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Thursday, March 16, 2006

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FENCE POST

Letters to the Editor

Hastert's strategy is about to backfire

It looks like someone went and kicked the sleeping giant. On Friday, March 10, Chicago's downtown was paralyzed by an immigrant march of more than 100,000 people. They carried signs saying: "We are America," "My Mexican immigrant son died in Iraq," and "I'm a dishwasher — not a criminal."

Marchers were protesting the punitive HR 4437, an "enforcement only" approach to immigration reform. This bill would make the 11 million undocumented dishwashers and nannies "aggravated criminal felons" and would turn priests and nurses into criminals for "aiding and abetting" the undocumented.

But the Illinoisan most responsible for kicking the sleeping giant, and who has the most to lose in the long term, was not present at the march.

Speaker of the House Dennis Hastert has made a decision to use "illegal immigration" as the Republican Party's next wedge issue. The political calculation is that the resentment and latent racism felt toward our new Mexican neighbors can be used for political advantage this year.

If "gay marriage" worked in 2004, then why not "illegals" in '06? This strategy has appeared to invoke the law of unintended consequences.

Few communities in the United States work harder at lower pay and in worse conditions than the immigrant community.

The demagoguery has launched an unprecedented national political mobilization by the Mexican and immigrant communities. The '04 election showed that socially conservative immigrant Latinos were 40 percent more likely to vote for President Bush than U.S.-born Latinos. Now President Bush's and Karl Rove's carefully crafted Hispanic outreach strategy is so much shredded lettuce.

What does this mean in Illinois? There are 348,000 legal immigrants in Illinois currently eligible to become U.S. citizens. If a substantial percentage of these folks now become citizens and the immigrant Latinos are cemented into the "Blue" column of voters, it changes

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the political balance of power in Illinois for the next generation.

Regardless, any short-term political gain to be made from the "Kick the illegals" strategy will likely lead to disastrous long-term pain for the Republican Party.

Joshua Hoyt

Executive Director

Illinois Coalition

for Immigrant

and Refugee Rights

Chicago

Vote for Gidwitz, Rauschenberger

I have lived in the state of Illinois for my entire life. I owe a debt of gratitude to the people and institutions who reared me. My childhood was filled with kindness, honesty, encouragement and decency.

Sadly, I have watched these values and the prosperity they engender slip away and be destroyed by special interests and cronyism. The values which nurtured me have been usurped by crudeness and a coarsening of society.

Two people have consistently demonstrated the statesmanship needed to accomplish this goal. Ron Gidwitz, candidate for governor, has performed extraordinary public service.

And, Steven Rauschenberger, candidate for lieutenant governor, has won the admiration of his constituents for his trustworthiness and competence.

Please join me on March 21 and cast your vote for Ron Gidwitz for governor and Steven Rauschenberger for lieutenant governor.

Margaret Scalfaro

Carpentersville

More letters

Please see additional letters, including election-related letters, in today's Neighbor section.

Nothing wrong with 'large' high schools

I'm sick and tired of everyone complaining about "large" high schools. My graduating class at New Trier High School was over 1,200 students, and it consistently had the best SAT and ACT scores in the state.

The fact is that because my high school had a large and diverse student body, it had phenomenal

advantages over other, smaller schools in the area. It was able to have clubs and sports teams that appealed to a wide variety of interests. Only because the school was larger were they able to have enough kids with common interests to offer a great diversity of programs. Not only did New Trier offer more clubs and athletic teams, they offered a much wider class curriculum, with classes in architecture, printmaking, dance, advanced chemistry and nuclear science, so kids who excelled in these areas could pursue them.

Not every student will make every team, or be class president, just as in the real world not everyone will be president of the United States, or an astronaut flying on the space shuttle. Life is full of disappointments, but when you do make the team, it has even more meaning if you had to earn the right to be on it.

There are also more subtle benefits from attending a larger high school; students get a broader and more meaningful education from, and exposure to a diverse student body with a wider scope of interests.

If it is proven that smaller high schools are significantly better for the children, where is the data? Why hasn't the District 204 school board rolled out reams of factual evidence?

