

Orlando Sentinel

Kids, not undocumented immigrants, should be Lake sheriff's concern: Letters

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Lake-ICE pact divides the community

The agreement between the Lake County Sheriff's Office and Immigration and Customs Enforcement — one which required initiation by the sheriff — affords one more opportunity to divide our community and encourage profiling in the immigrant community.

By initiating this agreement, the Sheriff's Office assumes we have a problem with undocumented immigrants performing violent crimes. This could not be further from the truth. Nationally, between the 1990s and 2013, violent crime declined 48 percent and property crime fell 41 percent over that period.

What's more, a slew of studies (published by the conservative Cato Institute) has found that immigrants as a whole — both legal and undocumented — commit less crime than native-born Americans.

Under the agreement, the Lake County Sheriff's Office has authority to hold an undocumented person with a criminal record for up to 48 hours for deportation. A criminal record does not necessarily mean a "violent criminal alien," as Sheriff Peyton Grinnell said. A criminal record could include driving without a license, tampering with an odometer or passing a bad check.

Also under the agreement, designated officers are trained and supervised by ICE to perform some immigration law-enforcement functions within jail settings. Our officers, being paid by our tax dollars, need to concentrate on protecting our schools and not be sidetracked to do a federal job. Rather than focus on a handful of undocumented immigrants, largely working in our agriculture industry, our concentration should be on protecting our 42,000 students.

Nancy Hurlbert *Leesburg*

Confront autism

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention reported in April that one in 59 children has an autism diagnosis. Yet, we're told it isn't an epidemic. We cannot fight an epidemic that we pretend doesn't exist.

At autism's present rate of growth, Stephanie Seneff, a top scientific researcher at Massachusetts Institute of Technology, states that by 2030, one in every two children will be diagnosed with

autism. Are we going to wait while this happens? It is the duty of the media to report these findings, to research beyond false government reports, but we have yet to see this happen. However, we can see the results of this epidemic on every street in this nation, in multiple homes, in every school in the country now inundated with huge numbers of children overflowing special-education classes that lack the resources to help them.

We must confront the autism epidemic now before more children are affected.

Maurine Meleck *Ponte Vedra Beach*

Defend senior benefits

Regarding Robert Samuelson's Wednesday column, "Future mortgaged to spend on the elderly": A few years back, the Soviet Union crumbled. It was replaced by the Russian Federation. One of the first things the Russian Federation tried to do was to cut the earned pensions of the retired workers. Seniors took to the streets to demonstrate in mass numbers and the Russian Federation rethought its stupid idea.

Social Security has been subtracted from my pay for 44 years, and my employers paid in additional funds to see that I could one day collect Social Security. What Samuelson does not seem to understand is that we have paid into this system, and we intend to collect. If taking to the streets in mass demonstrations is necessary, American seniors will show up and do just that.

In my view, Social Security can be fixed by simply adding 1 percent to the Social Security tax shared equally between business and workers. The same is true for Medicare. A small 1 percent increase shared by workers and business will make this program sound for years to come. Millennials should keep in mind that if we don't have Social Security and Medicare, it will be necessary for us seniors to come live with millennials.

Therefore, we expect the younger generations to show up and demonstrate with us when politicians attempt to cut these programs. Samuelson can go live under an Interstate-95 overpass.

Gus Ambler *Orlando*

Rethink dog-bite rules

In reference to the Thursday article "Orange dog-bite rules don't have much teeth, audit says," about Orange County code on dangerous dogs and the audit of Orange County Animal Services: If someone jumps my fence, enters my yard, and/or enters my house while I am not home and my dogs bite that person, my dogs are on their way to becoming declared dangerous? It sounds like Orange County code needs to be changed. My dogs are being punished for doing their job.

Terri Mellich *Tangerine*