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## Letters to the Editor

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Legislature ignores Constitutional duty

Two provisions of the Florida Constitution appear particularly relevant this week.

Article 9, Section 1(a) provides, in part: "... Adequate provision shall be made by law for a uniform, efficient, safe, secure, and high quality system of free public schools that allows students to obtain a high quality education ..."

Article 2, Section 5(b) provides, in part, that members of the Legislature, upon assuming office, shall swear to: "... support, protect, and defend the Constitution ... of the State of Florida ..."

The taking of the oath of office by each member of the Florida House and Senate is not just a quaint ritual, not just a formality. It actually means something, and yet, it would appear that the current membership is on the verge of violating that oath this very week.

JIM LOWE

[jimlowe2@aol.com](mailto:jimlowe2@aol.com)

Student's research describes our future

I am a doctoral student in education policy at FSU who is studying the relationship between investments in post-secondary education and economic development. I am writing my dissertation about a community in the Southern U.S. that has suffered from brain drain and low education levels and is now unable to attract industry. Its economy has been devastated.

I see this as the future of Florida if proposed cuts to higher education are enacted.

Faculty who have had years of state investment in their professional development will leave, taking their grant funding with them. Many faculty members have spouses and partners who hold advanced degrees and work in the local community. They too will leave. Students who cannot get the degrees they want in Florida will go elsewhere and are unlikely to return.

In the end, the brain drain will be felt most by Florida's employers. Florida's reputation for under-funding education will prevent it from attracting the high-tech industries it so badly needs to diversify its economy and lessen its dependence on tourism and real estate development.

Now is the time to stop and think about what the Florida economy will look like in less than a decade if proposed cuts are made. It is time to summon the courage to reject the popular mantra of no new revenues and find a way to fund education at all levels.

DONNA J. HALL

[djh9073@fsu.edu](mailto:djh9073@fsu.edu)

Gun ownership is indeed a right

Re: "Gun crimes linked to their availability"(letter. April 27).

Yes, Barbara, gun ownership in America is a given. It is a God-given right affirmed by the Constitution. Natural law dictates that, if I am assaulted, I have the right to defend myself, and your lawmakers have no right to restrict my options. Twenty years ago, here in Tallahassee, you could have rightfully scoffed at the idea of a street assault, but today they occur frequently in spite of an increased enforcement posture. Read the piece from the **Cato Institute** (a Libertarian think tank), "Gun Control: Myths and Realities," by David Lampo. He debunks the myth that there are loopholes at gun shows, and he shows that in states where citizens are allowed to carry the crime rate goes down. Criminals are reluctant to assault citizens if they think there may be a gun in that citizen's pocket.

So, if someone snatches my car door open or accosts me on the street, unless they kill me instantly I can guarantee you they won't live to hurt anyone else. If Ms. Donaldson is worried about young people, my suggestion is that she do something that is proven to help; mentor young people. Education and the love of family or a sympathetic friend will do more than all the laws ever passed.

RODNEY SAUCIER

[Harleyandgunclub@aol.com](mailto:Harleyandgunclub@aol.com)