

inquirer.com/opinion

EDITORIAL
&
OPINION

The Inquirer offers news, which strives to present unbiased, factual reporting, and opinion, which showcases viewpoints. Here is what you'll find on these opinion pages.

EDITORIAL: An opinion about a matter of public interest or policy researched and written by our Editorial Board, a group of journalists separate from the newsroom who meet frequently to discuss and debate issues. Unlike news stories, which are fact-driven and written by reporters, editorials advocate, champion, argue, critique, and suggest ways to make the region better.

COLUMN: Unlike reporters, columnists are allowed to include their opinions and viewpoints when presenting their reporting. Some columnists, like Will Bunch and Trudy Rubin, appear on these pages. Others, like Jenice Armstrong, Maria Panaritis, and Helen Ubiñas, appear elsewhere.

OP-ED: An essay or other type of article, including cartoons, that presents the opinion or perspective of someone with insight on the news. Many are submitted to us, but we also solicit op-eds from writers on specific topics. For more information: inquirer.com/opinion-guidelines

LETTER TO THE EDITOR: A reader's written opinion submitted by mail or email in response to a story in The Inquirer or another issue.

FOR MORE ON HOW WE WORK:

The Editorial Board consists of the managing editor for opinion, the deputy opinion editor, opinion coverage editor, columnists, and writers. The board routinely discusses issues of the day to decide what to editorialize on and, during election campaigns, which candidates or ballot measures to endorse. News reporters and editors do not participate in these discussions. The board's opinions are not a consideration in news coverage.

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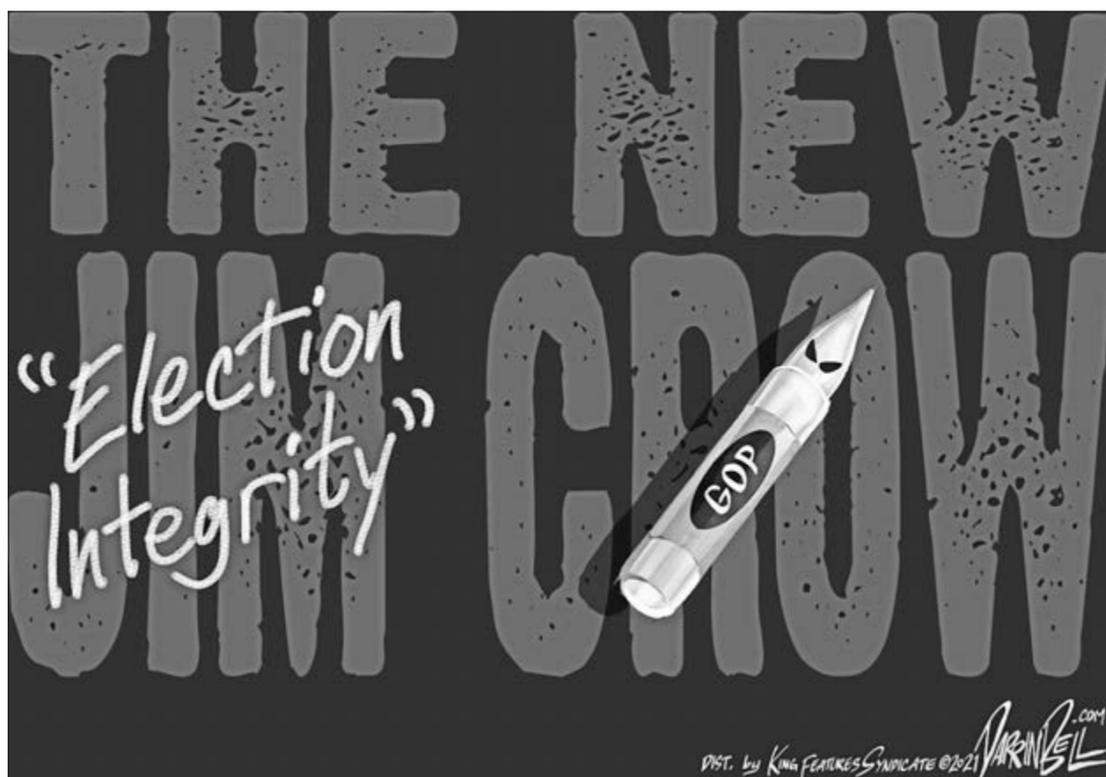
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DARRIN BELL

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Send letters to letters@inquirer.com. Limit length to 150 words and include home address and day and evening phone number. Letters run in the Inquirer six days a week on the editorial pages. Letters are not published online.

