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OUR VIEW

Missouri AG wrong to defend lawmakers

It is not the job of Missouri taxpayers to defend three lawmakers who are accused of popping off early on social media accounts in an attempt to politicize the Kansas City shooting following the Chiefs' Super Bowl victory in February.

The Missouri attorney general's decision to defend state Sens. Rick Brattin, Denny Hoskins and Nick Schroer leaves a sour taste in everyone's mouth, and the office needs to rethink its decision. This is not Missouri business.

The three are being sued for defamation by a man who was incorrectly identified on social media as both the suspected shooter and an illegal alien.

The man had attended the parade, and in the chaos of the shooting was apparently detained by police for "moving too slow" as officers tried to clear the scene. He was handcuffed, and because it was in public, people took photos that they shared on social media. You can imagine what happened.

According to the Missouri Independent, "Soon after that initial social media post, the Missouri Freedom Caucus, Hoskins, Brattin and Schroer posted their own social media comments, linking to an earlier post," and in some cases blamed "Biden's open border policies" and said "Close our borders."

The man, who has never been charged with anything and who, by the way, was born in the United States, has sued the three for defamation, as well as a U.S. congressman from Tennessee who also is accused of also defaming him on social media.

Whether the three Missouri lawmakers crossed the line is a matter for the courts to decide.

But it certainly not AG's job to get in their corner.

According to the Missouri Independent, a spokeswoman for Attorney General Andrew Bailey confirmed all three senators are being represented by the state.

"The defamation lawsuits should be dismissed, the attorney general's office contends in a motion filed Thursday, because the senators were acting in their official capacity when they made their posts on social media. Therefore, they are protected by legislative immunity. The posts falsely claiming (the man) was an undocumented immigrant were directed at the president, the attorney general's office argues, and referred to border security."

Whatever they said on social media, and whether it defamed the man or not, is in no way taxpayer responsibility, and in fact looks like, smells like and walks like political favoritism at our expense.

The three deserve their day in court, as does the man who was the subject of the social media posts, but the AG is wrong to drag the rest of the state into the courtroom on their behalf.

"Official capacity"... "legislative immunity..." It's going to be easier to sell matches in hell than to sell this hokey to Missourians.



YOUR VIEW

'We the people' are perceived as dumb

What if Joe Biden loses the other half of his mind and Donald Trump is convicted and goes to jail?

What then shall we do?

Please don't even suggest the current vice president or Trump's latest gun-toting, dog/goat-shooting pick. She even made a self-promoting spot for TV wearing her full cowgirl regalia — not a spot of dirt on it or her white hat — riding a horse supposedly herding cattle.

Have you begun to realize that "We the people" are perceived as truly dumb?

What if the parents who saved and sacrificed to be able to afford a college education for their children said, "Get your behind back in the classroom or get a job?"

Imagine living all of 18-20 years and knowing how to solve international, ethical and religious differences. Where did all these brilliant children come from? Of course, it could be that one or more of the professors in their classrooms might be the source of their arrogant behavior and, in that case, still a waste of hard-earned money. If they are as smart as they think they are, they would get back in the classroom and learn how to support and take care of themselves, and how to peacefully and legally make changes instead of participating in hateful violence.

Dianne Slater
Joplin

May is a great time to celebrate cycling

May is National Bike Month. We invite you to celebrate cycling by riding your bike this month.

If you regularly bike, keep up the good work. If — like many people — you haven't ridden your bike in a while, consider doing so. Air up those tires, check those brakes, and rediscover how fun it is to ride a bike. (If your bike needs a little work, we have some great bike shops in the Joplin area that can get you back on the road quickly.)

May 8 is National Bike to School Day. Research shows that children who ride their bike to school do better academically and are healthier and happier. If you have safety concerns, ride with your kids. While school is winding down this year, consider organizing a Bike Bus for next year.

Parents at Cecil Floyd Elementary have already done so.

May 13-19 is National Bike to Work Week. If you have a safe route, consider riding your bike to work. If you are an employer, you can use the federal Bicycle Commuter Benefit to reimburse employees (up to \$20 per month) who regularly commute by bicycle.

Finally, we invite you to join us May 31 for our Critical Mass ride. Everyone is welcome to join us for this slow group ride. The ride starts at 6 p.m. at the Gary Jones Ghost Bike Memorial near the intersection of Fourth Street and Joplin Avenue. The ride will be about an hour.

Why bike? Biking is fun. Remember the joy you had as a kid riding your bike? That's not changed. Biking also builds exercise into our daily routines. It is good for the wallet and the environment. By biking you can save money and reduce your dependence on fossil fuels.

