

Editorials are the institutional voice of The Free Press and independent of the newsroom reporting staff

## OUR VIEW: COVID-19

# Stay the course in combating virus

The pandemic weighs heavily on our civil society. Public frustration continues to grow with the continual sacrifices all have to make. But we should redouble our resolve and stay the course with the responses that are working to stop the spread and get us back to normal.

We need only look to the Dakotas to see what can happen when even a relatively small population ignores social distancing and such proven strategies as mask wearing.

### Why it matters:

Fighting COVID-19 is going to be a long battle, and it's important to stay the course using case data and community spread rates.

North and South Dakota, neither of which have mask mandates or other COVID restrictions, were ranked the No. 1 and 2 states where the virus is spreading fastest during the last two weeks, according to the Johns Hopkins University virus tracking data. That comes on the heels of the Sturgis motorcycle rally in South Dakota, which drew some 400,000 people, and the return to school.

South Dakota has a high positive test rate of near 17 percent, and 1,000 college students at four colleges in the two states have quarantined. The Sturgis rally spawned 300 cases in four states, according to health officials.

While virus cases spiked in the Mankato region two weeks ago after the bulk of college students moved back to town, the cases were down 50 percent last week in the nine-country region. The cases numbers were bound to spike with an influx of 16,000 students, but continued mask wearing, good compliance by people and businesses, and adherence to social distancing has likely help bring that drastic drop in the spread.

Positivity rates in the region remain in the 5 to 10 percent range. Positive tests dropped last week from 8 percent to 5 percent in the region. A mass testing event at Minnesota State University drew only 2.5 percent positives.

Health officials still warn that the amount of spreading from unknown community sources may be coming from family gatherings, such as weddings and funerals. The rate of community spread is still hovering around 30 percent, a rate health officials say can be a precursor to rapid spread that will be more difficult to contain.

So many of the measures Minnesota has put in place are working to reduce the positivity rates and cases. Hospitalization rates have been flat. Battling COVID will not doubt continue to be frustrating and trying, but without continued vigilance, we will only go backward.

## OTHER VIEW

### Time to put principles over party

By Sada Cumber  
Austin American-Statesman

From the moment of George Washington's inaugural address in 1789, it has been clear that the American president was more than a head of state or commander in chief. The president sets the moral tone for our nation. I first fell in love with America because of that moral tone, offering things I could not find in my birth country of Pakistan: Genuine democracy, rule of law, basic human rights, equal access to justice, and a strong civil society, among others.

Now that is under threat. After three and a half years of the current administration, American politics reminds me more of the country I left and less of the country I adopted, and that adopted me. For the majority of America's 244 years, we have had the luxury of conflating the presidency and the president because leaders who understood the importance, the meaning, and the sacred trust of their position occupied the Oval Office. That is no longer the case.

Unlike many "Never Trumpers," I find some constructive accomplishments in the president's record. I

don't believe every foreign policy or national security decision made by the current administration has been wrong, though many of them certainly are.

However, we've reached a point where that no longer matters. This is not about policy; it is about principles. Trump's behavior and attitudes undermine American democracy and erode confidence in the political process. Growing up in my country of birth, I witnessed the dangers posed by radicals on both ends of the political spectrum and by governments who coddle and enable them for short-term and private political gain.

Rather than a sacred charge and symbol of all that is great about the United States, our current president views the presidency as a plaything for satisfying his whims, a cudgel for beating the apparently endless list of those he considers his enemies and detractors.

*Cumber was George W. Bush's ambassador and special envoy to the Organization of Islamic Cooperation, a former adviser to the National Security Agency and office of the Director of National Intelligence. He lives in Austin.*

### Moms Deal with the New Stresses of the COVID Years

OFF TO SCHOOL! MY PRECIOUS BABY!  
EXPOSED TO THE VIRUS!  
KEEP SAFE! WEAR YOUR MASK!  
WASH YOUR HANDS!  
STAY AWAY FROM OTHER KIDS!  
THERE'S DANGER!  
DANGER!

