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FIRST AMENDMENT TO THE U.S. CONSTITUTION

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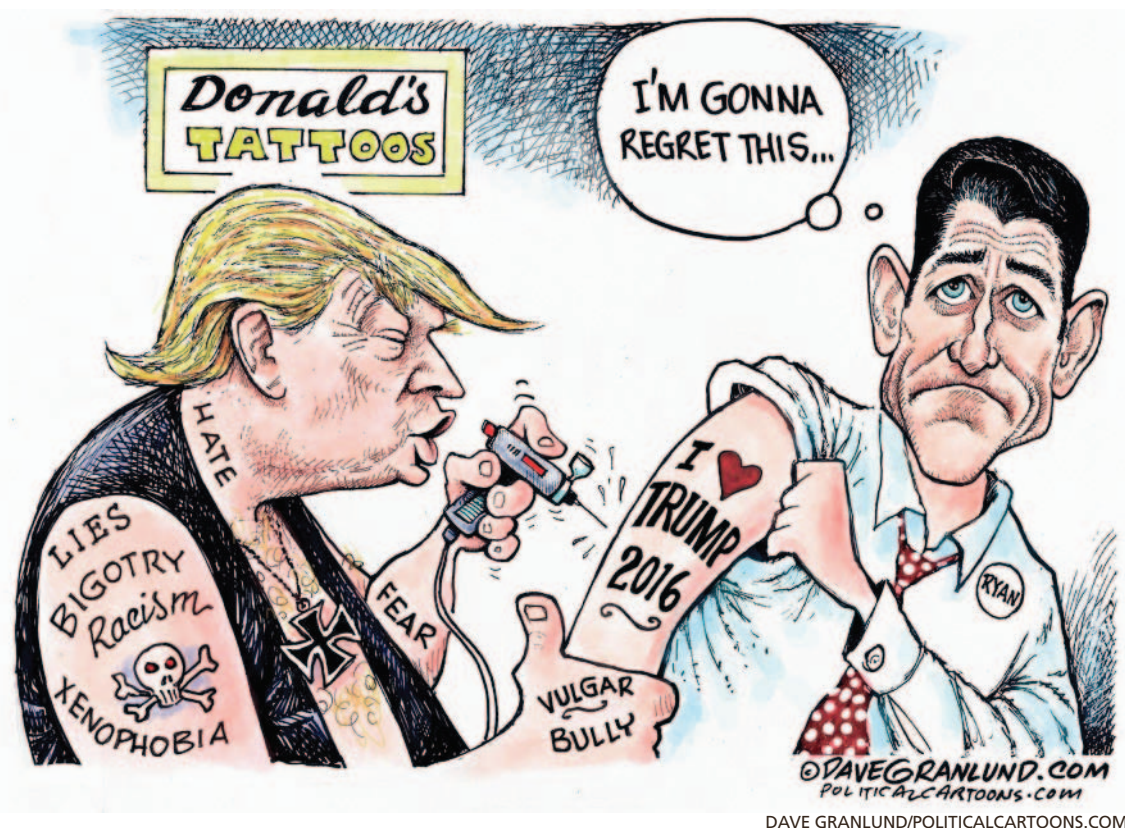
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POLITICS

Clinton delivers a winner; Ryan chases wild pitches

Hillary Clinton gave the speech about Donald Trump that, with a few changes, House Speaker Paul Ryan could have given. And he should have.

With her address, she assumed the role of the Democratic presidential nominee, even if the delegate numbers hadn't quite ratified that yet.

Instead of sticking to his vaunted principles, Ryan forged a link between the Republican Party and Donald Trump that may endure in public consciousness long after this campaign is over.

There will be some brave dissenters, especially among Republicans and conservatives who do not hold elected office (and former presidents named Bush).

But party leaders have decided that Trump's nativism and racism, his utter disrespect for the judicial system, his soft spot for foreign dictators and his latent authoritarianism matter far less to them than holding on to the House and the Senate. It will be up to the voters to decide how big a price Ryan, Mitch McConnell & Co. should pay for this.

Remember the date: Thursday, June 2, 2016. It will be seen as the day when the choice facing us in this election was finally clarified.