I've heard a lot of emotional statements like, "we believe smaller school are better for the kids." Where are the facts?

The facts are that larger schools such as New Trier and those in our area consistently score in the top 20 high schools in the whole state. Stop the lies. Vote "no," again. For the facts, go to www.voteno204.org.

Rita L. White

Naperville

Student surcharges, not higher taxes

Here we go again. District 87 will attempt a third try at passing a referendum that, according to their supporters, will only add \$50 per year of additional property tax to a home valued at \$300,000.

Yeah, right. Am I skeptical? You bet! The simple fact that once taxes are added to the property they will never come off, should make many of you think about your vote and vote "no." Until Illinois legislators can pass measures to assure the taxpayer will not get bilked out of more than the school administrators claim, continue to spend your disposable income the way you choose, and not give it to property taxes.

Here is an idea I could vote for: While you, as a parent and homeowner, have children in the District 87 schools, pay a surcharge for the children while they attend. This added cost will provide the children additional classes while not burdening you for the next 20-30 years, in the form of property taxes, once they graduate.

Carl Palash

Carol Stream

Sole candidate who backs U-46 split

Three candidates are vying for the 55th District House seat. That seat represents the portion of the U-46 School District in which voters overwhelmingly backed furthering the pursuit of splitting the school district into smaller, community-based districts by a two-thirds majority (roughly 12,000 voters). However, whether or not two of these three candidates understand the will of the people remains to be seen.

On Feb. 9, a candidate's forum was held in which the three candidates, Pamela Fenner, Randy Ramey and Matt Fuesting, were asked to discuss the possibility of splitting the district and whether they would support the effort. The only candidate willing to champion our cause was Matthew Fuesting.

Matt felt that heading back to the voting booth for more binding and non-binding referendums was a complete waste of time, money, and effort. He plans to carry the will of the 12,000 voters from the advisory referendum down to Springfield in the form of legislation he plans to work on. Fuesting said he would like to move off dead center on this one.

I couldn't have agreed more. So I ask those 12,000 or so "yes" voters to head back to the polls on March 21. You now have plenty of time to visit Web sites of the candidates and call your state representative. Ask them to commit to the will of the people and explain their state of wishy-washy politics. Ask them if they are willing to put the future of our children's education before all else, regardless of where they live.

Don't go to the polls blindly. I'll see you all on March 21.

Kristine Porter

Bartlett

Scott is best choice money can't buy

What a shame that money is the defining issue for a political candidate's success. How sad that highly qualified men and women are ignored because their limited resources don't allow them to get the attention of party leaders, the media and voters. This seems to be the case with Democratic candidate Lindy Scott running for the Sixth Congressional District. Even your March 3 editorial could only mention his name, but had nothing to say about Mr. Scott's case to be chosen as his party's representative.

In Lindy Scott, we have a person who embodies so much of what voters wish they had in Washington but usually don't get. He is someone who thinks about the moral issues and obligations that underlie actions of our government yet he is one who seeks common ground and workable compromise. He's pro-life in the fullest sense of that word but one who acknowledges the pluralism of American culture and seeks to live with respect for people of different persuasion and background. Isn't this the kind of person we want in

the House?

Immigration policy will be an agenda item in Congress in the years to come. Just think how valuable it would be to have a representative like Mr. Scott who has lived and worked in Mexico as well as the Latino community in Chicago, is bilingual and seeks solutions that are just and compassionate.

Mr. Scott took a principled stand against the war in Iraq from the very beginning believing it was not morally justified but also because it alienated the United States from much of the world and undermined our positive influence as a democracy and defender of human rights. His voice would be among those that speak out against foreign policy decisions that are simply about asserting military power and would speak on behalf of closer understanding between nations.

Voters should know that often the most capable candidates are the ones with the least publicity and money.

Priscilla Heidebrecht

West Chicago

McBride best choice for county board

Jerry "JR" McBride is running for the position of DuPage County board member in District 4. I have known Jerry for the past 15 years and I strongly endorse his candidacy.

