

Election 2020: No matter how, if eligible, please vote

Over the past few weeks, we have published an editorial series about important election issues, including race relations, police reform, health care, the COVID-19 response, the economy and climate change.

Each election contest has its own set of issues, be they local, state or national. Other issues, such as immigration, education and taxation could be added to the mix. However, this year, one issue stands apart from the others and that is the integrity of the election system itself.

Our position is that every eligible citizen should educate themselves on these important issues and then vote. We fully recognize, however, the issue is nowhere near that simple.

On the one hand, Democrats have accused the Republicans of trying to suppress the vote of some citizens the GOP thinks are mostly Democrats. On the other, the Republicans believe the Democrats are playing fast and loose with the rules, making it easier for ineligible people to vote.

Either way, distrust of the system is growing. The result is, regardless of who is declared the winner, a substantial number of Americans are not going to accept the results as legitimate.

Passions run high in every election, but we

would remind all citizens that elections are the thin line which separates all of us from the dictatorial government, tyranny and mob rule that have mostly been humankind's lot for thousands of years. Elections to government office are not popularity contests like choosing a homecoming king and queen. They are about choosing people to represent your views with honesty and integrity, people whose judgment you respect, even on those issues of which you have little knowledge.

Adding to the distrust this year is the global pandemic. The courts have been put in the unenviable position of having to change state laws unilaterally because of this health emergency. As a result, this will be the most litigated election in U.S. history; in mid-August, 154 lawsuits had been brought in 41 states and the District of Columbia.

Elections are held under state law and administered by local governments. The most foolproof way to make sure your ballot is counted is to vote at your precinct on Election Day. In 2005, the bipartisan Commission on Federal Election Reform, chaired by former President Jimmy Carter and former Secretary of State James Baker III, found "Absentee ballots remain the largest source of potential voter

fraud."

Masks, hand sanitizer and frequent wipe downs will be part of every precinct's operation. Minnesota Secretary of State Steve Simon said he is urging local government officials to "over-recruit" election judges in case the pandemic lays low those patriots scheduled to man the precincts.

However, we understand citizens who fear catching COVID or who cannot vote in person would choose to vote absentee this year. The Minnesota Secretary of State's office is encouraging citizens to vote absentee, and 1.3 million Minnesotans are expected to do so.

Minnesota law has been changed for this election to allow ballots to be counted up to seven days after Election Day. We understand the need for some delay, although it will be minimized because officials begin processing absentee ballots 14 days before Election Day. A U.S. District Court ruling has upheld this process as long as late-arriving ballots are postmarked.

That said, we encourage those who do vote absentee to do so early, to increase the chances that their vote will be counted.

Finally, your community, state and nation have prospered over time because of the wisdom of the masses who voted. We encourage

all of you to vote, of course, but even more importantly, we urge you to respect the outcome.

An opinion of the Adams Publishing - East Central Minnesota Editorial Board. Reactions welcome: Send to editorial.board@apgecm.com.

Election 2020 Key Topics Series



The APG of East Central Minnesota Editorial Board has identified four key topics that we believe are important to our readers. Over four weeks, we will present editorials on these topics and compare and contrast the positions of candidates for federal office on these issues, and what the Editorial Board recommends as the best solutions.

- The four topics are:
- Racial equity/police reform
 - Health care
 - Economy/recovery
 - Climate change/environment

We will be encouraging readers to make their own choices as they prepare to vote, but we hope this process provides important information before ballots are cast.

Throughout this series, we welcome your reactions. Please share with the board at editorial.board@apgecm.com.

MY VIEW

Just for the Record . . .

I looked out this morning and the sun was gone. Turned on some music to start my day, I lost myself in a familiar song. I closed my eyes and I slipped away.

Monday, Oct. 12 at 10:59 p.m., I was in bed but couldn't sleep. My phone rang and the caller ID said it was my brother, Bill. It made me nervous because he doesn't usually call me at that hour unless it's important.

