of people's lives by providing valuable information on what's happening in their world.

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Use common sense, not nostalgia for Memorial Hall decision

It is sad to read about the deterioration of Memorial Hall (Globe, May 8).

Recently, I saw picture of a Roman stadium in Croatia — 2,000 years old — that is still in good condition and used for soccer tournaments and other events.

The key to the long life of buildings is the same as with people — proper care and maintenance. Unfortunately, Memorial Hall has been let to go too long without either, and now the best answer, unless private funding is obtained, is to demolish and replace it with a memorial park and car park for the Harry M. Cornell Arts & Entertainment Complex.

I say this with regret. I remember attending home shows in the 1940s there as well as playing in the all-city orchestra there. My first job was parking cars on my grandfather's lot across from Memorial Hall. So, I have many fond memories of Memorial Hall.

I opposed the Memorial Hall proposal that was defeated at the polls after hoping I could support it, but when I looked at the cost

for taxpayers and questioned the rosy projections for its operation I could not support it and voted against that proposal.

My grandfather, Capt. Leon Briggs, was killed leading his infantry company in the Meuse-Argonne Forest at the end of World War I. With two silver stars, he was one of the most highly decorated in World War I. His wife served as secretary to the publisher of the Globe, whose family were close friends with ours.

Capt. Briggs is buried in Arlington and his name is on the plaque in Memorial Hall. His father, Julian Briggs, was the third mayor of Joplin and served with Gen. Ulysses Grant in the Union Army from the Wilderness to Appomattox. His home was across the street from what is now Memorial Hall.

My grandfather married my grandmother, whose father, Dr. Martain Balsley, lived at the corner of 7th Street and Wall Avenue and whose property was taken for a parking lot for Memorial Hall.

As a life member of Veterans of Foreign Wars and a Vietnam veteran myself, I have a strong belief in supporting our veterans and remembering those who have died for our freedoms. But that does not mean burdening those living today with taxes to support a building that has not been prop-



A postcard shows the front of Memorial Hall in 1943.

GLOBE FILE

erly maintained and now suffers a fate the likes of the Union Depot's.

As those of you who have read my previous columns know, I have serious questions about the handling of our city finances — questions I hope that the state audit underway will begin to help us address.

I see such wasteful spending and projects that benefit and enrich the few at the cost of the many that anger me. I hope it angers you as well. When they agree to buy tornado-destroyed land for over \$800,000 an acre for the new library (still not owned by the city by the way) there is something very, very wrong. I could list many

items of wasteful spending, such as the flood gates on Murphy Boulevard, spending some \$300,000 where merely putting up inexpensive barriers would have prevented the risk to life these gates are designed to protect. And recently tons of mulch were spread 10 to 15 feet around the trees near those gates — trees donated to replace those lost in the tornado but put in areas where the tornado did not cause damage. These are free trees that are costing parks and recreation considerable resources to maintain. And never forget the ballpark stadium sold as such a wonderful investment for Joplin and now a white

elephant on High Street.

I just hope that the City Council takes the right steps. To me, that is demolition and creation of a small park and parking area. And I hope they are taking a hard look at expenditures by the city just as the rest of us have to do with our finances. We do not have the luxury of taxing our friends and neighbors to keep our budgets balanced. I am all for good public projects but not waste and certainly not highly questionable projects.

Let us hope there are no other Memorial Hall situations in Joplin where maintenance has been ignored, causing buildings to suffer an early demise. We lost the Connor to the wrecking ball, and sadly it is now time for Memorial Hall to go as well.

I hope there is private money that can save it, but to do so with taxpayer money is not only wasteful, it is throwing good money after bad. We cannot let nostalgia overtake common sense and being good stewards of the public trust and finances in Joplin.

ROBERT SCOTT, an attorney and author, was operating vice president and senior counsel for Federated Department Stores (now Macy's) and a partner in Roberts, Fleishaker and Scott law firm in Joplin.

ROBERT SCOTT

Columnist

Associated Press allowing bias to betray its 'fact-based' mission

The year was 2013 and the keepers of the holy book of journalism, the AP Stylebook, had just decided to decree that "illegal immigrant" or "illegal alien" were no longer acceptable terms.

In a desire to strip their precious book of "labels," editors had just told the American public that the legal language of the law of the land — the United States Code — was no longer relevant.

I was livid. Who gave the AP power to redefine the legal language of a nation? So I turned to a friend in the industry: Why do the members put up with it? Why not drop the AP and send the message that if they want your dues, then stick to reporting news instead of pushing a preferred political ideology?

