

Standard online reader survey



Q: Who do you blame for the government shutdown?

- **Democrats** 46%
- **Republicans** 6%
- **The president** 24%
- **All of Congress** 24%

GUEST COLUMNIST

Public notices should remain in newspapers

Each year a few elected officials will sponsor a law or an ordinance to change the way the voters who elected them are notified about actions government wishes to take. 2018 will be no exception.

Generally, our officials say, the proposed changes are to make government notices, and the legally required notices for property foreclosures, bankruptcies or unclaimed property, less expensive to publish.

"Anybody can see them on our government website," they proclaim, "and we will save taxpayers money."

But that's not the whole story, is it?

Bureaucrats, like just about all of us, really don't want to be bothered. They want to do their job as they think it ought to be done, and they would rather not have to answer your questions before they go ahead and do what they want.

Open government is hard work, requiring public servants to actively publicize what they intend to do, and to suffer through the debate, both educated and ill-informed, that might ensue.

The framers of our government recognized the challenge. In 1789, the first Congress required all bills, orders, resolutions and

votes be published in at least three papers. Tennessee's constitution, approved seven years later, required the Legislature to publish any amendments proposed by the General Assembly.

And newspapers have been dedicated to their role in holding our government accountable ever since. It is a role our readers, if not our elected officials, still appreciate.

In November, Mason-Dixon Polling and Strategy asked Tennesseans: "Do you believe state and local government should or should not be required to publish public notices by your local newspaper on a regular basis?" — 79 percent responded governments should be required.

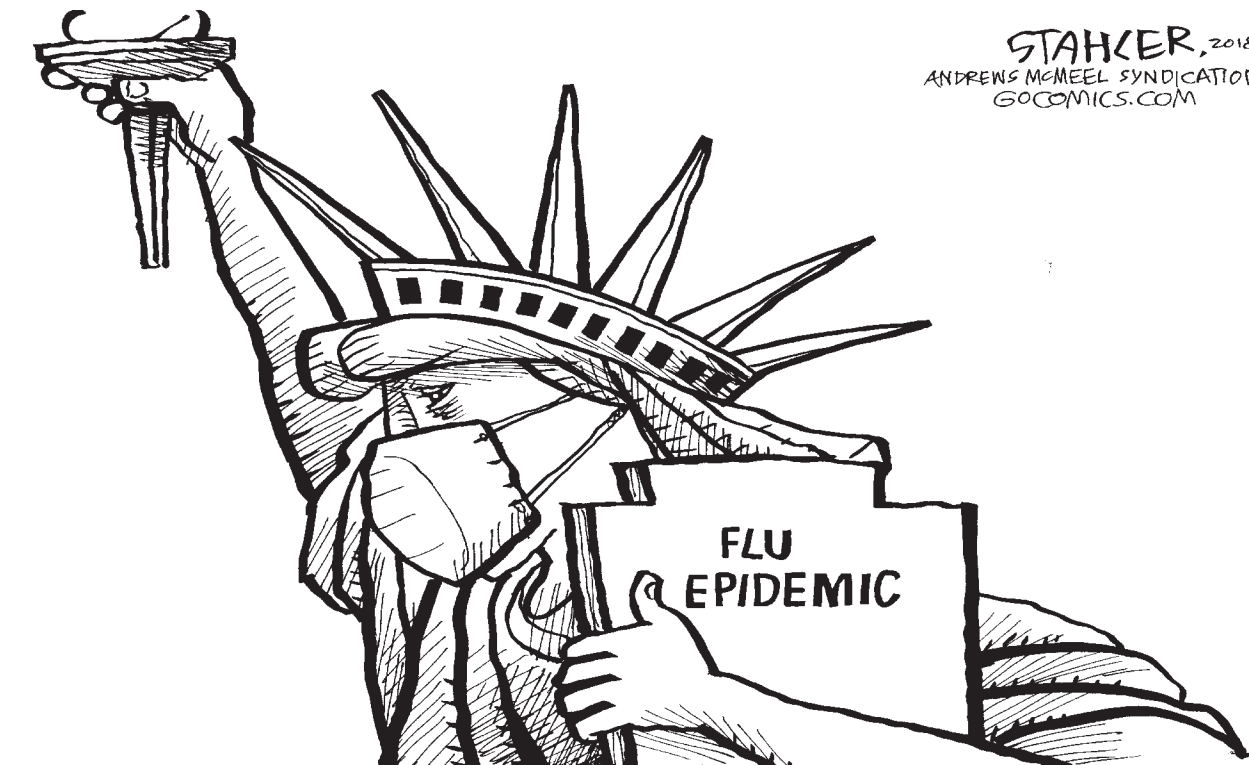
Tennessee Press Association member newspapers print and distribute more than 4 million papers each week to readers in Tennessee. That's not total readership, which would be about double the number. Also, TPA member websites receive more than 75 million page views per month.

January 21-27 is Public Notice Week, a time to remind readers of our important partnership with them in holding our government accountable.

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What to make of Trump's success?

