

# OPINION

## Getting Minnesota back to work

After several weeks of staying at home, I am hopeful Minnesota will begin to move towards flattening the curve on new cases of COVID-19 and with that, turn the dial up even more for the safe and thoughtful reopening of businesses across the state. I'm pleased Gov. Walz moved toward opening additional jobs recently and has provided additional guidance for getting our economy back on its feet. I believe with proper guidelines Minnesota can continue to be a leader in responsibly reopening the economy while providing protections and economic security for all citizens.

To preface my argument to reopen more businesses, I want to emphasize that I am a strong advocate of all people and businesses following Minnesota Department of Health and CDC guidelines for all activity as we move to return to a safe



and economically functioning state. The safety of our citizens is my number one priority, but I also think we can safely start to open more businesses while protecting our citizens. These are not mutually exclusive — they should work hand in hand.

It's important to recognize and commend Minnesota leaders for taking aggressive action in their handling of the pandemic. I appreciate the rigorous, science-based response for turning the dial on opening the economy. And, although the state's work is far from over, we must ramp up efforts for the next phase of the response to help our economy as well as our

people recover. Let's dedicate the same focused energy we channeled into the public health response into restoring our economic and social foundation. We need to stem the devastating loss of jobs and commerce. We need to open up more businesses and industry, but we need to do so safely by providing resources for people and businesses to stay afloat while making sure every citizen in this state has greater economic security to meet their basic needs.

So, in addition to helping businesses and the economy reopen, I will continue to balance economic stability with my advocacy for the most vulnerable by supporting economic security measures for those with pre-existing conditions, those who are high-risk, and for those struggling economically. That hasn't changed during the pandemic. In doing so, we must

continue to support emergency housing and homelessness prevention, pay our hourly school district employees who've been left out of any support payments, support the Minnesota Family Investment Program emergency assistance payments proposal, make sure we have better broadband infrastructure support for both businesses and schools, and support a pay increase for personal care attendants.

Economic stability for businesses and for citizens go hand in hand. Although the governor extended the stay-at-home order for another two weeks, he has continued to turn the dial to open additional businesses, such as those that might be able to do curbside pickup or home delivery.

These measures will help ensure people and businesses have the resources they need to stay afloat and, as we continue to

achieve significant public health metrics, to get back to work. In addition to restoring jobs where we can, this is a real opportunity to generate new jobs by investing in a robust bonding bill to further turn up the dial help get our economy moving.

Minnesota has done a good job of relying on data and science for our public health response. Now we can use the same metrics and science to responsibly open up our businesses. Rebuilding our economic strength after the pandemic begs for common sense along with ingenuity, determination and a strong partnership regardless of political affiliation to build one Minnesota that works for all of us.

Sen. John Hoffman, DFL-Champlin, represents Senate District 36 in the Minnesota Senate.

### Letter to the editor

#### COVID and our conscience

To the editor:

One aspect of a crisis like the COVID-19 pandemic is how individuals are moved, or not, to examine their spiritual condition.

Shortly after the 9/11 event, churches and other religious institutions' attendance increased greatly. That only lasted a little while.