The answer (paraphrased) shocked me: "If it wasn't for the sports page and the stats I probably would drop them. They're ungodly expensive and I see the bias creeping into articles."

That was 11 years ago and it's only gotten worse, the



GEOFF CALDWELL

Columnist

strongest case for such being the AP's own headlines and articles of these past two weeks concerning the explosion of antisemitism and chaos on college campuses across the country.

The worst example comes May 6 with this headline: "Israel begins military operation in Rafah, hours after Hamas agrees to a cease-fire."

Hamas agrees to a cease-fire and Israel invades anyway? You could be forgiven for having a moment of, "Hmmm, maybe those college squatters are right about genocide in Gaza."

And you would be believing something that just wasn't true.

That cease-fire that Hamas accepted was an Egyptian-Qatari proposal that the U.S. and Israel hadn't even seen. It was nothing more than a PR stunt. That not one editor

felt the need to correct such a deceptive headline illustrates a serious case of group-think within the organization.

But that's just the tip of the iceberg. Last weekend I went to www.apnews.com and reviewed every article I could find on the campus protests back to April 23: "Pro-Palestinian protests sweep US college campuses following mass arrests at Columbia."

In the more than a dozen articles reviewed, the language and context was shockingly identical. "Pro-Palestinian" but no mention of the "Pro-Hamas" underpinnings.

And of those articles that did mention Hamas, it was "militants," never terrorists, even though the U.S. government identifies Hamas as a terrorist organization.

So, 11 years ago, the AP, in its politically correct obsession to eliminate labels banned "illegal aliens" but now provides cover for an officially designated terrorist organization by using "militant" instead?

Just as "undocumented

This isn't the first time the organization has been accused of bias. The July 1914 issue of The Atlantic Monthly has an article titled "The Problem of the Associated Press" with the byline of "An Observer."

migrant" softens the language against "illegal aliens," so, too, does using "militant" instead of "terrorist" soften another.

Another common theme was "student protests." Not once did I read about the critical influence of non-student outside organizers and the dark money paying for all the tents, signs and supplies.

Adding insult to injury was the rotating ad between paragraphs with "Support the Associated Press" in bold and in all caps: "EVERY DOLLAR WE EARN HELPS US PRODUCE FACT-BASED JOURNALISM" with a red "DONATE" button to click. At top right of the homepage website is a permanent plea: "EVEN WHEN THE NEWS IS FREE, JOURNAL-

ISM IS NOT. SUPPORT INDEPENDENT, FACT-BASED JOURNALISM" and another red "DONATE" button.

Click through to the small FAQ and the reader is at least informed that dollars given are not tax deductible. So why use the word "donate," which infers to many a tax-deductible status? Why not use the more contextually accurate word "contribute?"

Again, where are the editors?

This isn't the first time the organization has been accused of bias. The July 1914 issue of The Atlantic Monthly has an article titled "The Problem of the Associated Press" with the byline of "An Observer."

The writer noted critics citing "being a close corpo-

ration, it stifles trade in the selling of news, and that it is not impartial," and "... Does it tend to be a one-sided monopoly? The writer believes that it does. He believes that it may fairly be said that the Associated Press as a corporation is inclined to see things through conservative spectacles, and that its correspondents, despite the very high average of their fairness, tend to do the same thing."

Yes, you read that right. A century ago, the bias was to the right. That today it veers to the left doesn't change the fact that when it comes to reporting news, both are wrong.

Unfortunately for the public, that wrong will continue as long as members stay silent. Unless members push back, nothing will change, and that "independent, fact-based journalism" will remain what it is — another empty slogan from another corporation claiming to be something that it's not.

GEOFF CALDWELL lives in Joplin. He can be reached at gc@caldwellsconer.com.

What the students protesting Israel's Gaza siege want to see change

A wave of protests expressing solidarity with the Palestinian people is spreading across college and university campuses. There were more than 400 such demonstrations by the end of April just in the U.S., with many more in Canada and other countries.

The specific demands vary from place to place. What unites them is a call for schools to use their financial leverage and other kinds of influence to apply pressure on Israel.

The protesters are demanding divestment, meaning the sale of financial assets either related to Israeli companies or shares in other corporations perceived to assist the Israeli military. In addition, many protests include calls for the disclosure of those financial ties. They also feature demands for colleges and universities to distance themselves from Israel by ending study-abroad programs and academic exchanges.

The demands are mostly a response to Israel's bombings and other military operations in Gaza that followed the Oct. 7, 2023, Hamas attack on Israel.