The start of President Trump's second year in office has given Republicans and conservatives an opportunity to review a solid list of achievements: corporate and individual tax cuts; economic growth; wage growth; a conservative Supreme Court justice; a record number of circuit court confirmations; deregulation; and more. Each is a development worth celebrating, either by the standards of conservatism, or the general welfare, or both.

But for NeverTrump conservatives, the list presents a challenge. Many support the actions, like cutting taxes and reducing regulation, on Trump's list. Yet some have also staked their credibility and prestige on declaring Trump's election an unmitigated, historic disaster that will lead to an autocratic, dystopian future.

So how to deal with the current good news?

The most extreme NeverTrumpers, like *The Washington Post's* Jennifer Rubin, simply rail against everything the president does. But more sophisticated NeverTrumpers are looking for nuanced ways to recognize the president's accomplishments while maintaining he is a menace — and they have been right about him all along.

One strategy is to concede some of Trump's successes while insisting that the sum total of NeverTrump objections outweighs those gains.

At the *Weekly Standard*, for example, the editors recently cited some of Trump's accomplishments and asked: "Isn't it time for Trump's conservative

critics to acknowledge his election was worth it?" Their answer: No.

While citing a few of Trump's accomplishments, the publication argued the president's endorsement of Roy Moore in Alabama, his firing of FBI Director James Comey, his bombastic tweets about North Korea, loose-lipped meeting with Russian diplomats, response to Charlottesville, and "shithole" nations remark, along with other things, more than offset goods like wage growth, job creation and a victory against terrorism.

At *The New York Times*, conservative columnist Bret Stephens, author of the recent piece, "Why I'm Still a NeverTrumper," argues reflexive NeverTrumpism actually harms the effort to resist the president. Stephens recently took on Trump critics who denounce the president even when news is good — as when Apple announced that it will bring back most of the \$274 billion it has parked overseas, pay a \$38 billion tax bill, and create another 20,000 jobs in the U.S. Slamming Trump over a development like that, Stephens wrote, does "damage ... to the anti-Trump cause."

Trump will surely run into a major reversal someday; that's what happens to presidents. When it does, NeverTrumpers can say they called it long ago. But as long as Trump is piling up conservative achievements, life will remain complicated for the nation's NeverTrumpers.

Byron York is chief political correspondent for *The Washington Examiner*.

COLUMNIST

BYRON
YORK



Addicted to the word addicted

Some big investors at Apple think the company should do something to protect defenseless, wealthier-than-average children from their iPhones.

These charges are getting a lot of attention because they're not made by publicity-seeking provocateurs — they're made by people who actually own billions of dollars in Apple stock. They say children are addicted to their iPhones, and even though Apple already has a host of parental controls built into every single iPhone, the company should do even more.

Why? Because we all know cell phones are bad for children because ... well, I can't actually think of anything bad a phone has done to children. Except for the "fact" they are addicted to them.

Is that like being addicted to TV, or is it more like being addicted to sex? If you do too much of something, are you addicted? Does that make you a junkie? Are stockbrokers addicted to money, or are they just jerks? Are marathoners addicted to running? Are sales reps addicted to selling?

Or is being "addicted" to a smartphone more like watching football all weekend, to the exclusion of everything else? I know parents who have moved to different school districts so their kids can play on better teams. Are they addicted to their children?

Or are we addicted to the word "addicted"? Do you really believe there is such a thing as being addicted to sex, or is that just a made-up syndrome? Is that the same as being addicted to heroin or nicotine, or is more like saying you're addicted to the hot tub? Or soap operas?

And honestly, aren't we all addicted to waking up each morning? Yes, bad things may happen to us today

because we're alive. Let's blame it all on our "waking-up addiction."

What, exactly, is the consequence of being addicted to a cellphone? Is the phone molesting children? Is the phone making them smoke dope? Is the phone exposing them to things they shouldn't be seeing — like say, the kind of stuff that's on prime-time network and cable TV every single night of the week and twice on Sunday?

Or is the harm that they use the phone too much? It's funny, parents never complained about how much time their kids spent on the phone in the '60s. Or the '70s. Or the '80s. Or the '90s. Oh, yeah — they complained all the time. How did those kids turn out? Pretty much the same as every other generation: some jerks, some OK, some wildly successful.

Let's see: You can read a book on the iPhone, you can play solitaire, you can call your friends, you can do your homework. It's a calculator, a clock, a calendar, a notebook, an alarm, a tracker, an answering machine — OMG, why would we want our children to have one of these horrible things?! Because they are incredible, that's why.

If rich investors want to do something for children, they should make sure that no phone can text while it's in motion. Make sure the phone can only dial the kid's parents or 911 while it's in the school building. Make the phone stop parents from buying carbonated sugar-water for their children. It's poisoning them.

Whoops! Sorry, that was off topic. As we all know, all the problems in the world are caused by cellphones. Everything else is just hunky-dory.

Contact Jim Mullen at mullen.jim@gmail.com.

VILLAGE IDIOT

JIM
MULLEN



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SOMEONE WILL DISAGREE
WITH YOU SHORTLY.



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