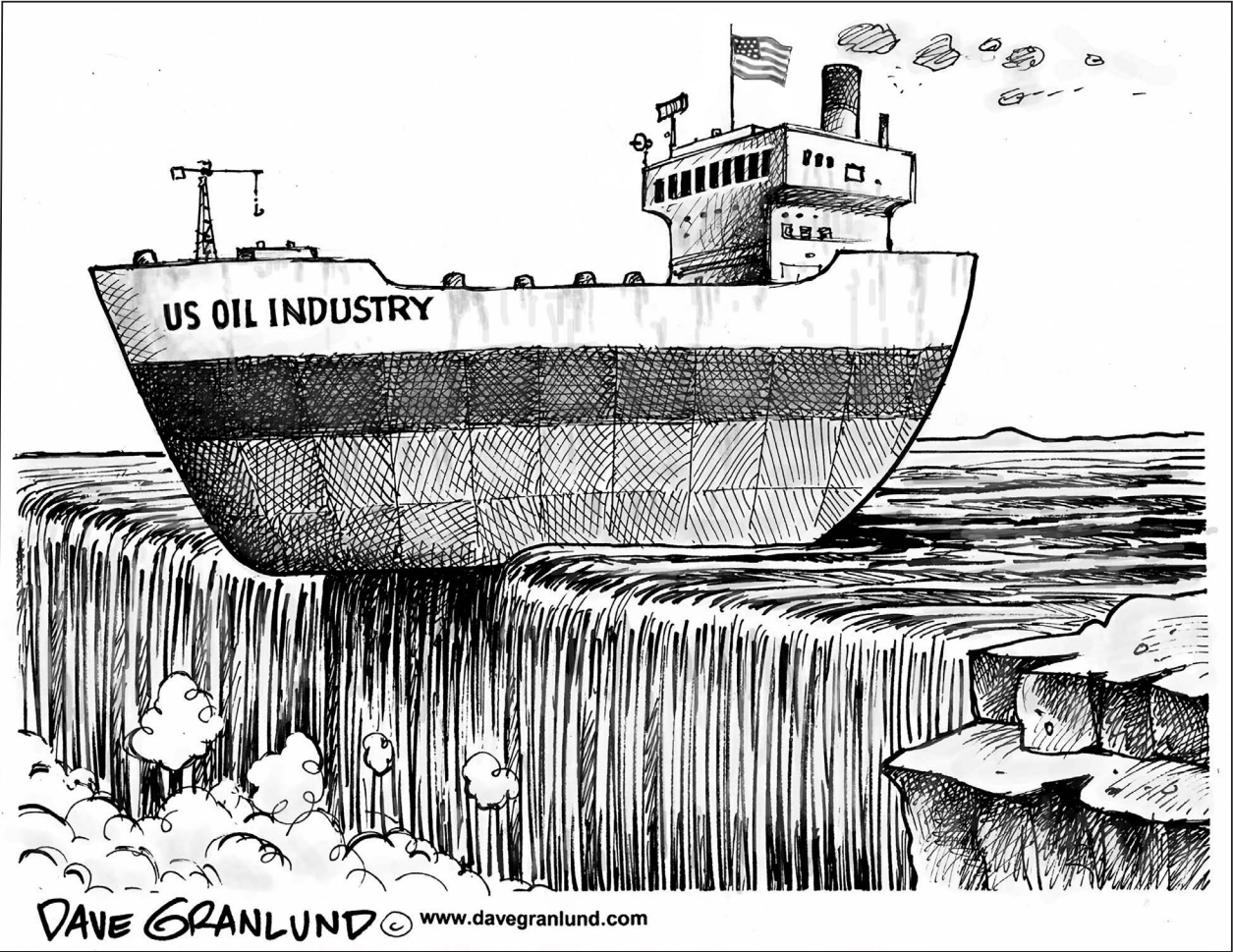
There is a deep conscious in all of us that senses when we have to look toward something that is outside of this world for comfort. Those who look to others and the government only, usually tend to develop a high degree of fear, blame and hate.

No one knows why our creator allowed this calam-

ity to happen, but rest assured he is not happy with how this country's culture is changing and going to a dark side. Some examples are the on-demand abortion, pornography, gambling, gay lifestyles, worshipping the creation instead of worshipping the creator, the attack on Christian values and our causal acceptance of all the elements of evil. Our creator is also merciful, so if we change, he will add blessings to our country.

So many people don't understand why there is evil in the world. I would recommend that we all look deeply into God's Word, the Bible. It will help us understand, if we want to understand. As it is often said, we have to "think outside the box."

