

# Editorials

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Lampasas Dispatch Record

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## Letters

### Solutions needed for gasoline crisis

An open letter to U.S. Rep. Mike Conaway:

Recently I wrote you concerning our skyrocketing fuel prices. Your reply contained two pages of posturing words but did not address one single reason our fuel prices are rising.

What you refused to address that would go far in reducing our fuel prices:

- We must build new refineries. We have not built one in more than 30 years. This is because Congress will not stand up to the hysterical, mendacious propaganda of environmental wackos. We can have all the oil in the world, but if we cannot refine it we have shortages.

- We must drill our own oil. We must drill in ANWR and offshore. Once again, a cowardly Congress will not stand up to environmental extremists. As a result, we are held hostage by the Middle East. We also are financing both sides of the Middle East war, which constitutes treason on the part of Congress.

- We must build nuclear power plants, something we haven't done in 30 years.

While alternate power sources are important and must be explored, those solutions are far in the future. We must develop shorter-term solutions such as are listed above, or our economy will be destroyed precisely because of congressional incompetence.

Another thing you can do now to help your constituents is suspend the federal gasoline tax. I realize the politician's argument against this is that these funds are for highways. However, that is untrue. Just as Congress has taken all the money from Social Security for non-related, wasteful spending, pork-barrel projects and new programs, you have done exactly the same thing with highway funds. You constantly rail against "the obscene profits oil companies get." The fact is oil companies make 8 cents a gallon of gas, while federal, state and other taxes on gasoline constitute about 50 cents a gallon. I think it is time to curtail the obscene profits greedy politicians get from gasoline taxes. As least oil companies produce fuel. All Congress produces is lies. My vehicle doesn't run on lies.

Now, you did try to do something to ease the gasoline shortage. You diverted corn to use as fuel. As a result, gasoline prices have not been affected, but food and livestock feed prices have risen dramatically. Some food products are even being rationed. You also have banned incandescent light bulbs. The bulbs you mandated in their place are more expensive and hazardous to the environment.

It is clear to me that rather than changing the bulbs in my house I need to change the incompetent dim bulbs in Congress.

Donald N. Baker

### Personal vendetta against resident

This is an open letter to the citizens of Adamsville and Lampasas.

For years I've watched a very dear friend and his family be victimized by the "bureaucrats" in our fair township and county. This man always has been fair, honest and generous to everyone. He is a family man and all his friends know he is always available to help, no matter what.

J.W. puts the needs of others above his own. He took my family in when no one else would. Yet, since he doesn't act like or look like society dictates, and his yard doesn't conform to the perfect standards as set forth by certain people, it was decided to make an example of him. What started as a personal grudge has turned into a vendetta against this man.

J.W. makes an honest living hauling scrap. This hard work enables him to care for his family. Evidently, this is wrong, according to some folks.

I suppose it is more important to certain people (and you know who I am talking to; you should be ashamed!) to look good, dress nice, have a nice house and "fit in." If you don't, you are an outcast. If you are friends with the outcast, you are shunned as well.

My question is this: If you have an out-of-the-ordinary business, are you next? If you worship differently, will you become a social leper? Fat, old, short?

I have a special-needs child. Is he next because his parents don't follow social rules? Will he be shunned for not "fitting in"? Ask yourselves, people: Are you next? Is doing your very best not quite good enough for the rich and powerful, "all-perfect" powers that be? Will you be railroaded because you dare go against what they think you should be?

Let your voices be heard! If they did it to J.W., they will do it again.

I say again his friends should be proud to be his friends, and the "judges" who have their noses in the air should take a look in the mirror and be ashamed.

One last question to those in Adamsville: What would Charles Conley have thought of you?

Judith M. Waller  
Adamsville

### From the Bible

"Oh, the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God! How unsearchable are His judgments and unfathomable His ways!"

Romans 11:33



### Zimbabwe illustrates the liberal antipathy for empire

For decades the rap, as administered by good Western liberals, had an eerie sameness: Imperialists bad; freedom fighters, good. Out of there, you smug, gold-laced Churchillian types with your topees and your gin and tonics. Out of India! Out of Africa! Out! Out!

Nor did American liberals alone make up the chorus. Plenty of Brits declaimed against their overseas fiefdoms. Worn-down Frenchmen and Dutchmen called for withdrawal from the plains and jungles of empire. Empire, as we'd say nowadays, was so over. The glorious dawn of independence was at hand, bathing in its lustrous rays ... well, for Robert Mugabe, among others.