I also know Jerry's opponent, current county board member Grant Eckhoff, whom I respect. I do feel Jerry will bring energy and a hands-on style that will be a benefit to the county and to residents of District 4. As a husband, father of five and a small business owner, Jerry will always have the best interests of the taxpayers in mind when casting important votes. Jerry McBride has demonstrated his commitment to the community through his active involvement in civic and charitable causes. Jerry is a founding member of the Jubilee Board for Outreach Ministries; a volunteer for Meals on Wheels; a youth sports coach; volunteer and fund raiser for Misericordia Heart of Mercy; a member of the board of directors for the DuPage Chapter of the American Cancer Society; a precinct committeeman and active in other worthy pursuits.

Jerry brings energy and enthusiasm to every role and, equally important, he is a true gentleman. These two qualities will serve him well in politics. I hope you will strongly consider casting your vote for Jerry "JR" McBride for county board member for District 4.

Joe Birkett

Wheaton

DuPage County

State's Attorney

Eckhoff best choice for county board

Grant Eckhoff's experience counts for all of us now that he is representing us on the DuPage County board. Grant knows how to deal with transportation and zoning matters, having been involved with such issues for over 13 years on the Wheaton City Council. Now he is the county board liaison to the committee monitoring the development of O'Hare Airport, as well as the liaison to DuPage Biz, a committee responsible for growing businesses in DuPage County. With his work on these committees Grant will help keep our county a great place to live. I strongly support Grant for re-election to the DuPage County Board, District 4.

Christopher Betrin

Wheaton

Fox Lake student asks for a 'yes' vote

I am writing to you because I need people to say "yes" to the referendum in Fox Lake. You need to say yes so we can have computers, music, art and library. These are important because they are fun and learnable. We learn how to sing in music, type in computers, and read in library. Those are the reasons why you should say yes to the referendum.

Thank you

Emily Mangubat

2nd Grade

Fox Lake

Dems don't offer more than Del Re

After failing in his attempts to secure a police chief or other high ranking police official, Democratic Party Chairman Terry Link selected a defense attorney to run for Lake County sheriff.

Mr. Curran offers no police experience and boasts about his experience as a former assistant state's attorney. The question now becomes why then did he leave the state's attorney's office? Today he earns his living by representing criminals.

As to the other Democratic alternative, my understanding is that candidate Larry Oliver apparently has never taken a promotional exam in 27 years as a deputy sheriff. Like Mr. Curran, he has absolutely zero management background.

As I write this letter, Mr. Oliver has provided no meaningful programs which would benefit the Lake County community.

I encourage all Lake County voters to examine Sheriff Del Re's record, not the rhetoric and alternatives Mr. Link has provided the voters. My vote stands with our current sheriff, Gary Del Re.

John Sciarretta

Deerfield

Brady, Oberweis the only pro-family votes

Elections in America have always had as their goal the support and maintenance of freedom.

It is this goal which was the intent and purpose of our Constitution. What is unique about our Constitution is that it understands freedom is a God-given right, and that such freedom requires a level of individual and social virtue among citizens.

This presence of individual and social virtue is an absolute requirement if freedom is to be maintained. That goal of virtuous freedom has been completely abandoned by not only the national Democratic party, but by both Republican and Democratic parties of Illinois.

One needs only to look at the front runners for governor in both parties to see that this is true. Of the six candidates, only two favor government support for morality in individual personal living.

The other four, two of each party, support "gay rights" — a program which destroys the family life, which is a requirement of a free and virtuous society. If you doubt that last statement about destruction of family life, you need to look at the homosexual agenda as published on several of their Web sites.

The only purpose of marriage, by their standards, is to obtain insurance and other financial benefits for their partners, without regard for number or gender. No other restrictions are accepted for sexual conduct, including that which, under current law, is called "child abuse."

As for "freedom," only those who agree with their view are "free." All others are, under recent Illinois law, criminals.

True, there are other forms of immoral activity which need to be addressed by society. And some who are homosexual do not agree with the agenda of their leadership.