Safety matters, especially when cars, trucks and bikes share the same road. When biking, follow the same traffic laws as when you drive. Ride with the flow and be predictable. Use hand signals to indicate a change in direction. When driving, slow down and give cyclists room.

We invite you to join us (BikeWalkJoplin.org) in making Joplin a safer place to bike, walk, roll and yes, even drive.

Shawn Hull
President
Bike Walk Joplin

Missouri state senators must protect farmers

Farmers in Missouri depend on a steady supply of glyphosate, a critical component of modern agriculture. Glyphosate controls harmful weeds and saves millions of tons of valuable topsoil because of its essential contribution to conservation practices. Not only that, glyphosate also helps keep consumer food prices low.

Passing HB 2763 this legislative session will keep liberal trial lawyers from bankrupting producers of essential herbicides like glyphosate. Farmers must have the American-made products they need to supply families with fresh, healthy food. Costly, frivolous litigation is a threat to our safe and locally produced food supply.

Without this legislation, Missouri farmers will be forced to rely on China, which is the only other producer of glyphosate, making our nation's food security wholly dependent on a rival that

doesn't share our values. We've outsourced manufacturing and let China dominate for decades. Is our food supply next? Having to import a product that is used on 66% of corn and 91% of soybean acres in Missouri will significantly drive-up costs for farmers and consumers.

This bill protects our principles of individual liberty and economic freedom by supporting farmers and equipping U.S. agriculture to thrive in an increasingly competitive global market.

I urge our state senators to support this crucial bill. With the session ending soon, we must quickly protect our rural communities from being hollowed out by liberal lawyers assisting Chinese communists.

Blake Hurst
Former president
Missouri Farm Bureau

May 6-12 a good week to go screen free

Smartphones are an essential part of everyday life that helps us do so many things, but in a UScellular survey, nearly 75% of respondents said they spend at least an hour on social media every day, with 24% spending 3-4 hours per day.

Nearly a third of respondents said they want to take an intentional break from their phone, making Screen Free Week, May 6-12, a great moment for people to spend some time away from their screens and reset their relationship with technology.

Challenge yourself to take some screen-free time. This can help foster a healthier relationship with technology as well as provide a variety of other benefits. Consider spending time reconnecting with family and friends, being outside or discovering a new hobby or passion.

This is also a good opportunity for parents to establish healthier digital boundaries with their children. UScellular and Screen Sanity's Smarter Start Toolkit includes educational and actionable tools, tips and an agreement for both parents and kids, so everyone can use technology in a more thoughtful way.

While it may be easier said than done, small changes can lead to big rewards. Once you commit to creating healthy digital habits and occasionally disconnecting from the screens, you'll see the benefits and find balance in the digital world.