Robert Mugabe: exalted oppressor of the Zimbabwean people, jailer of opponents, suppressor of every human right known to man and then some. Robert Mugabe, all-round tyrant, despot and jerk, as well as unwitting generator of a certain nostalgia for the bad old days of topees and gin and tonics.

Maybe, after all, we think, watching Zimbabwe's plunge into the Dark Ages, amid economic ruin and the shutdown of civil liberties, black isn't automatically the color of virtue, nor white the color of viciousness. Maybe the old empires, which certainly had their demerits, had, as well, some good points. For one thing, they'd allow you a fair trial.

Western liberal antipathy for empire and, at one time, the white-ruled relics of empire — e.g., South Africa and Rhodesia — never had much discernment about it. The supposition was that when the colonial masters got kicked out, or left of their own accord, native successors to power would initiate the reign of freedom and justice and love. It's been, here and there, a little messier than that, a little rockier.

Zimbabwe isn't the only example, but it's a good one. After Britain, the former colonial authority in Rhodesia helped peel power away from Ian Smith's rebel white regime, and Robert Mugabe governed for a time with some success. Then he decided to become president for life. Autocracy descended, as did hunger and imprisonment. He seized the productive farmlands of the country's then-wealthy whites. Racial mythology protected him. He was black and, as the New York Times called him last week, "a revered liberation hero." The whites were, well, white.

Not that whites were Mugabe's most conspicuous victims; blacks were, too — blacks like himself. Whites had the money and motive to flee; not so the



William Murchison

blacks he had killed or thrown in prison, or whom he shut out of power for demanding what had been represented to them as their lawful human rights.

White liberals abroad kept largely quiet. It was so embarrassing: A black oppressing blacks! — and, with the implied acquiescence of other black African leaders happy to cut some slack for a revered liberation hero. Until now, that is. Now, when widely acknowledged as the author of all Zimbabwe's problems — including an inflation rate of 2 million percent — and the brazen theft of the most recent presidential election — Mugabe seems to be wearing out his international welcome.

Kenyan President Raila Odinga calls recent developments in Zimbabwe "a shame and an embarrassment to Africa in the eyes of the international community." He calls on the African Union "to send troops to Zimbabwe" and restore order and justice.

A good idea, one would think. There's one more good idea. It's to cut the racial component out of political discourse.

If we're all for freedom and justice — we are, aren't we? — it hardly makes sense to judge in racial terms, and racial terms alone, the bona fides of this or that government, this or that ruler. We're past that, aren't we? Or where would Barack Obama stand in the electoral pecking order?

Of course, old habits die hard. A Western liberal prone to excusing revered liberation heroes on the slightest grounds doesn't automatically abandon the habit — the habit that goes with slinging and slandering white "imperialists." Not rational. Not useful in the full securing of human rights. But so Western liberal, don't you know?

William Murchison is a senior fellow of the Texas Public Policy Foundation and a columnist with *Creators Syndicate*.

## Write your representatives

Let your voice be heard on important issues by contacting your elected officials regularly.

#### AUSTIN:

The Hon. Rick Perry  
Governor's Office  
P.O. Box 12428  
Capitol Station  
Austin, TX 78711  
(512)463-2000  
Fax: (512)463-1849

The Hon. Troy Fraser  
Texas Senate  
P.O. Box 12068  
Austin, TX 78711  
(512)463-0124  
Fax: (512)475-3732  
E-mail: troy.fraser@senate.state.tx.us

The Hon. Jimmie Don Aycock  
Texas House of Representatives  
P.O. Box 2910  
Austin, TX 78768-2910  
(512)463-0684  
Fax: (512)482-8284  
E-mail: jimmie.aycock@house.state.tx.us

#### WASHINGTON:

The Hon. George W. Bush  
The White House  
Washington, D.C. 20500  
(202)456-1414  
Fax: (202)456-2461  
E-mail: president@whitehouse.gov

The Hon. Kay Bailey Hutchison  
U.S. Senate  
284 Russell Senate Office Building  
Washington, D.C. 20510  
(202)224-5922  
Fax: (202)224-0776  
www.hutchison.senate.gov