USPS expectations

The U.S. Postal Service used to be the envy of the world. There wasn't a letter, which now only costs \$0.55, or package that couldn't be mailed across the country and be at its destination in two to three days. The postal system could handle billions of pieces of mail and maybe misplace a small fraction. That's service, and for a government entity, that's amazing. Then we get Postmaster General Louis DeJoy, who only cares about saving cost. According to the article (March 11) about the Postal Service, DeJoy wants us to expect slower delivery and delays and "recast expectations." Businesses and individuals have been complaining for months about the late and inconsistent service, and rightfully so. As a taxpayer, I don't have a problem with more funding if it gets results and brings back reliability, be it with planes, new equipment, funds for the pension plan, or more employees. The U.S. economy is \$22 trillion, and if the postal system needs \$100 billion, which is 0.45%, then they should get it and a new postmaster general.

Ken Forman, King of Prussia,
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Invest in cell and gene therapy

One of the fastest-growing industries in Greater Philadelphia is cell and gene therapy. Today, 36 cell and gene therapy R&D companies call the region home. They, along with supporting product and service providers, research institutions, and academic medical centers, are sources of sought-after jobs and significant economic contributors. In 2020, six sector investment deals amounted to nearly \$4.4 billion. That robust investment drives real estate projects to meet specialized needs. Job growth to support the industry brings opportunities for high school graduates to doctorates. But long-term success is not guaranteed. To grow the cell and gene therapy ecosystem, we need to prioritize generating increased awareness of the region's assets for this field; continuing to develop critical infrastructure, such as lab space; and building capacity to meet workforce needs and ensure an inclusive and local talent pipeline. Investing in these activities has the power to transform lives and our local economy.

Claire Greenwood, executive director,
Chamber of Commerce for Greater Philadelphia

The closing of Somerset Station

The article about the closing of the SEPTA Somerset El station highlights another case where Philadelphia's tolerance of drug use is negatively affecting this city. The station is being closed due to urine, needles, and trash that have damaged the elevators. I live in South Philadelphia and work in Fishtown, and the drug-addicted population seems to continue growing. Center City has become a maze of drug users that makes downtown Philadelphia feel dangerous. I have gotten to know several of the drug users and they seem to come from outside of Philadelphia because it's easy to buy and use drugs here. I have met users as young as 16. I understand that drug addiction is a disease, but the impact is outsized. It seems that compelling people into treatment instead of having them live on the streets is something that is never mentioned, but maybe it's time to give it consideration. Is it better to



Postmaster General Louis DeJoy during a House Oversight and Reform Committee hearing on Capitol Hill. AP

require someone to enter into treatment or leave them on the street to die?

Frank J. Gontowski, Philadelphia

More cerebral palsy specialists, please

Where are the adult cerebral palsy specialists located in the United States? Yes, I am an adult living with cerebral palsy. There are many different types per individual. At the age of 32, I find myself in a gray area of the medical field. Funding is everything after the age of 18, or even 21. Those "golden years" begin the journey of being aged out of the pediatric medical system. Each year, March is Cerebral Palsy Awareness Month. Adults with cerebral palsy exist. The advanced medical services should also exist. Fund them.

Elizbeth Curry, Philadelphia

Not one 'yes' vote from Republicans

Not a single Republican voted in favor of the new stimulus package that President Joe Biden has called for to help out our fellow Americans. Republicans think it is a waste of money to help states, counties, municipalities, and pension funds. If people aren't working, then taxes and contributions to pensions are not being collected. I didn't see Republicans cry when the tax cuts cost the economy trillions in debt, wiped out deductibles for folks like me, and gave large corporations an extra 14% net savings in taxes. That trickle-down effect never happened. Now I pay thousands in taxes every year.