Mike Burwell
Director of sales and operations
UScellular in Missouri



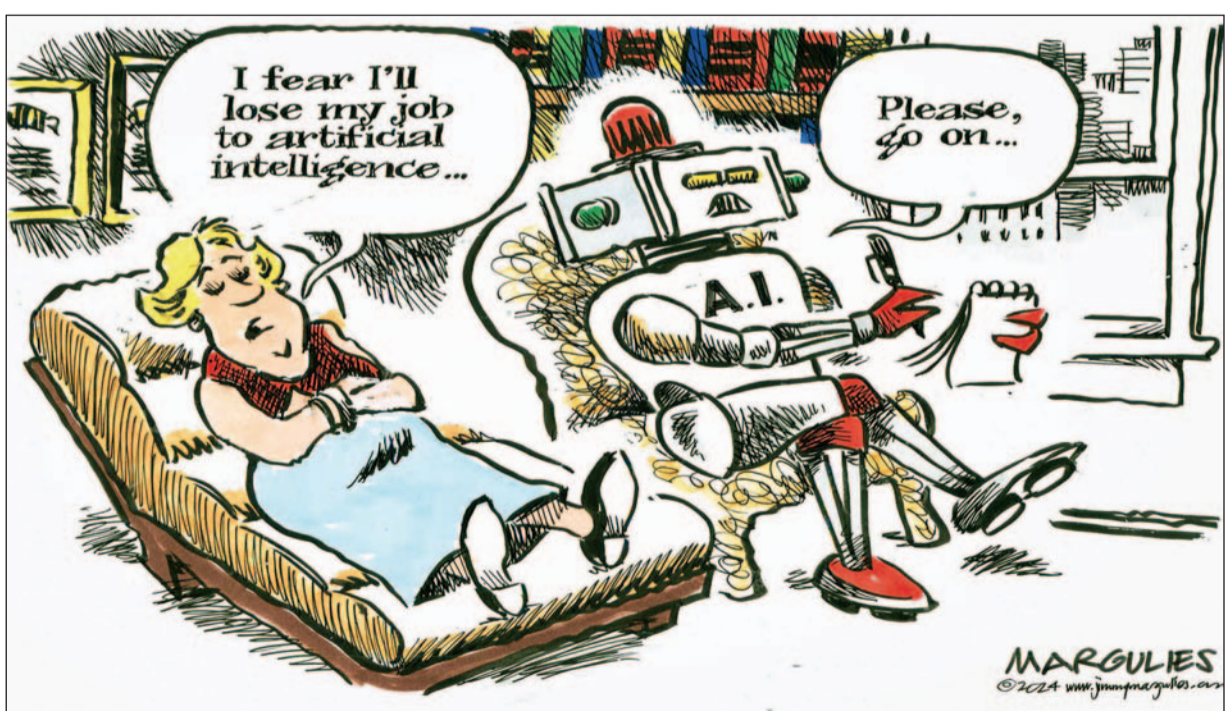
INFO POLL

Q. Would a felony conviction in the hush-money trial that began Monday in New York make you less likely to vote for Donald Trump for president? Go to JOPLINGLOBE.COM to cast your vote.

Verse

'A false witness will not go unpunished, and he who breathes out lies will perish.'

Proverbs 19:9



Funnel money from civil asset forfeiture to communities

David Gilkey once asked a pair of police officers a profound question: “What do you do with all the money you seize in drug busts?”

One officer said, “We put in back into law enforcement training.” The other officer nodded.

Gilkey, a Wichita youth advocate, then asked, “Why don’t you put that money back into the community?”

The officer who answered said, “That’s not a bad idea.” The other officer stayed quiet.

Those questions could prove timely. The Kansas Legislature unanimously passed a measure recently that fundamentally alters a common police practice known as civil asset forfeiture, which allows police to seize cars, cash, homes and more on mere suspicion.

The Kansas House and Senate voted 120-0 and 35-0 to pass Senate Bill 458, which exempts drug offenses related to possession or personal use from civil asset forfeiture. It also limits federal law enforcement taking part in local law enforcement forfeiture cases.

The resounding vote reflects at least a tacit belief among people in both parties that law enforcement has abused this power.



MARK MCCORMICK

Columnist

The Kansas Fraternal Order of Police did not respond to an email seeking comment about the new measure and whether Kansas law enforcement agencies have abused this practice.

The bill, which Gov. Laura Kelly just signed into law, requires judges to consider whether seizures were excessive, puts the burden of proof on prosecutors to show the seizure was proportional, and allows some property owners to recoup legal costs after successful challenges.

In 2017, the late state Rep. Gail Finney pointed out how these seizures often took place without due process and without a trial or conviction. Even afterward, residents sometimes have spent more than the property was worth trying to retrieve it.

Finney, D-Wichita, said police departments seize millions of dollars in property annually. “Kansans should be innocent until proven guilty,” she said. Finney’s handpicked successor,

state Rep. Ford Carr, agreed with Gilkey’s suggestion. Carr said he’s working on legislation that would send a percentage of cannabis revenue into the communities around dispensaries, if Kansas were to approve medical marijuana.

“That money could fund more treatment centers, create more in-patient beds, help communities,” Carr said.

Carr also cautioned against over-exuberance regarding the forfeiture reform.

“They can still shake you down,” he said of the police. “It’s just a little more difficult now. There’s a lot more work to be done.”

According to the Kansas Reflector, the Kansas Judicial Council reported that state law enforcement agencies seized \$23.1 million in property from July 2019 to November 2023. Of that, \$5.7 million was transferred to the federal government under a revenue-sharing agreement.

Only a fourth of the remaining \$17.4 million made its way back to the owners. That property retrieval process took an average of 249 days.

This is why Gilkey’s questions are so profound. Many Black com-

munities and brown communities look as though they’ve been strip mined — because they have. Imagine what millions in reinvestment could do for those neighborhoods?

“We could open a trade school, build community centers, create jobs to get and keep kids off the street,” Gilkey said. “Some of this money has to go back into the community where it can make a real difference.”

Gilkey scoffed at the idea of proceeds funding police training.

“They’ve already got money in the budget for training,” Gilkey said. “That’s part of the budget every year. All they’re doing is buying more weapons, and who knows what else?”

This money also could be used to bring some funding parity to public defender offices. Where district attorney offices gulp, public defender offices sip from the budget trough.

