

## Standard online reader survey



**Q: Do you like the idea of arming teachers with guns?**

**YES 44%**  
**NO 56%**

## LETTER TO THE EDITOR

### Schools should include a few armed teachers

#### TO THE EDITOR:

In the Feb. 23 edition of *Southern Standard*, editor James Clark brings up the issue of arming teachers and staff in our schools. I agree with some of his points but not all of them.

First and foremost we should keep in mind that a shooter can kill or injure quite a few people before the police or sheriff's deputies can even arrive at the scene. What happens in the first two to four minutes is critical. In the recent Florida shooting, it has been reported, the shooter had actually fired his shots and departed the school before external law enforcement officers arrived.

Murphy's Law says that an armed school resource officer will be at the far end of the building (possibly too far away to hear) when the shooting starts. That is why more than one or two defensive guns are needed.

Mr. Clark is entirely correct in recognizing the potential dangers presented by the mere presence of handguns. But then he suggests keeping them locked up until needed. That would keep those on-site handguns from being used during those first few minutes as users run to the safes and undo the locks.

Likewise, a gun should not be left unattended where students could pick it up, such as on or in a desk. In fact, it should be kept constantly on the owner's person. And it should be kept in a "no-grab" holster or other device, such as a zipped "fanny pack" (worn in front or on the side). Sorry, ladies, purses don't work unless you constantly and securely carry them.

And of course the one carrying the handgun must be well trained. At a minimum the Tennessee requirements for a handgun carry permit should be met. But I would propose more training than that. A couple of sheriffs in the country have been in the news lately for providing such training to teachers -- in the order of two to four days worth.

In short, protective guns should be at hand and immediately available throughout the school; twenty percent of the teachers probably would suffice. They should be securely held by their owners, not stored in or on a desk or in a safe or file cabinet. And each person carrying one should be well trained.

Designation of schools as "gun free zones" ensures that only evil-minded shooters will have guns in schools. It's time to make sure the people who care about our children's safety be allowed to carry guns in school.

Additionally, for sake of their classmates, all children should be taught basic procedures to stop or slow bleeding from wounds.

James R. Fryssinger  
Stoney Point Mountain  
Road  
Doyle



### Tax reform key to midterms

Politicians and pundits are still trying to sort out the winners and losers from the Tax Cuts and Jobs Act.

President Donald Trump and Republican members of both Houses of Congress celebrated the historic passage of their \$1.5 trillion bill that became law with Trump's signature. The good news for the GOP is the bill passed the Senate 51-48 and the House 224-201 in favor of the bill. The bad news is nary a Democrat voted for it in either House.

Even worse, 12 House Republicans broke ranks and voted with the Democrats against the tax reform bill. Most of them represent high State And Local Tax (SALT) states, like California, New York and New Jersey. Whether they voted their conscience or their constituents' preference, I cannot say for sure. However, one thing is certain. Eleven of the 12 are from California, New York, or New Jersey, all so-called "Blue States" that went for Hillary Clinton in 2016.

The dissident dozen, including one from North Carolina, now find themselves in the crosshairs of controversy and possible competition from Republicans and Democrats alike in 2018. Their breaking ranks from the party faithful on tax reform could be a harbinger of how, when and where that issue will impact House and Senate elections this year.

With roughly one-third of the Senate and all of the House theoretically up for re-election in 2018, I pre-

dict tax reform will be front and center in the hearts and minds of "We the People."

As so often happens in politics, perceptions will probably trump truth. Those of us who perceive the Tax Cuts and Jobs Act as a positive outcome in our lives will be more apt to vote for the Republican of our choice. Conversely, if we view it as a net negative, we are more likely to vote for a Democrat, if we vote at all.

The special election in Pennsylvania next month looms large as an early test of how two starkly different takes

on tax reform could determine who wins and who loses in a district Donald Trump won by nearly 20 points in 2016. The GOP candidate, Rick Saccone asserts "the sweep-

ing tax changes will aid the economy and give Americans bigger paychecks." His Democratic opponent, Conor Lamb derides the Tax Cuts and Jobs Act as "a gift to corporations and the wealthy that will add to the national debt and give the GOP-led Congress an excuse to gut Social Security and Medicare."

Since Democrats must flip at least 24 Republican-held House seats and hold on to those they hold now, a Lamb victory March 13 would be a lion-like event to celebrate. As for the GOP and Saccone, they better hope those who vote do so with their wallets in mind.

