

The Dallas Morning News

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Acknowledge the right of the people
to get from the newspaper both sides
of every important question.

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LAUGH OR CRY



Bill Bramhall/New York Daily News

LETTERS

What about the older population?

Re: “Change That’s For the Better — Dallas College chancellor has ruffled feathers with his reforms, but they benefit students and the community,” Saturday Editorials.

This editorial tells only part of the story. I can appreciate Chancellor Joe May’s focus on the underserved youth population but he gutted services to another population: 50-and-older residents, many of whom pay college district taxes.

Previously, most campuses had robust continuing education programs with a variety of useful classes. The list was intentionally diverse: technology, art classes in several media, exercise programs, foreign languages, financial planning, creative writing and current affairs just to mention a few. Most are gone.

And many of them were free thanks to state law. And, therein lies May’s solution to fund the youth programs. Gone are the senior program advisers who got the adjunct professors, managed the scheduling and answered questions. Gone, too, are the technology managers on each campus. (Brookhaven College’s was a particular loss since he was a great teacher for the 50+ programs.)

The much-touted new website serves only the technology-oriented. It takes some serious digging to find the few continuing education classes.

Such a loss to the community at large.

Liz Oliphant, Addison

An eye on the future

This editorial is on point regarding so much in our society. As President John F. Kennedy is quoted: “Change is a law of life. And those who look only to the past or the present are sure to miss the future.” The editorial board’s recognition of this, as it applies to Dallas College, is appreciated.

True change agents, like Joe May, are often ridiculed and castigated. Way to go, Joe! The majority of your stakeholders applaud your courage.

Leonard Martin, Carrollton

We need real action on guns

Our Texas governor spoke after the recent shooting at an Arlington high school and offered his sympathy to those affected, and he also offered police resources to school staff and students along with their families. Expressing grief and police aid is crucial, though Gov. Greg Abbott only did half of what is needed to really address gun violence. Passing gun safety laws is the other half, which should have been passed at the last legislative session and should actually have been implemented several years ago.

Gun safety laws include: gun locks in residences with children under 18, universal background checks and no guns sold to individuals under 21. Our state’s tilt toward individual rights is OK as long as laws honor their obligations to those who also have rights, such as their own “right to life” in the area of gun safety.

Come on, Texas legislators! Pass reasonable gun safety laws which honor both the rights and obligations of all Texas citizens.

Sheila Madigan Levatino, Fairview

Same old GOP playbook

I and others are really tired of the same worn-out Republican playbook. Let me en-

lighten you if you’re not familiar with it. The opening scene is something horrific like a school shooting. The first to arrive on the scene is Gov. Greg Abbott. The usual photo op is followed by some tired old “thoughts and prayers” rhetoric for the families and victims.

It’s time for something different. Questions. How was the young man able to get a gun? Why does a dispute end with gun violence? When are our elected leaders going to pursue real gun legislation? I read earlier that Timothy Simpkins was bullied in school. What other factors make a young man turn to violence?

To this reader, it’s evident that the school system, our elected officials and the state of Texas allowed this to happen.

Richard S. Gaca, Keller

McConaughey asks good questions

Re: “Lack of stances leaving Texas dazed, confused — McConaughey against SB 8, pro-mask, but quiet on other issues,” Saturday Metro & Business story.

This headline is totally inappropriate. Matthew McConaughey asks good questions, such as why there is so much division and mistrust in our society. His words are relevant and introspective.

In my opinion, we have way too many “leaders” with their fingers on the hot button already and most of the real answers to these stances are neither yes nor no, but somewhere in the gray zone. I congratulate McConaughey on his common sense and thoughtfulness.

Robert Henderson, Dallas/Turtle Creek

Time to form opinions

Matthew McConaughey has few known opinions on almost every issue voters are concerned about. He claims that he’s not hiding his opinions, but needs more time to better understand the issues. Mr. McConaughey, if you’re seriously considering getting into the race for governor, you should already understand the issues and have an opinion on every one.

Greg Hurlburt, Plano

Everyone else gets this ...

My wife and I just got back from a trip to Mexico City. As we wandered around the city, we saw that everyone (except very small children) was wearing masks both indoors and outdoors. The only time people were not wearing masks was when they were eating in a restaurant.

Not wearing a mask is not only a decision that affects you, but it also affects everyone you come in contact with. Why do the people in Mexico City understand that but our state leadership does not?

Neil J. Orleans, Richardson

LETTERS POLICY

We value reader submissions. We receive far more than we can print and publish a representative sample. Letters should not exceed 200 words. Please include the source of your information. Letters are edited for length and clarity. Include your name, address with ZIP code and daytime phone number. Submissions become property of The Dallas Morning News.

ONLINE FORM

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EDITORIALS

Accountability Is Key

Dallas chief’s domestic violence plan will offer services to victims and better track batterers

Domestic violence often happens behind closed doors — a problem that cities can dismiss as a family’s personal tragedy, deemed less scary than the murders, assaults and robberies that sow terror in our neighborhoods.

