

ALBUQUERQUE JOURNAL



Talk of the town

July 1, 2014

Paid maternity leave is a necessity

PAID LEAVE allows parents to take time off without putting their jobs and economic security at risk. Out of all the Western industrialized nations the U.S. comes in dead last for paid maternity leave. This lack of paid leave puts the entire family at risk from the time of conception.

Without paid leave parents may sacrifice their job and/or health. Without reasonable time to recover, the mother's health is at risk. The strong bonds between parent and child, which grow over the first few months after birth, are interrupted. The strong family foundation needed for a child to become a successful student and healthy citizen are jeopardized.

United States must realize that paid leave is critical to the health and well-being of our entire country.

SARA ROGERS, JUDITH SMITH and MARSHA JOHANSEN

Albuquerque

More campaign fund coverage, please

I AM VERY appreciative of your Sunday front page coverage of specifics of the Democratic campaign funds, donors and recipients. The level of detail was very impressive and spoke of much journalistic research. I look forward to seeing similar coverage and display of the GOP donors, recipients and funds also on a Sunday front page.

This kind of article is very important to understanding some of the political positions taken at the legislative chambers and committees. The information is invaluable for the transparency that so many officials praise but often do not practice.

BARBARA CONROY

Santa Fe

Abortion is nothing to be celebrated

WHAT MUST IT be like to be Alice Ladas?

She writes in the Albuquerque Journal on June 28th that she has “dedicated a large part of her personal and professional life to ensure that women” are able to snuff out the lives of their pre-born children without the bother of parental consent for teenagers, or waiting periods or ultrasounds or other restrictive stumbling blocks to instant killing without having to think through making such a monumental decision.

Alice hopes that by the time she is 95, women will be able to not only control their own bodies, but the bodies of their unborn children with gay abandon. Well, here is what I hope for Ladas – I hope that by some miracle of seeking the truth of what really happens during an abortion reaches her consciousness. Not only what happens to her infant, but what happens to his or her not-to-be-Mom. Every woman who has undergone an abortion knows in her heart that she has killed a human being, and not just any human being – her own flesh and blood.... It’s not enough for Alice that the U.S. Supreme Court ruled in 1973 that an abortion affords a woman a right of privacy so that she can abort with abandon and no one will have to know – except her in her own heart.

Screams of joy from women like Alice attend this right in one of the most seriously flawed emotions ever displayed by a human female. It is, however, perfectly understandable for those whose hearts have been seared with guilt.

ELAINE HENDERSON

Albuquerque

More specificity required in Op-Eds

THE JOURNAL recently published an Op-Ed against Obamacare and against European-style single-payer health care systems by Dr. Jeffrey A. Singer, a Phoenix-based surgeon writing as an adjunct scholar for the conservative-leaning Cato Institute. With no elaboration, he included this story in a single paragraph:

“Doctors can also refuse to take health insurance. More doctors and hospitals are choosing this path. One of my patients did this and saved \$17,000 on a single procedure.”

One of his patients did what? To save \$17,000 compared to what? Compared to some other doctor’s list price that may be artificially much higher than any insurance company would actually pay to an in-network physician under contract? Was this a person who had no insurance, even though now required, who then went to a doctor who takes no insurance? Did this person have insurance but get some elective procedure not normally covered by insurance? Surely this could not have been a person who has insurance with a \$6,350 out-of-pocket maximum for in-network providers, the standard

under Obamacare, getting a covered procedure, because it seems impossible for the patient to save \$17,000 in that scenario.

We all understand that many conservatives oppose Obamacare, but shouldn't we reasonably expect people writing against it – especially doctors – to include details that make sense? Nearly everyone is willing to hear well-defined alternative proposals for the financing of American health care, but they have to be more detailed than the oft-repeated, fast-mumbled phrases about “tort reform,” or “selling (unspecified) insurance products across state lines,” or Singer's little anecdote. I hope the Journal will require more specificity in its op-eds from credentialed professionals. We subscribers deserve better.

DANIEL DAVIS

Belen

Board took wrong side on Redskins

RE: THE WASHINGTON Redskins controversy

The defense of racism couched as protection of First Amendment rights was wrong in the past and it's wrong now. The Albuquerque Journal squandered a chance to be on the right side of history on the Washington Redskins controversy. The Journal editorial board could have added its voice to the millions in American history who have heroically fought against racism for a prize so many who live outside of the margins take for granted every day: dignity.

The editorial board took an issue, which is at its very core about human respect, and politicized it. What the Patent and Trade Office did has nothing to do with free speech or governmental overreach. Remember, not one single federal entity is denying Washington's owner, Marc Snyder, the right to name his team the “Redskins.” Snyder can continue to call his team whatever name he wants for as long as he wants. The Trade Office is simply saying they will no longer protect his right to be the sole monetary beneficiary of that team's racist name.

Keep in mind, segregationists thought they were protecting their First Amendment rights by denying African Americans an equal and inclusive place in American society. In 20 or 30 years, when we look back at the times in which we lived, we will have a great teaching tool in the words of the editorial board of the Albuquerque Journal. I suspect we will stare in wonder at the board's words much the same way we look at old pictures of segregationists protesting and we'll ponder how these people could have ever been so wrong?