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#### MY TURN

THOMAS B. VAUGHN



### Russians knew their target

How clever are these Russians! We now learn they placed at least 3,000 ads on Facebook to confuse and divide the American people, that they connived at a "photo" of Hillary Clinton in a prisoner's striped uniform (imprisoned in a cage, no less!) and they placed Russians to live in American society as "Americans" to disrupt our comity firsthand.

This and much worse we now know from Special Counsel Robert Mueller's 37-page indictment of 13 Russians accused of attempting to "sow discord in the U.S. political system." Yes, that much we know -- although our president still does not seem to know it.

But there is something else going on in this dark world of "noir diplomacy." We are rather taking it for granted that those Russian trolls -- which, I recently discovered, is the word for those who sow discord on the internet -- should know us so well. We should not!

For underlying this scandal of Russian influence on the American political system is the question of why they and many other peoples know us too-too well, while we seem to know them all too-too little.

Average Russians have little real understanding of the true nature of the American system, but they're unimportant. We are talking here about Vladimir Putin's upper-echelon oligarchs like Yevgeny Prigozhin, the "czar's right-hand," and Russian students of social media and sociology (probably 80 in all) at Putin's Internet Research Agency in St. Petersburg, whose \$1.25 million monthly budget funds programs designed explicitly to destroy Americans' faith in their system.

Before Mueller and his merry band

of counter-trolls, we could say we didn't know; now we do. And so now we must ask: Are we going to let the weaknesses Putin and the czar's right-hand have exploited so well -- like the inability of American congressmen to work together on just about anything -- prevent us from dealing with the Russians' dangerous meddling?

And American citizens: Do they care?

If they do, they surely are not showing it. Where could they start? Well, by not wasting their time watching too much cable news, by

demanding the truth about those Russian ads, and by supporting newspapers. Newspapers are the only place you will find the truth about your friends, and especially about your enemies.

More ideas: Proselytize for more Voice of America (VOA) news programs to Russia like the ones that unquestionably were consequential in destroying the Soviet Union (these programs are all but dead today). Resuscitate the U.S. Information Service, which President Clinton wantonly destroyed.

Finally, tell your congressmen to get off their ... errr ... bums. And do it in whatever language you please!

I think we congratulate Moscow too much with our seemingly helpless reactions to them. For in truth, while it is easy for the Russians to know about us because we are an open society, it's not really impossible for US to know THEM, either.

As the Russians keep trolling, we should start rolling.

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#### COLUMNIST

GEORGIE ANNE GEYER



#### JUST A THOUGHT

LISA HOBBS



### Duct tape can be used to decorate

I think I've lost my mind, but I'll let you decide for yourself.

As I was watching TV the other night and looking at a large roll of duct tape on the dresser, something snapped and I thought "wouldn't it be awesome to use that duct tape to add stripes to my room?"

I slowly began to envision one wall having vertical stripes. If that worked out well, the wall adjacent having horizontal stripes that went the length of the wall. At that point, my thought process stopped. I want to do that one wall and see how it looks.

Then, I started considering what color to paint the wall and what color I wanted the duct tape to be. It used to be that duct tape came in one color, best I remember, and that color was gray. These days it comes in different colors, as well as different designs and even leopard print and camo.

I'm not a wild and crazy person when it comes to home décor. My niece, whom I love dearly, says I'm afraid of color. I agree. When I get the mood to paint something, I start considering different colors. I go to the store and check out those little color guides and booklets that are supposed to include suggestions. I check online, as well. This process can take days or even a couple of weeks.

Eventually, I stop looking at bright colors and start looking at neutral colors. The process gets so frustrating, because I've done this more times than I can count, that I just give up and settle for a color I know won't frustrate me -- white.

As I'm looking at this wall and thinking how crazy I am for even thinking about doing this, I go online and apparently, I'm not the first to think of using duct tape to add a little pizzazz to my bedroom walls. It's called duct tape wall art. There are endless selections, suggestions and pictures. It's considered a budget-friendly way to decorate a room or items. Who knew?

Something I hadn't thought of was adding it to furniture and other items. One washer and dryer set had black stripes and dots. It looked like a really cool way to spruce up basic white appliances.

Some of these people have way too much time on their hands. They put my basic stripes idea to shame with what looks like an outline of a city and three-dimensional pictures. I think I might have to pass on that.

Well, my plan is to work on one wall this weekend. According to weather predictions, it's going to rain so I'll be trapped inside. Perfect timing, I guess. I'm still hoping the groundhog was wrong and we'll have an early spring. The temperatures have been unseasonably warm.

Just so you know, I've decided to not trigger my stress level and go right to what I know won't freak me out: white wall and gray duct tape. I'll keep you posted.

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