The Hon. John Cornyn  
U.S. Senate  
517 Hart Senate Office Building  
Washington, D.C. 20510  
(202)224-2934 Fax: (202)228-2856  
www.cornyn.senate.gov

The Hon. Mike Conaway  
U.S. House of Representatives  
c/o Llano Regional Office  
104 W. Sandstone  
Llano, TX 78643  
(325)247-2826 Fax: (325)247-2676  
www.conaway.house.gov

Linda Chavez



### Reagan's city on a hill

There are few places in the world that beckon to those who share no common blood or history, but America has done so for centuries. It is one of the things that defines this great country. In celebrating the 232nd birthday of our nation this July, it is worth recalling what Ronald Reagan said about the promise the United States holds out to so many.

In his farewell address, President Reagan said: "I've spoken of the shining city all my political life, but I don't know if I ever quite communicated what I saw when I said it. In my mind it was a tall, proud city built on rocks stronger than oceans, wind-swept, God-blessed, and teeming with people of all kinds living in harmony and peace; a city with free ports that hummed with commerce and creativity. And if there had to be city walls, the walls had doors, and the doors were open to anyone with the will and the heart to get here."

Jason Riley, a member of the Wall Street Journal's editorial board, quotes President Reagan's words in his new book, "Let Them In: The Case for Open Borders, Six Common Arguments Against Immigration and Why They Are Wrong." Like Reagan, Riley is an optimist, one who sees the United States as a land of unlimited opportunity and potential. It's a view in short supply lately but worth thinking about as we celebrate our nation's founding.

Riley's book will infuriate those who want to see America close her doors, throw up barriers and shrink in size. Perhaps his most important contribution is exposing the origins of the modern immigration-restriction movement, whose founders come out of radical environmentalist and population-control groups. "Anti-immigrant sentiment coming from the political right tends to dominate the headlines, but the environmental left has always played a central role in efforts to tighten the U.S. border. For restrictionist greens, though, the main issue isn't the economy or even homeland security. It's the human species," he says.

But as Riley points out, people aren't a problem. In fact, people constitute the nation's real wealth, even those who don't seem likely candidates to fill that role. Riley argues that low-skilled immigrants are an asset, not a threat, filling niches in our economy that make us both more efficient and richer. "This isn't about immigrants displacing Americans in the labor force," he says. "It's about foreign workers coming here to fill jobs that the natives don't want because they've got better opportunities."

Take agriculture. Americans are not filling the jobs left vacant because of recent crackdowns on illegal workers, so growers are relocating south of the border. "The reality is that U.S. companies will either grow food domestically that is harvested by foreign workers," Riley writes, "or import food harvested by foreign workers."

Of course, not all immigrants are low-skilled farm workers. Riley reports on one study that found between 1991 and 2006, immigrants started an amazing 25 percent of all U.S. public companies that were backed by venture capital, and these companies' market capitalization exceeded a half-trillion dollars. And the foreign-born swell our engineering, science, computer and math programs at the undergraduate and graduate level, as well.

Riley also tackles the myth that immigrants aren't assimilating. Today we worry about Mexicans and Guatemalans, but not so long ago it was Germans, Italians and the Irish who were sure would never become Americans. As Riley points out, the Irish immigrants of the 19th century (my great-grandparents among them) were "dirt-poor peasants back home. ...Most were uneducated. Many spoke no English. ...They were stereotyped as slow-witted drunks and ne'er-do-wells who would never acculturate to America."

Yet they did become Americans — as has every group, no matter where they came from. That is the wonder of America, that we can transform the most unpromising of newcomers. And within a generation or two, they are indistinguishable in all important aspects from those whose families have been here since the founding. We shouldn't give up on this great American ideal. Ronald Reagan never did.

Linda Chavez is a columnist with *Creators Syndicate*.

### Letters Policy

The *Lampasas Dispatch Record* encourages letters from readers. They should be to the point, typed if possible and signed. Address and telephone numbers also should be included for verification purposes. Only one letter per writer will be considered in a 60-day period. Letters should stick with issues and not be personal attacks. Letters endorsing a particular position on issues of local interest will be accepted, however letters endorsing a candidate for political office will not. We reserve the right to edit for length, content and potentially libelous statements. Write to Letters to the Editor, P.O. Box 631, Lampasas, TX 76550. Or email letters@lampasasdispatchrecord.com.