DAVID LUNA

Albuquerque

Zero tolerance for EDB in water supply

RE: JOURNAL Editorial: "Threat to shut ABQ water wells may be overreaching"

I attended the water authority meeting where a resolution passed. It stated, and I paraphrase, that the water authority was committed to providing a water supply that does not have any measurable amount of the carcinogen EDB and they were prepared to shut down wells if necessary to keep EDB out of our water system.

I supported the resolution. We must have zero tolerance for any amount of the chemical EDB in our city's water. As a member of the Albuquerque community, and as an individual who has attended numerous community meetings about the fuel spill, I did not view this resolution as "overreaching" as your editorial stated.

The water authority is finally stepping forward as the ultimate stakeholder with the responsibility to provide clean water to our community. It is inaccurate on the Journal's part to say the water authority is acting with "impatience." The water authority is responding to the growing sentiment in the community that the Air Force Base has impeded the process of cleanup for too long. The process of the "study" of the spill has dragged on for over a decade and now appears to be a stalling tactic by the Air Force.

We may be running out of time and potentially face a public health and economic situation of crisis proportions. I support the water authority's position and say that it is time ... for the Air Force to act now and begin the process of clean up of the spill to protect our water. It is precisely because the spill is so large when compared to the spill in Santa Fe that there is a growing sense of urgency in the need to begin cleanup now. The technology is out there. It is a matter of will and the dedication of money for the cleanup to begin.

I have reluctantly concluded that the Air Force does not have the commitment to meet its obligation to Albuquerque, despite their words to the contrary. A growing number of people in the community are of this opinion. It is in this political context that the water authority's resolution needs to be seen. The water authority is finally standing with the people of Albuquerque and meeting its obligations.

MAUREEN MAY

Albuquerque

Border issue calls for long-term reform

IT IS ASTONISHING that the administration at Homeland Security is scrambling to respond to the surge of desperate young migrants across the southwest border. It was clearly ill-prepared for a problem that grew steadily for years before exploding this year, with more than 47,000 unaccompanied children caught at the border since October.

The administration needs to mount a sustained surge of humanitarian care, shelter and legal assistance for children who have faced horrific traumas in fleeing violence in their home countries, mainly Honduras, Guatemala and El Salvador.

As the Journal reported sending Vice President Joseph Biden Jr. to meet this week with officials in those countries to tell them they should all commit to making it safe for would-be migrants to stay home won't alleviate the problem.

More justified, and vexing, are the complaints from those witnessing the chaos close-up.

State officials in Arizona are furious that immigration officials, apparently without better ideas, have dumped hundreds of migrants at a bus station in Phoenix, with no resources, to find their way. Civil-liberties groups have reported that children have told of being beaten, harassed, threatened and sexually abused in detention. Some children reportedly have been held in icebox-cold cells – nicknamed hieleras, Spanish for freezers. The administration needs to investigate and immediately correct conditions that threaten any child's safety and health.

Despite what immigration reform (naysayers) are reporting there are reasonable responses to the crisis at the border. The administration needs to keep its eye on the larger goal: a more rational, lawful immigration system. Nothing about the current crisis changes that.

It's infuriating to see the long-term reform that would ease the problem – by opening more routes to legal immigration, and restoring mobility to a population trapped on this side of the border – being sent to its doom by the short-term scheming of Congress's hard-core anti-immigrant, anti-Obama caucus.

WILLIAM E. HERSHEY

Albuquerque

It's time for grand jury probe of VA

KUDOS TO Colleen Heild for her June 22 story on the V.A. scandal. Anyone who read herstory should now realize that nothing short of a federal grand jury will root out the truth of what is going on at our local V.A. hospital.

The article notes that the V.A. Office of Inspector General initially declined to investigate a whistleblower's allegations into the Albuquerque V.A. last year because, "the OIG receives over 30,000 (complaints) a year," as if that's an excuse. And pardon me, but isn't the mere fact that the OIG receives over 30,000 complaints a year a scandal in and of itself?

Then we have the issue of the Albuquerque V.A. investigating itself. The absurdity of this is clearly brought out by the internal report's noting that, "several of the health techs and medical support assistants claimed 'this was being directed by management'." The

report further notes, “several people interviewed claimed the practice was directed by ‘unnamed personnel residing in the Director’s Suite’.” Now juxtapose those two statements with the investigator’s summary, “I conclude that the claim that ‘management is making us do this’ unsubstantiated.” Really?

The U.S. Attorney should convene a grand jury and the Department of Justice should seriously consider receivership, a move that has legal precedent: The courts seized control of the District of Columbia’s jails in 1995, and again in 2005 with the California’s Department of Corrections health care system. The judge who put the California system into receivership said “horrifying details” had filled him with a sense of urgency and that “nothing short of a receiver could halt the deaths,” according to a 2005 Los Angeles Times article.

We have horrific details of deaths, but where is the sense of urgency to hold senior V.A. management accountable? It is time for the courts to step in and correct this long-standing systemic management malfeasance and nonfeasance.

ANTHONY J. DAQUINO

Albuquerque