Gene Hodel  
Oak Grove



## Turn to our better angels, away from partisanship

By Todd Otis and Chuck Slocum  
Guest Columnists

We are former chairs of the two major political parties in Minnesota; we care deeply about public issues. Yes, the two parties are driven by different priorities and principles, and the two of us have our strong and cordial disagreements.

But at this remarkable and agonizing time, we find ourselves in total agreement on one idea. And that is that now is absolutely not the time for nasty partisanship in the public affairs of our state or our nation. All of our elected leaders, from our president and Minnesota governor, and thousands of others, need to be guided by character and not

political expediency.

Our Anishinaabe brothers and sisters can show us the way. They have treasured the "Gifts of the Seven Grandfathers: Humility, Courage, Honesty, Wisdom, Truth, Respect and Love."

**Humility.** The awesome responsibility that elected leaders have to lead honorably and focus exclusively on the public good requires giving up the usual orientation toward re-election.

**Wisdom.** Knowing what to focus on to develop strategies and garner resources to attack the coronavirus requires great wisdom. It requires securing the public's health and regenerating the economy.

**Truth.** The solutions

we need urgently must be guided by facts, science and verifiable truth. The scope of the dangers, the effectiveness of treatments, the challenges related to developing and distributing vaccines must be unwaveringly guided by the truth.

**Honesty.** Now more than ever our citizens need to have leaders they can trust who will tell the truth. Indeed trust is the bedrock for a vibrant and effective democracy. In our adult lifetimes, trust has been eroding ever since the 1960s; 2020 is the time for our leaders to reverse what has been eroding for that last 60 years.

**Respect.** The heroes of the COVID-19 crisis are on the front lines, putting

their lives at risk to serve us all. Respect for them must be continuously and profoundly offered. Leaders must not point fingers at one another as the blame game often creates losers across the spectrum of public opinion.

**Courage.** The courage that is shown privately by doctors, nurses, public safety professionals, grocery store and other service workers, is a worthy model for all leaders.

**Love.** The spirit that "we are all in this together" is sweeping across our nation and the globe. Rather than inciting racism and xenophobia, now is the time to lead with love, understanding and forgiveness. As Rev. Martin Luther King Jr. once said, "We may have all

come on different ships, but we're in the same boat now."

We are certain that we will get through this crisis. We grieve for those who are losing their lives and livelihoods because of this cursed virus. This is a calamity for the ages. It calls upon all of us to summon our faith, hope and charity.

With leaders who demonstrate character, what is at the other end of this tunnel could literally transform our state, nation and world. We can summon our "better angels" to do that. That transformation can change the tone of public life from one of polarized recrimination to robust but respectful debate on the important issues.

We can find helpful ways to provide greater financial and health care security for millions while rebuilding our economy. And we can join hands to protect the environment and the earth. As Rev. Martin Luther King Jr. said, "We must learn to live together as brothers or perish together as fools."

Todd Otis of Minneapolis is a former state legislator and State Chair of the Minnesota DFL. Chuck Slocum of Minnetonka is a management consultant and former State Chair of the Independent-Republicans of Minnesota. They are members of the non-partisan Minnesota Council on Character.

Anoka County  
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Established 1865



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Newspaper subscriptions ..... 763-712-3544  
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**Subscriptions ..... \$45/year**

Anoka County UnionHerald Copyright © 2020 by ECM Publishers is published weekly on Friday's by ECM Publishers, 4095 Coon Rapids Blvd, Coon Rapids, MN 55433-2585. Business and Editorial Offices: 4095 Coon Rapids Blvd, Coon Rapids, MN 55433-2585. Accounting and Circulation Offices: ECM Publishers, 4095 Coon Rapids Blvd, Coon Rapids, MN 55433-2523. Call 763-712-3544 to subscribe. Periodical postage paid at St Paul, MN and additional mailing offices. (USPS 26600)

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**POSTMASTER:** Send address changes to Anoka County UnionHerald 4095 Coon Rapids Blvd, Coon Rapids, MN 55433-2523.