But this type of crime is not just one family’s crisis. Last year, about a quarter of Dallas’ 8,048 aggravated assault cases involved family members or intimate partners. Researchers have found that domestic batterers frequently commit crimes outside the home, as well. For example, a study of 18,000 Massachusetts men with restraining orders revealed that 75% of them had a prior criminal history, with nearly half charged with or convicted of a violent crime.

We commend Dallas officials for treating domestic violence seriously. After all, the city has had a domestic violence task force since the 1980s.

Yet Dallas has struggled to track its progress and account for setbacks, so we are hopeful about Police Chief Eddie Garcia’s plan to reduce intimate partner violence, which he said makes up most of the load of the Dallas Police Department’s domestic violence unit.

Societal response to domestic violence generally emphasizes protection of the victims. Garcia’s plan, modeled in part after a promising strategy in North Carolina, would place equal attention on victims and offenders.

You might remember the term “focused deterrence” from Garcia’s violent crime reduction plan unveiled earlier this year. The idea is to identify repeat offenders and offer them social services to discourage them from continuing their criminal behavior — and to threaten jail time if that behavior continues. Garcia’s domestic violence plan employs a fo-

cused deterrence approach tailored for this type of crime.

Dallas police’s domestic violence initiative, like that in High Point, N.C., will create a tier system for victims and offenders. Top-level offenders — those with multiple domestic violence charges — are targeted for immediate prosecution with a maximum sentence sought, and police would work with prosecutors to pursue federal charges if applicable. Offenders in lower tiers will hear from authorities about their legal exposure and about resources available to them, such as counseling.

Victims will be offered an array of services based on their risk. While police already work with shelters and other agencies to protect victims, Garcia is allocating more resources to the department’s domestic violence unit, said Lt. Kylee Hawks, who heads the unit. Her team of 40 sworn and non-sworn personnel will add five detectives and a sergeant. This will allow part of her team to focus exclusively on intimate partner violence, Hawks said. Her unit handled more than 14,000 domestic violence cases last year.

Dallas police will develop protocols to categorize victims and offenders. An essential aspect of any plan is accountability, and Garcia is working with University of Texas at San Antonio researchers to track implementation of focused deterrence.

Garcia has the backing of Mayor Eric Johnson, City Council public safety chair Adam McGough and former council member Jennifer Gates, chair of the Mayor’s Domestic Violence Advisory Council. The chief also identified other partners, including local and federal prosecutors. We’re optimistic his plan will deliver results.

A Test of Will

Make it clear that Chinese aggression toward Taiwan won’t be tolerated

As it has done countless times before, including in the early days of the Biden administration, Beijing is testing the will of the United States and Pacific allies to stand behind Taiwan. Just days ago, China flew scores of military aircraft over Taiwan and warned that “war may be triggered at any time.”

In essence, China’s authoritarian leadership under the aegis of President Xi Jinping continues to test international resolve with a proverbial line in the strait that separates Taiwan from the mainland. China’s provocations are designed to push the United States and Taiwan’s democratic allies onto their heels. So far, the U.S. response has been a lukewarm diplomatic missive decrying China for “provocative military activity” that “risks miscalculations and undermines regional peace and stability.”

That is true but hardly persuasive to a communist regime that will always have Taiwan in its sights. There are no good answers, just bad responses and less worse responses. The Biden administration can’t draw a redline that it can’t or won’t defend. Nor can the White House or democratic governments around the world pretend that China is just blowing off steam. And arguably the worst response is continued ambiguity.

The White House has a responsibility to speak with clarity that aggression will not be tolerated. Beijing considers democratic Taiwan to be part of China; Taiwan sees itself as a sovereign state and U.S. policy has been diplomatically ambiguous. Biden now must make it clear that the United States is

not trying to change Taiwan’s status, but will stand firm with democratic allies such as Japan, the European Union, India and Australia if China moves militarily against Taiwan. That message can’t be ambiguous and open to Chinese miscalculation.

China played a similar game with both the Trump and Biden administrations over Hong Kong and arguably emerged with a victory. Beijing imposed an onerous national security law to rein in Hong Kong’s political and economic freedoms and continues to tighten its vise on everyday life in Hong Kong.

At the time of Britain’s turnover of Hong Kong to China in 1997, Beijing promised considerable political autonomy for 50 years, a promise we now see was false. In recent months, Hong Kong residents opposed to Beijing’s repression and political requirements are fleeing to seek freedom in other nations.

Beijing sees Taiwan as an affront to its authoritarian values, and the stakes are higher than Hong Kong. Taiwan holds democratic elections, has a free media, its own military and currency and has never come under the boot of the Chinese Communist Party.

The Biden administration really has just one option: to build a strategic global commitment to preserve Taiwan’s political and economic autonomy.

The path forward is unclear but it can be made less treacherous through deeper engagement with democratic allies and clear principles supporting Taiwan’s self-determined future.

Editorials on this page are written by the editorial board and serve as the voice and opinion of The Dallas Morning News.