David Rabin, Aston,
dbabin@verizon.net

Vaccine inequalities

Let's stop blaming and pointing fingers. There were, and still are, shortages in total vaccines available, but that is a separate issue. Large groups of seniors over 75 were not able to get vaccinated in Montgomery County. I was not able to be vaccinated where all physicians practice in Philadelphia, but Gov. Tom Wolf and the Pennsylvania Health Department did not set those rules. Each county was given the authority to decide how to prioritize

vaccine recipients. Montgomery County decided to prioritize first responders, both medical and police, ahead of vulnerable seniors. They had the right to make that decision. Unfortunately, a lot of frantic, vulnerable seniors got left out when the allotted vaccines became depleted. The rules that prevented Philadelphia's major hospitals from vaccinating their own immunocompromised patients were set by the federal government and were rigidly different from the rules set by the counties themselves. Hardship was created for vulnerable seniors and frustration created for wonderful Hospital of the University of Pennsylvania physicians who could not look out for their own patients because they did not live in Philadelphia. Help is on the way, but let's stop blaming people and institutions that were doing their best in very difficult circumstances.

Carol Vorchheimercq, Bala Cynwyd

Update appliance efficiency standards

My parents own a restaurant, so I understand the stresses of spending so much on monthly utility bills. Restaurants spend 3%-5% of their total operating budgets on electricity and other utility bills. This is in part because appliance efficiency standards have not been updated in New Jersey since 2005. Many dishwashers and other household and commercial appliances are using more energy and water than they need to function. Businesses are using more energy and wasting money. We need to change the rules about how much water and energy appliances sold in New Jersey can use. States across the country are doing just that. Updating these appliance efficiency standards is one of the most accessible ways to help consumers and businesses save on their monthly energy bills.

Right now, New Jersey legislators are considering two bills that would update the state standards. A5160 (Assemblyman Wayne DeAngelo) and S3324 (State Sen. Bob Smith) recently passed out of their respective committees in the state legislature. I encourage our state legislators to vote "yes" on updating appliance efficiency standards to help family businesses like mine.

Sara Tabakha, New Brunswick,
sara.tabakha@publicinterestnetwork.org

Not concerned with Capitol rioters?

Republican Sen. Ron Johnson's comments on the thugs and rabble who attacked our U.S. Capitol Building made my head spin. Johnson said he saw only law-abiding citizens. "I knew those are people that love this country, that truly respect law enforcement, would never do anything to break the law, so I wasn't concerned." These are the words of the new Republican leadership. They beat police officers, killing one. Those who attacked and ransacked our Capitol Building and threatened to murder several elected legislators broke more laws than can be listed here. Johnson is completely removed from reality. He and other Republicans like him found Donald Trump not guilty of wrongdoing twice, in denial of overwhelming evidence. They are the new face of the Republican Party. It is terrifying that they play important roles in running this great nation. God save our nation.

Michael Frank, Doylestown

Can't beat them, disenfranchise them

Faced with the choice between broadening their appeal and finding ways to limit Democratic votes against them, Republicans in state Houses, including Pennsylvania's, are deciding for the latter. It is a strategy that may work in the short term, but will hurt them and our country in the long term. Republicans were not able to prove that Donald Trump won the election. They tried to overturn it in the courts, but their unique legal strategy of going in without evidence backfired. When that didn't work, the president and his backers got a crowd fired up to attack the U.S. Capitol on Jan. 6. We are still scarred from the tragedy that ensued.

The Republican Party is troubled. As long as they remain in fealty to Trump and they choose to believe that they won, they will not be able to move forward. Their party needs forward-thinking leadership, but they are paralyzed by the past.

Elliott Miller, Bala Cynwyd



The intersection of Somerset Street and Kensington Avenue. SEPTA's Somerset El station has been closed to fix elevators damaged by urine and trash. HEATHER KHALIFA / Staff Photographer