They also stem from broader concerns around Israel's long-running blockade of Gaza and half-century of military occupation of the West Bank and Gaza. Both of those concerns have been behind the boycott, divestment and sanctions movement for nearly 20 years.

I have spent decades teaching and researching Israeli-Palestinian relations and the global politics surrounding these issues. Along the way, I've learned that the discourse around the activism related to this Middle Eastern conflict is at least as relevant as the direct



BJ Brumley, left, and fellow University of Southern Mississippi student Vinny Halsey, hold Pro-Palestinian signs during an hour-long silent protest.

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

effects of the activism itself.

BOYCOTT, DIVESTMENT, SANCTIONS

In 2005, 170 Palestinian civil society groups came together to initiate a call for boycott, divestment and sanctions. Many student organizations, academic associations and other kinds of groups later embraced the initiative.

BDS activists call for consumers around the world to boycott Israeli-made goods and refrain from spending money on Israeli movies, music and other cultural products. They discourage non-Israeli bands from performing in Israel and urge scholars and students not to study at or engage with Israeli academic institutions.

The movement also promotes divestment from holdings that support Israel's military operations. And it seeks to impose sanc-

tions, which could hypothetically include arms embargoes, asset freezes or trade barriers.

In other words, the U.S. government would have to participate for sanctions to work. Due to its close ties with the Israeli government, this is extremely unlikely. Nevertheless, the U.S. has recently sanctioned certain far-right Israeli entities.

U.S.-based BDS activists have, for this reason, focused on boycott and divestment rather than sanctions.

BDS GOALS

BDS has three goals or pillars. The first is ending Israel's occupation of the West Bank and Gaza.

The second is dismantling the separation wall snaking through the West Bank.

The third is attaining full equal-

ity for Palestinian citizens of Israel and the right of Palestinian refugees to return to their ancestral towns and villages in historic Palestine. About 750,000 Palestinians fled or were forced to move to surrounding areas prior to and during the 1948 Arab-Israeli war.

Two-thirds of Gaza's current residents are refugees and their descendants who were uprooted from their homes in 1948. This right to return is enshrined in international law.

While Israel has never let these Palestinian refugees return, it does maintain a "law of return" for Jews.

BDS has caught on with many Palestinians and their supporters across the globe. But there's been a concerted effort in Israel and the U.S. to legislate against it.

Israel has barred some BDS supporters, with Jews among them, from entering the country. And 38 U.S. states, as of 2024, have enacted anti-BDS legislation.

Such laws require state contractors to pledge that they will not engage in BDS, or they require states to not invest funds in companies that support the movement's goals.

To some Jews, boycotting Israeli products evokes the Nazi boycott of Jewish businesses in Germany in the 1930s. Other critics believe academic and cultural ties should never be restricted for any reason.

BDS CRITICS

There are also BDS critics who find the tactics legitimate but object to one or more of the movement's goals. The least controversial goal of the three pillars is full equality for Palestinian citizens of Israel. BDS critics almost never object to this goal. Instead, the debate occurs over the degree to which different people view Palestinian citizens of Israel as already possessing equality.

The second goal — ending Israel's occupation — tends to be opposed primarily by right-wing supporters of Israel. These more

conservative Israel supporters either believe that the occupation, including the security barrier that separates Palestinian residents of the West Bank from Israeli settlers and from Israeli residents in noncontested areas, is necessary for maintaining Israeli security — or that there is no occupation at all.

Other Israelis say that Israeli settlers deserve to live in all the lands of ancient Israel, including the West Bank.

Granting all Palestinian refugees the right to return is the most controversial BDS goal because of fears that Jews would perhaps become a minority of Israel's citizens, causing the country to cease to be a Jewish state.

People with those concerns say making Jews a minority in Israel would be unjust and perhaps even an expression of antisemitism.

Another common concern regarding the BDS movement and the slightly different demands heard on campuses today has to do with the impression that Israel is being singled out for criticism when there are many other countries that commit human rights violations.

The protests on college campuses in the spring of 2024, including those with prolonged encampments, have had, at best, modest success.

For example, Brown University protesters managed to persuade the administration to hold a vote on divesting from companies connected to the Israeli military. In return, the protesters agreed to dismantle their encampment.

Perhaps most importantly, though, the protests have helped place Palestinian human rights demands squarely in the public eye.

MIRA SUCHAROV is a professor of political science at Carleton University. Her column first appeared in The Conversation.



MIRA SUCHAROV

Columnist