It was important. I met Stephen Luverne Campbell when I was 11 years old. His two boys (Kris and Kory) went to the same day care as Bill and I. All of us watched with excitement while our mom and dad fell in love. We finally had a two-parent household and as a bonus, two new brothers.

Steve taught me how to shoot pool, play frisbee, to appreciate music. He also showed me how a newspaper works, how to drive a car (or the Vista Cruiser), oh my gosh. The list of things that I feel are the most important parts of me I would probably have never known if it wasn't for him being a part of my life. He was my dad because he truly wanted to be.

As I have mentioned before, I have a love for '80s music. I have seen so many live performances that it's hard to even remember them all. At almost every one that I attended, he was there with me. When I got to breathe in the same room Steve Perry was in, he was there. When Aerosmith played "Angel" perfectly, he was there. When I heard Night Ranger sing "Sister Christian," he was there. In almost all of my favorite memories of my youth, he was there.

It is also because of him that ink runs through my blood. Dad worked at a print shop in Rochester when we first met. Eventually our family owned and operated the *Pine Island Record* and ran a print shop in Pine Island. I learned typesetting, bindery (collate, staple, number, fold, etc.), the boys even learned how to run the presses.

Eventually the marriage ended in divorce. Sadly, I didn't see him much after that. I do remember well the last time, though. It was Christmas Eve quite a few years ago. I heard a knock and when I answered it, I was surprised to see him standing there at my front door, the snow falling lightly. He handed me a couple of CDs. One of them was Queensryche with a Post-It note stuck to cover to let me know which songs were the best and why. We talked for just a few minutes, he said goodbye and drove away.

Back to the phone call.

Kory had called Bill to tell him something important.

Dad had an aneurysm. He didn't recover.

I am filled with so many emotions right now that it's difficult to breathe or even to move. I am so very sad. Yet at the same moment, I am also so thankful. Thankful that I was lucky enough to know him, love him and call him dad.

Thank you, dad. For everything.

You never let me down, you're always by my side, and I'll never, never let you go...

— Steelheart

The first paragraph is from Boston's tune More Than A Feeling.



KATHY ROBB
Columnist

MORE LETTERS

Continued from 4

Consider Judge Austad in voting

Area voters this year will have the opportunity to determine the outcome of two contested Ninth Judicial Court elections, one of which involves the incumbent Judge Jana Austad.

Judge Austad was the managing attorney for the office of the State Public Defender in Brainerd for many years. In that capacity, I worked with her on many committees, trials and other court management issues. Her intellect, preparation, work ethic and dedication impressed me greatly.

In 2013, the Minnesota Judicial Selection Committee screened and recommended Judge Austad's appointment to the then-open judgeship in Cass County. The last seven years she has demonstrated herself as a hard-working, fair and impartial judge. She cares about the people who appear in court and treats all with dignity and respect.

Judge Austad has also been recognized by the other judges of the Ninth District when she was elected to the position of assistant chief judge.

I believe Judge Austad should be reelected. I hope the above information helps you in making your decision.

John Solien
district judge (retired)
Aitkin

Their future is our future

I would like to say a word of encouragement for our community and our school system in Aitkin and the surrounding county.

We are living in a time that is very "interesting." Many big problems and questions are facing our country and our individual lives every day - and yet we still have some great opportunities. Through the upcoming school levy vote we can choose to support a future where our children have safe transportation and outstanding technology tools to prepare

them for their futures. And let's be real - their future is our future. They will be the ones who inherit the opportunities and problems of our world and find solutions to issues we don't even know exist right now.

Whether you have kids in this district or not, these children are still your future and need all of our support right now. Please show our kids that you support them and their/our future - vote to pass the levy.

Jessica Perrine
Aitkin

Saving lives

This is not about Don or Joe. I guess most minds are already made up about that contest. But scan down the ballot to some races that are important to all of us as Minnesotans and as residents of the 8th District. The important names are Tina Smith and Quinn Nystrom.

We all know Senator Smith as a fighter for working people. For years she has made the high costs of health care and prescription drugs her top two priorities, fiercely advocating for generic drugs, mental health services, and to improve the availability of health care in rural areas.

