

Des Moines Register

Letters: Republicans would destroy Social Security and Medicare

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Social Security and Medicare are the backbones of America's commitment to our seniors. These are hard-earned benefits paid for with each and every paycheck. They give our seniors the dignity and resources to retire and receive needed care after a lifetime of work. It's no wonder these programs remain wildly popular with the American public after nearly 60 years since passage.

But the future of your Medicare and Social Security are on the ballot. Republican U.S. Sen. Rick Scott, chair of the National Republican Senatorial Committee, released a plan putting Medicare and Social Security on the chopping block every five years. This is the Republican Party's only released plan going into the midterms. Sen. Ron Johnson declared the plan does not go far enough, calling for Medicare and Social Security to be on the chopping block every year.

Last month Rep. Mariannette Miller-Meeks and Sen. Chuck Grassley invited Rick Scott to campaign with them here in Iowa. Scott brought his plan with him. Make no mistake, our Social Security and Medicare are at risk. Our seniors, and all Americans, deserve the confidence that these programs will remain in place. No one should live with the fear and stress that their earned benefits, the very promise our Nation made to them, could be stripped away every year.

Fortunately, Mike Franken and Christina Bohannon understand the importance of honoring the promises America makes. These are your earned benefits. Support candidates who will support you.

— *Jean Pardee, Clinton*

Ganske is no expert

Having experienced 50 years as a nurse, I felt I had an inside track when it came to choosing the best options for health care problems. If you want a good recommendation for the best doctor, ask a hospital nurse.

Through the years of raising a family, if I needed surgery I consulted a surgeon; for a skin problem, a dermatologist. And so on.

I'm puzzled that the Register relies on a surgeon for answers about an epidemiology problem.

Two sentences stood out in Dr. Greg Ganske's Oct. 23 essay.

One was, "We found that the vaccines are effective in protecting people from getting really sick and dying." Obviously!

He also said, "The biggest mistake our health authorities made was to politicize 'science.'" He certainly got that one wrong. It wasn't the health authorities who made it political.

This is the first time in my lifetime, having lived through measles, mumps, scarlet fever and polio, that I saw people's response to a pandemic be turned into a political battle by certain media outlets ranting about the "leftist" government telling you what to do. Masks and vaccines were derided.

I do not go for advice on a pandemic to a surgeon. Ask most hospital nurses their reaction to being more concerned about the economic situation or the life of their patients. Thanks to them for their tireless efforts.

— *Markoline Johnson, Des Moines*

Naming building for Sarcone was misguided

In a 4-1 vote, Polk County supervisors voted to rename the Polk County Justice Center after John P. Sarcone, retiring Polk County attorney.

This was an item added to the agenda, with no discussion or public input, at the last moment. IT was orchestrated by Board Chairperson Angela Connolly as a "surprise" to Sarcone and his family.

Additionally, it was a surprise to Black, brown, LGBTQ and marginalized people in Polk County. No thoughtful community discussion was entertained. No input was gathered. Why?

The board is unwilling and unable to connect the dots on the consequences of renaming a justice center after a prosecuting attorney. Sarcone prosecuted our friends of color at an alarmingly high percentage when compared with our white counterparts. Sarcone also argued against same-sex marriage in 2007. Sarcone also sought to prosecute a reporter who covered the George Floyd protests.

Naming a justice center after a bigoted man will leave stain on our community. Renaming the Polk County Jail after Sarcone would be a more fitting tribute. Des Moines should have learned a lesson after Geroge Flagg Parkway and the Archie Brooks Community Center.

— *Bryan Crowder, Des Moines*

Republicans seem to exist only to obstruct

On issue after issue the Republican Party no longer listens to the majority opinion. It has become the party of No.

No to women's reproductive rights. No to maintaining election access and election integrity. No to lower drug costs. No to better roads and bridges. No to sensible gun laws. No to affordable health care. No to slowing global warming. No to fully funding public education.

The Democratic Party, in contrast, follows the will of the people and strives to maintain a government that works for everyday Iowans. In order to keep a government that achieves critical and popular goals, we need to vote for Democratic candidates.

— *Thomas Hill, Cedar Falls*

Vote no on gun amendment

As a gun owner, a National Rifle Association-certified hunter education instructor, the holder of an Iowa permit to carry weapons, and an avid hunter and shooter, I urge my fellow Iowans to vote NO on the proposed constitutional amendment that could make it virtually impossible to enforce any restrictions on firearms in the state.

Proponents say the Iowa amendment merely adds language similar to the Second Amendment to the U.S. Constitution. "The sovereign state of Iowa affirms and recognizes the right to keep and bear arms as a fundamental right. Any and all restrictions of this right shall be subject to strict scrutiny."

But those last two words, "strict scrutiny," are the problem. Strict scrutiny is the highest standard of judicial review a court can use, and would require "a compelling state interest" to allow any gun controls.

Yes, I value my rights to own and use guns. I'm the son, grandson, parent and grandparent of individuals who were and are safe, responsible gun owners and users.

Albeit not without controversy, the Second Amendment has withstood the test of time. Iowa does not need to go beyond that.

— *Larry Stone, Elkader*

Not buying Cato as nonpartisan

A recent letter lauded Gov. Kim Reynolds for being named best governor by the "nonpartisan Cato Institute."

If you aren't familiar with the Cato Institute, the people there call themselves libertarian, but one of the founders is billionaire Charles Koch, who spends his billions backing Republican candidates. The institute wants to privatize Social Security and Medicare, eliminate the Affordable Care Act, eliminate regulations on fossil fuels. It's not crazy about public schools. Cato Institute people are somewhat isolationist, are anti-union, against a minimum wage, and on and on.

Does that sound like any political party you know? Hint: it's the Republicans.

— *Frank McCammond, Redfield*

Don't stop here; let's make gun possession mandatory

I oppose the amendment to the Iowa Constitution that proposes strict scrutiny regarding any further gun regulations in Iowa.

Should the amendment pass, I recommend then the passage of legislation providing guns for everyone. The Legislature would require taxpayers to pay for guns for all adult citizens. This action would obviously make everyone safer, bring more profits to gun manufacturers, and peace to neighborhoods where the locals often have controversies. It will also help us to love our neighbors more easily. Amen

— *Thomas Beck, Ankeny*