Clinton's speech did nothing more (or less) than show how ridiculous and self-destructive it would be for a democratic superpower to elect Trump as president. Not only did the emperor emerge with no clothes. The very idea of him as a head of state of any kind became laughable.

There were no punches pulled as Clinton came up with one sound bite after another to capture who Trump is and what he does — "dangerously incoherent," "bizarre rants," "personal feuds," "outright lies."

More tellingly, she shredded his standing by doing the most effective kind of negative campaigning where Trump is concerned: She quoted or accurately paraphrased him, over and over. Two of the best lines: "He says he has foreign policy experience because he ran the Miss Universe Pageant in Russia," and, "You know, there's no risk of people losing their lives if you blow up a golf course deal."

And also this: "I will leave it to the psychiatrists to explain his affection for tyrants."

By going back several times to Trump's apparent love affair with dictators, Clinton sent a larger message. Alongside her vast inventory of absurd Trumpisms, Clinton offered a contrast between her view of the United States and Trump's. She is an optimist who believes in our country's present, its future and its role in the world. He is a pessimist who seems to think that only strongman, Putin-inspired leadership can save us from the abyss.



E.J. Dionne

Here is the key thought:

"He believes America is weak, an embarrassment. He called our military a disaster. He said we are — and I quote — 'a Third World country.' ... Those are the words, my friends, of someone who doesn't understand America or

the world. ... If you really believe America is weak, with our military, our values, our capabilities that no other country comes close to matching, then you don't know America. And you certainly don't deserve to lead it."

This passage explains why none of Trump's Republican foes could give Clinton's speech — positively Reaganesque in its patriotic embrace of American exceptionalism — at a point during the primaries when Trump might have been stopped.

During President Obama's tenure, Republicans, Ryan included, became deeply committed to describing a country in ruinous decline. They insisted that we had lost our core values; that Obama had radically undermined an economy that, in fact, he had helped rebuild; and that our nation was under the control of forces so alien that we needed to "take it back."

Trump, coarsely but unsparingly, has given voice to the extreme hopelessness that has gripped such a broad swath of the Republican electorate — egged on in its anxieties by its more conventional leaders.

Thus Ryan's appalling but entirely predictable capitulation. His sunny personality conveys optimism. But the House speaker knows the band he leads in Congress includes many who have been selling Trumpian despair out of conviction and scores of others who pretend to an unrelenting gloom because this is the attitude their primary voters demand of them.

And so Ryan and his colleagues will now be stuck defending an indefensible man even as Hillary Clinton occupies Lincoln's high ground in proclaiming our country as "the last best hope of Earth."

There is, however, this: Many who say they support Trump will be praying quietly and fervently for Clinton to prevail. Ryan may be among them.

E.J. Dionne's email address is ejdionne@washpost.com.

VALLEY VOICE

The working poor work even harder during summertime

As many valley residents make plans for extended vacations to escape the heat, it is easy to forget that for most of the people who live in the valley, there is no "away." Poor working families work here year-round, many at part-time, minimum-wage jobs with no benefits and definitely no vacation time. If they leave the valley they lose the money they need to pay rent, buy food and support their families. Even when they stay, they are often laid off from seasonal jobs and have to rely on other part-time work.

According to the most recent survey by HARC, 48.7 percent, or 34,595, of the Coachella Valley's children live in families who earn 100 percent or less of the amount established as the Federal Poverty Level. That's \$24,250 gross income for a family of four. That's less than \$2000 a month for everything a family of four needs: rent, food, clothing, medical and dental costs, utilities, gas, car repairs and any emergency that comes up.

Most of these families have less than \$500 in savings at any given time and could not meet a sudden emergency. Additionally, during the brutal desert summers, air conditioning bills skyrocket and subsidized school lunch programs stop. Thus every summer, poor working families pay more in utilities and more for food at home just when many of them have been laid off or are working reduced hours. So, Disneyland and the beach just aren't options. These families are surviving, not thriving.

The working poor are the backbone of the service industry that supports this resort economy. They are also our health care workers, office assistants, dog groomers, manicurists and gas station attendants. They represent every walk of life that keeps this valley running.