Quinn Nystrom is a rising star in Minnesota politics. Like Tina, she is a strong advocate for affordable health care and prescription drugs. Quinn's opponent, Pete Stauber, has failed to honor even one single promise he made in 2018 regarding health care.

If elected, Quinn vows to continue her fight to lower costs for life-saving medications and to put forward legislation to lower out-of-pocket expenses and deductibles. She will also work to strengthen the Affordable Care Act and protect coverage for people with pre-existing conditions.

There's no doubt that the pandemic has complicated the health care landscape, but the only way through this is to work together. So, the three things we need to do to protect all Minnesotans are:

- 1) Vote Tina Smith for Sen-ate

- 2) Vote Quinn Nystrom for Congress in the 8th District and...

- 3) Wear our masks

Guy Roger
Isle

No more games

With all the appeals and arguments over the Line 3 Replacement Project, it may get lost that this project is 100% ready to go and proven necessary by the state agencies that make decisions on utility projects like these. The only thing left to do is issue the remaining permits. The only reason that has not happened is because the agencies are being pressured by activists.

It is time state agencies and their employees stopped worrying about criticism from the far left. The Line 3 Replacement Project has been ready to go for the better part of five years. This project is safe, it is necessary, and it will ensure that our state has a reliable source of oil to our refineries for years to come.

This project will put over 4,000 people to work in northern Minnesota, and it will be huge for our economy. It will bring over \$2 billion into our state and not require any taxpayer dollars. We need to worry about helping Minnesota now, and approving this project will help our state tremendously. Let's stop playing games and get this project started.

Kory and Jennifer
Anderson
Bagley

Pay it forward

Public schools rely on local, state and federal funding to operate. Without funding, districts suffer.

Aitkin Public Schools has been forced to make \$575,000 in cuts over the past few years and will continue to make cuts unless something changes. The Capital Projects Levy being proposed is a chance for our community to help support the students in Aitkin's school district.

Technology needs are the primary focus of the levy. This covers everything

from individual devices to servers, wireless networks, building security, software, data protection and more.

The integration of modern technology in teaching provides so many opportunities for our students. They will be better prepared for the workforce, higher education and becoming leaders in our community. The levy will also support the purchase and replacement of school buses and school-related transportation vehicles. We need to come together as a district and support this levy.

Some people may ask why they should support the levy because they don't have kids in school. It's your responsibility to help make our community the best it can be. At some point in your life, or your kids' lives, someone helped you. Community members who have come and gone supported your children, your relatives and your neighbors. I believe it is time for all of us to support families and education in our district.

If the levy passes, a median-value home (\$111,600) in the city of Aitkin would see a tax increase of approximately \$2 per month. This money will help the district maintain its one-to-one device program, provide access to sophisticated career and technical tools, and ensure the systems, hardware and software needed to run this technology is current and reliable. Your money will go a lot farther through the levy than if you had to purchase the necessary equipment and software on your own. Levy funds will also support the purchase of a new bus every other year.

There are 9,306 taxable property owners in the Aitkin School District, and 39% of the total property value is seasonal. All property owners in the district will contribute to a successful levy, including the 39% of recreational/non-homestead owners. If we all chip in a little bit, it will make a big difference.

Cindi Hills
Aitkin

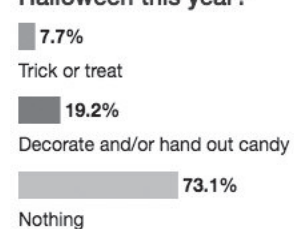
See **More Letters** page 6

online opinion poll

views from www.aitkinage.com readers

ONLINE POLL

What will you do to celebrate Halloween this year?



NEW OPINION POLL — VOTE NOW

Out of the following, which is your favorite "scary" movie?

Online polls are found at aitkinage.com. Scroll down the page and look for it in the right-hand column.

SUGGEST A POLL QUESTION

Do you have a good poll question? Send it to kat.robbs@apgecm.com