Law enforcement predictably pushed back on these reforms, conjuring images of Mexican cartels and Chinese syndicates. Law enforcement’s insistence that a provision for jury trials be stricken from the bill was telling. The watchers didn’t

want to be watched.

Gilkey said this question has long lingered in his mind.

Before he and his wife, Lynn, became nationally renowned mentors invited to the White House for their work with youths, they were on the wrong end of some of those law enforcement raids. He wondered even then where all the money and drugs went.

“What do they do with all this money when they do drug raids?” he recalled asking himself. “What do they do with all of the drugs?”

What better victims than neighborhoods of second-class Americans no one would believe, or worse, people whom authorities wouldn’t fear disrespecting or disappointing?

Before he turned his life around, Gilkey worried about rival dealers, and gangs of armed youths.

In the dangerous environment he moved in, policing for profit created just another group of people he had to watch out for.

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.

Data now the new gold; it should be protected

Lotion, calcium, magnesium supplements, a blue rug, extra-big bags of cotton balls and scent-free lotion.

Based on these purchases, a national department store reported that it could predict with 87% accuracy that their customer was expecting. Through purchasing data and increasing targeted ads, they raised \$22 billion in revenue in the course of a few years.



JILL CARTER

Columnist

Data is the new gold. The Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act was a strong privacy law when enacted by Congress in 1974. It forbade any educational agency, institution or school from disclosing personally identifiable information from a student’s records to any nonschool official — even other government agencies — without parental notification or consent, putting parents in charge of their child’s records and information.

In 2008 and again in 2011, FERPA was radically revised by the U.S. Department of Education without a vote or authorization of Congress, fundamentally changing the sharing of personally identifiable information with third-party entities, vendors and other nongovernmental actors to be redefined as “authorized representatives.”

This was brought to Missouri through an incentivized federal grant called Race to the Top.

In 2009, Missouri Senate Bill 291 was passed that created the P-20 Council that became section 160.800 to 160.820 of Missouri law. “As used in this section, the word ‘corporation’ means the P-20 Council authorized in this section.”

The P-20 Council was created as a corporation and given its own authority under a private, non-profit status that the State Board of Education sits on. The P-20 Council collects data on children preschool to the 20th year of education.

Under the guise of reform we continue to expand the tentacles of the largest bureaucracy in Jefferson City.

- 12TH YEAR — 18 years old.
- 16TH YEAR — 22 years old.
- 20TH YEAR — 26 years old.

In 2023, the Missouri Legislature passed HB3 (budget bill 3) with funding for the P-20 Council in the amount of \$2.5 Million.

The Data Quality Campaign has a lot of information on the P-20 Council agenda, pushing lawmakers to set the stage to give more children’s data to the P-20 Council. Language in SB628 filed in 2023 was in many omnibus bills last session that were pushed through, with little discussion. Section 210.1360: “This section shall not prohibit any state agency from disclosing personally identifiable information to any governmental entity or its agents, vendors, grantees and contractors...”

Senate Ed Bill 727 (SB727) passed last week, going from the initial 12 pages to over 150 pages on the Senate floor, and among many things, granted the Missouri Department of Elementary and Secondary Education all the data held previously by the state treasurer for all homeschoolers and private school children using the MoScholars program.

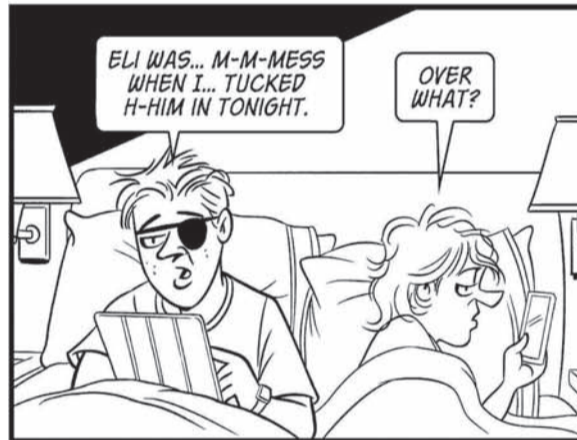
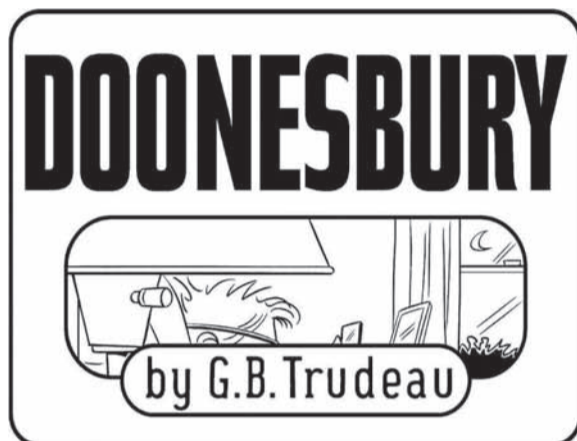
It’s offensive that under the guise of reform we continue to expand the tentacles of the largest bureaucracy in Jefferson City.