MOM. SHHH. YOU'LL START A PANIC!



DANZIGER The Rutland Herald Washington Post Writers Group Sep 11 2020(9163)

# Respecting anthem respects veterans

The American Legion Department of Minnesota recognizes the nation's divisions are laid bare during a difficult year for all Americans, and we hope to explain why the national anthem should not be the time and place for kneeling or other forms of protest.

The playing of the national anthem, "The Star-Spangled Banner," is intended as a time for unity. It is a time when we can be one United States of America.

After all, despite divisions over race, criminal justice, employment, health care, economy, elections and, of course, contentious partisan rhetoric, we, as Americans, all want the same thing — a more perfect union.

The song's history at sports contests dates back to the seventh-inning stretch of Game One of the 1918 World Series in Chicago. The World War I death count was at 100,000, and a day before a bomb had exploded

in the Windy City, killing four and injuring dozens.



MARK DVORAK  
My View

Like now, America was in turmoil. The Chicago Cubs decided to play "The Star-Spangled Banner" during their contest with the Boston Red Sox at Weeghman Park, now Wrigley Field. The song became the national anthem in 1931, and playing it before sporting events grew and especially proliferated during World

War II. This tradition of a moment of oneness and national pride continued after the war. Like the word "United" in our country's name, this solemn time allowed us to reflect and put away our differences.

It pains us, as veterans, to see time for honoring the flag become politicized because so many of us have risked our lives or died for this country, so that we may secure the

blessings of liberty — such as free speech and the constant back-and-forth dialogue on important issues of the day.

We aren't opposed to improving the lives of America's people, no matter race, ethnicity, gender or politics. Veterans served with people of all backgrounds and were willing to die for them. Wear whichever message you wish to convey. Support whichever cause you desire. Push for change. That's America.

But, for brief moments in our lives, let's recognize that there are brothers and sisters, aunts and uncles, mothers and fathers, grandfathers and grandmothers, sons and daughters, who have given their lives for this nation. Respecting the flag respects them.

*Mark Dvorak is the Department of Minnesota commander for The American Legion. He is a member of New Prague Post 45.*

## YOUR VIEW

### What would Hitler have done about virus?

In these turbulent times we are so lucky to have a president like Donald Trump, a law-and-order candidate who wants to make America great again.

I think of an earlier historic leader whose themes were law and order and

make Germany great again. I wonder what that leader would have done if faced with the virus we now have. Warned by his advisors of this deadly

threat that would adversely affect the elderly, the people with underlying health

conditions, and minority communities that live in crowded surroundings and need to work in spite of dangerous conditions.

We are so lucky that Donald Trump, when given these same warnings, chose not to ask us

to do things that we did not want to do. He told us what we wanted to hear.

We need to turn out in droves on Nov. 3 and make America great again.

*Patrick Duenwald  
St. Peter*

# Life as a continuing resolution

WASHINGTON — Washington's NFL team, until recently known as the Redskins, is seeking a less insensitive name, and one appropriate for the nation's capital. The name should be: the Continuing Resolutions.

The eight syllables are clunky, but so is the federal government, which finds a fundamental task of governing — passing a budget — too arduous to do more than intermittently. Such heavy legislative lifting is generally too much for an election year. Or a year before an election year. And those are the only kinds of years there are.

The Senate Appropriations Committee has passed none of this fiscal year's 12 funding bills, so, to prevent the unseemliness of a government shutdown as Election Day approaches — and as the pandemic death toll approaches 200,000 — a continuing resolution will probably be passed by Oct. 1, the beginning of the next fiscal year. Treasury Secretary Steven Mnuchin suggests a CR enabling the government to keep on keeping on with things as they are "through the beginning of December." Then there probably will be another CR, to get the country to the next one.