Nonprofit agencies throughout the valley such as Jewish Family Service, Sal-



Maureen Forman

vation Army, Catholic Charities and Find Food Bank receive calls every day from the working poor.

A young father cannot afford to fix his car so that he can get to his job as an auto mechanic.

A young woman caring for her mother with cancer can't pay for her mother's new medication.

A family of four is eating from the local food bank and going to the mall to cool off in the late afternoons.

A father has fallen off a roof on the job and has no income until Workers' Compensation is settled.

A single mother is being evicted because her apartment is being turned into condos for tourists.

A family's mobile home park is being converted to a seniors-only park and they must move.

So as summer once again sets in like a sledge hammer — smile, tip well, say thank you, and support the businesses that keep staff on year round. (Note: There is a wonderful little hardware store in Palm Desert who figured out a long time ago that it is smarter to keep good staff on all summer than to hire new folks in the fall. That's a model that helps stabilize our valley — Bravo!) And please, if you can, contribute to or volunteer at the non-profit agencies that are the last resort of the working poor.

Remember, we can't make this valley work without each other.

Remember, we can't make this valley work without each other.

Email Maureen Forman, executive director of Jewish Family Service of the Desert, at mforman@jfsdesert.org.

SHARE YOUR VIEWS

The Desert Sun welcomes guest columns addressing local political and social issues.

General guidelines include:

- » Columns should be 500 to 550 words.
- » We print the author's photo and contact info (typically an email address) with the column.
- » Anonymous columns are never published.
- » Stick to a single topic and avoid personal attacks.
- » We reserve the right to edit and republish (including electronically) all columns.

Direct column submissions and questions to Al Franco, engagement editor/opinion, at al.franco@desertsun.com

YOUR VOICE

Principal Ramirez is right

I just finished reading about a wonderful and disciplinarian principal. If only ALL principals were as he was, our schools would achieve 96 percent graduation and 2.9 percent dropout rates. I believe all schools — grammar, middle and high — should adhere to a "no cellphone policy."

I just heard of a "weak" new principal in the valley, whose students basically do as they please. There are no rules and discipline is on the side of the students and their parents AND, the teachers are questioned as to their rules in the classroom.

All schools in this valley need a Rudy Ramirez.

D.J. McCorkle, Rancho Mirage

Making IID's case

The article by Sammy Roth

on Imperial Irrigation District trying to keep energy costs down for its customers ignores a couple of inconvenient truths.

First, there is not a single solar plant in this country, of any type of technology, that would have been built without a taxpayer-funded subsidy. And if built, would not operate without a government mandate that the energy from the plant would be purchased by the local utility at a price higher than the utility paid from all other sources.

The pro-solar guys may admit (reluctantly) that this might be true, but it is our solemn duty to reduce the CO2 emissions that would occur if the solar plants were not built. This brings me to the second inconvenient truth.

If the United States were to eliminate all CO2 emissions tomorrow (and I mean every

source, including power plants, cars, refineries, etc) within four years the global CO2 level would be back to what it is today due to the Chinese emissions alone.

I know that our government has announced a diplomatic victory in getting the Chinese to agree to stop increasing their emissions by 2035, but I think that is wishful thinking. In any case, it demonstrates the futility of condemning California industry to the highest cost of electrical energy in the country.

Mark Dusbabek,
La Quinta

A poor choice

I have been a Desert Sun subscriber for 14 years and an L.A. Times subscriber for 21 years. Never have I been so disappointed in The Desert

Sun for an article that should not have been on the front page.

The headline was "Watch the police beating that cost Indio \$140,000."

My children read the newspaper every morning with me. We discuss current issues, which school friend has made the local news, laugh at the comics.

This morning was different. I put the paper away and we did not read it together.

Since when is it OK to watch someone being brutalized? Since when is it OK to publicize how to see this brutalization?

In this world of sharing and viewing everything, there has been desensitization of what should be shared and seen.

There is no value in sharing it with the public. Decisions have already been made for consequences for the officers

involved. No matter how many times the video is viewed by the public, those opinions will not be changed.

Desert Sun, you are better than this. Leave the glamorization of police brutality videos for the evening news or TMZ.

Gillian Jones,
La Quinta

SEND YOUR LETTER

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