However, my present concern is to make clear that there are only two candidates for governor who will attempt to reverse the destruction of virtuous freedom in Illinois. These two are Bill Brady and Jim Oberweis.

If you do not vote for one or the other of these two, it makes no difference how you cast your ballot.

Emmit Lehman

Grayslake

Let Fremont work begin with 'yes' vote

We are voting "yes" on March 21 for Fremont schools and hope you will too.

Fremont is out of permanent classroom space and

nearly out of space to add more mobile classrooms. The district is asking voters to approve the sale of bonds for a new building; it has the funds available to open and operate the new school.

Approving the sale of bonds allows the construction and renovations to begin almost immediately. The new building will be ready for students in Fall 2007. Only one of our three children will truly benefit from the new school because of their grade levels. However, we know that voting yes is the right thing to do.

Homeowners before us built the schools for our children. It's our turn to build the schools for the children coming after ours.

We also know that good schools and proper education affect our property values, as well as the country's future work force. The district has done its homework, has planned so that these bonds can be sold with no net tax rate increase to homeowners, and has looked to the future in order to avoid larger classroom sizes and cramped learning environments.

Join us in voting "yes" for Fremont Schools on March 21.

Sharon and Ted Popielewski

Hawthorn Woods

Oliver's cool calm wins her vote

I am writing this letter as a sequel to a letter I wrote in August. In that letter, I advised the people of Lake County to take an active part in Lake County politics, and to pay particular attention to the candidates running for the office of Lake County Sheriff.

I have attended every candidate forum and I have listened to both Democratic sheriff candidates, Lawrence Oliver and Mark Curran. After hearing both of them speak on the various issues and their credentials for the job of sheriff, in my opinion there is only one candidate who is right for the job and that is Lawrence Oliver.

Mark Curran may be a nice man, but after hearing his ideas about getting into the schools and having a program to reach first offenders, I feel he would make a wonderful social worker. His heart is in the right place. However, under simple debate and questioning pressure, he did not do well.

He rambles about his ideas and programs, constantly repeats things he mentioned previously and never seemed to truly answer direct questions. He even exploded at the Shields Township forum, after which he wrote a public apology.

Lawrence Oliver is a very composed and intelligent police veteran. He maintains total cool under every circumstance, as was evidenced at every forum I attended. At another forum, Mr. Oliver handled an unruly spectator calmly, quietly and without incident, while Mr. Curran sat on his hands, not knowing how to

handle the situation.

How can we expect Mr. Curran to run the sheriff's office, and have the respect of the deputies, if he is unable to handle an elderly gentleman?

Mr. Oliver has the experience on the job from the inside. He has seen the department deteriorate into the lawsuit plagued mess it has become. Mr. Oliver is the only Democratic candidate who has the ability to take on Gary Del Re and beat him.

Lawrence Oliver has shown he has the attitude and strength of character to face Del Re and "Bring it on!!" This is why I believe Lawrence Oliver is the only candidate to vote for in the March 21 primary.

Dianne Horowitz

Libertyville

Voting for Cole's clean campaign

After sorting through the huge stack of political postcards, mailers and brochures that has been growing on my kitchen counter, only a few remain. The rest were put where they belong, in the trash!

State representative. (62nd District) candidate Sandy Cole is one of the rare candidates who have garnered my respect and vote in the mud-slinging competition otherwise known as the March 21 primary.

I have not seen one iota of negative campaigning or name-calling generated by this lady — a term defined by Daniel Webster as "a woman who is polite, refined, and well-mannered."

Cole's impressive list of accomplishments has gone a long way in serving her constituents over the years, but has never inflated her ego when it comes to meeting, greeting and working with the public when they turn to her for help.

It's too bad that the majority of political candidates for this primary have to resort to finger pointing and blame games to support their campaigns. I for one, see that as a murky sign that they have nothing else of value to offer their voters.

Cole's platform is crystal clear: she works for the people! Please cast your primary vote for Sandy Cole as state representative for District 62 on March 21!

Sandra L. Hartogh

Grayslake