Elsewhere in today's improvisational government, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention's behavior has become notably muscular. The CDC's name denotes a specific mission that this agency cannot be entirely blamed for not having altogether mastered. Controlling diseases involves medicines, social protocols (e.g., "social distancing") and, suddenly, a sweeping excision from property rights: The CDC has this month asserted a power to prohibit — through the end of 2020, but actually for as long as the CDC deems "necessary" — the eviction of private

tenants from privately owned residences because of unpaid rent. This, even though eviction levels have been below normal during the lockdown.

The CDC's order protects tenants earning up to \$99,000 — almost quadruple the official poverty line of \$26,200 for a family of four. Or, for those filing joint tax returns, tenants earning up to \$198,000, who are in the top quintile

of U.S. households. Tenants must inform their landlords in writing that they have sought government assistance, that they have lost income or received substantial uncompensated medical expenses, and that eviction would render them homeless or would result in their living elsewhere "in close quarters." Noncompliant landlords can be fined up to \$100,000 and incarcerated for up to a year.

Congress is, as usual, a bystander. A regulation promulgated by the executive branch grants vast — almost limitless, the CDC clearly thinks — discretion to an executive branch bureaucrat, the CDC director, when acting to contain any "communicable" disease, such as a seasonal flu, spread by "infectious agents." If the director deems state regulations "insufficient," he or she may "take such measures to prevent such spread of the diseases as he/she deems reasonably necessary, including inspection, fumigation, disinfection, sanitation, pest extermination, and destruction of animals or articles believed to be sources of infection."

And, if today's director is correct, the director is authorized to curtail some property rights and abrogate some contracts nationwide, to suspend some state laws and strip state courts of jurisdiction in eviction cas-

es. The authority for this regulation is presumably — and this presumption is the foundation of constitutional government — somehow traceable back to an implied (it certainly is not explicit) constitutional delegation of power. But how does this empower an executive branch agency to overturn state laws governing contracts?

As Josh Blackman notes, the six categories of actions that are enumerated in the regulation (inspections, fumigations, etc.) are narrow policies targeting specific anti-infection measures "in a single building or location." Blackman, professor at South Texas College of Law Houston and adjunct scholar at the Cato Institute, notes that the CDC has lunged far beyond such measures, and beyond the principles of the separation of powers in the federal government, and principles of federalism in the allocation of federal and state powers.

The CDC presents all this as just another anti-infection protocol. Try, however, to imagine an activity or legal arrangement that the CDC, citing the regulation, could not overturn by fiat in the context of even a seasonal infectious disease such as the flu. Ilya Somin, law professor at George Mason University and another Cato adjunct scholar, notes: "Pretty much any economic transaction or movement of people and goods could potentially spread disease in some way."

Come January — unless the fourth branch of government, aka the CDC, wants to extend the eviction moratorium — back rent will presumably come due. Then Congress, remembering that it is technically one of the branches, might recompense tenants who owe five (or more) months' rent. If this can be tacked onto a continuing resolution.

*George Will's email address is georgewill@washpost.com.*

FOUNDED IN 1887

# The Free Press

1st Amendment: Congress shall make no law respecting an establishment of religion, or prohibiting the free exercise thereof; or abridging the freedom of speech, or of the press; or the right of the people peaceably to assemble, and to petition the Government for a redress of grievances.

STEVE JAMESON, Publisher

### EDITORIAL MANAGEMENT

JOSEPH SPEAR, Managing Editor  
KATHY VOS, News Editor  
TIM KROHN, Business Editor  
PAT CHRISTMAN, Photo Editor  
CHAD COURRIER, Sports Editor

### BUSINESS MANAGEMENT

JUSTIN NILES, Audience Development Director  
GLEN ASLESON, Facilities & Technology Director  
TODD BROUWER, Press/Post Press Manager  
DEB PETTERSON, General Manager - The Land

### LETTERS POLICY

The Free Press welcomes letters on any issue of general community interest. Please limit your letters to no more than 275 words, type-written or clearly printed. Letters or emails citing facts that are not commonly known should include the source. Letters must contain the author's name, address and phone number for verification. All letters will be edited for clarity, grammar, spelling and space. You may email letters to the editor to editor@mankatofreepress.com