Education reform seems to include cutting mandates on our neighborhood schools, and returning education back to parents and the communities they belong to.

“Hopefully someday we can track kids from pre-school to high-school and from high school to college and college to career.”

— Arne Duncan, U.S. Dept of Education, 2009.

STATE SEN. JILL CARTER represents District 32 in the Missouri Senate.



President Biden’s decisions in office have alienated many Americans

Eighty-two years ago today — May 4, 1942 — what we now know as the Battle of the Coral Sea opened a new chapter in the history of naval warfare. Not for ships sunk or sailors and airmen lost, but because, for the first time in history, two opposing fleets — the Imperial Japanese Navy and the United States Navy — engaged in battle without ever seeing the other from the decks of their own ships. As battles go, it was a draw. As for shaping the world we live in today? Indispensable.

To us history nerds it seems like only yesterday. To the rest of America, it’s a time long ago and, sadly, too easily forgotten — momentous in its day but no longer relevant in this brave new first quarter of the 21st century.

Yet little do they realize how that time is still affecting their lives today. For it was just seven months later — on Nov. 20, 1942, in Scranton, Pennsylvania, that one Joseph Robinette Biden Jr. would enter this world.

As a product of the Greatest Generation that literally saved the world, he grew up under the presidencies of Harry Truman

(recognized Israel, launched Berlin Airlift, defended South Korea) and Dwight D. Eisenhower (father of nuclear deterrence, believer in balanced budgets, shaper of the Eisenhower Doctrine). He went into his early adulthood during the heady days of John F. Kennedy (“We shall oppose any foe.” “Ask not what your country can do for you, but what you can do for your country.” “A rising tide lifts all boats.”) It’s not unreasonable to think that President Biden would have a better grasp on and appreciation of this nation’s special place in the world and the role of its citizens.

Yet, judging by his actions so far, to think such at this point in time would indeed be thinking unrealistically, thinking as disconnected from reality as the president himself displays on those rare days he allows the American public to actually see him in public.

From the foreign policy debacles of Afghanistan, China, Iran and Russia to the “Washington knows best” top-down domestic policies that have resulted in crushing inflation, the seemingly unlim-



GEOFF CALDWELL

Columnist

ited expansion of new and ever more costly regulations, and the gutting of the historic Title IX protections for biological girls’ and women’s sporting events, Biden has wasted every ounce of goodwill he was afforded on inauguration day.

His decisions in office have disaffected so many Americans that when the Gallup organization released the results of its 13th quarter job-approval ratings for every president since Eisenhower last week, our current occupant comes in with a brutal dead last 38.7%. The lowest of every president between Ike and that evil “dictator from Day 1” Donald Trump.

would have been in the news back in March instead of now?

Especially considering the president’s silence during the entire Columbia University takeover. Only after the removal of another mob from the UCLA campus early Thursday morning was he finally forced to speak. But even then he couldn’t just address the explosion of hate against Jews without tossing in “...Islamophobia or discrimination against Arab Americans or Palestinian Americans.”

Some are comparing today’s chaos with the Vietnam War protests. They are anything but. Those had a legitimate purpose of fighting to keep their fellow Americans from being shipped off to die without reason.

The spoiled brats and professional agitators of today are nothing more than PR props for the Hamas barbarians and the Iranian mullahs who control them.

It’s good that the president finally said something. Even if it was just another prepared teleprompter read. The tell, though, is that yet again he wouldn’t stay and take questions. What’s he afraid of? The over 200,000 Arab Americans who

call Michigan home, that’s what.

Because along with Pennsylvania and Wisconsin, Michigan is part of the Democrats “blue wall.” As polls stand now he needs not one, not two, but all three states to win a second term.

Lose Michigan and Of Joe and Jill go tumbling back down the hill to Delaware without even a drop of water in their pail.

Biden has always been a self-serving political parasite with situational morals, but on this topic, at this time, he’s even outdone (or should I say out-lowered?) himself.

And with “from the river to the sea” encampments continuing to pop up on campus after campus there’s only one thing more to say: Wake up, Mr. President, for God’s sake, wake up.

The president’s statement Thursday was a start. But it’s certainly not the end and more will be needed. At this point all we can do is pray that at least on this one issue, he will finally get it right.

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