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## GUEST EDITORIAL

### Ryan says he's tired of being weekend dad

Why can't Ryan's motivation be believed?

Democrats were practically dancing in the streets of towns in the 1st Congressional District Wednesday after the district's representative and speaker of the U.S. House of Representatives, Paul Ryan, announced his current term would be his last.

Pundits speculated Ryan recognized the so-called "blue wave" sweeping the nation jeopardizing his chances for an 11th term.

We doubt that. Polls showed Ryan could have essentially coasted to victory in November in a district with a Republican-majority population.

Few want to accept Ryan's stated reason for not running again — to spend more time with his growing family — as genuine.

Granted, there is a cynical skepticism among the population when a politician says they're giving it up to become just a family guy. It's not uncommon to think there's got to be some skeleton lurking in the closet somewhere. But Ryan achieved his signature goal of tax reform and there had been speculation he'd resign once that was accomplished, but promised last Wednesday he'd finish his term.

Ryan reiterated his motivation to not seek another term was because of his kids in an interview

**Kenosha News Wisconsin**

Thursday on "CBS This Morning." "You know why? 'Cause our kids aren't getting younger," Ryan told CBS's Gail King. "I gotta tell you, Gail, I've had so many people in their 50s, 60s and 70s tell me, 'I wish I spent more time with my kids.' Well, my kids have only known me their entire lives as a weekend dad. And now they're teenagers in or about to be in high school."

Ryan's retirement is the most high-profile of two dozen Republicans who have announced they won't seek another term in Washington. And Democrats hope to seize the opportunity the way Republicans did in the 2010 midterm elections. His pending departure makes for an intriguing race.

Ryan's desire to be home with his family isn't unique. Former Vice President Joe Biden, when he was a senator, commuted via Amtrak from his home in Delaware to Washington almost daily. Parents whose job forces them to be away from a growing family for long stretches of time can appreciate Ryan's desire to not be remembered by his kids as he phrased it, a "weekend dad."

We'll take him at his word.



### Child brings hope to D.C.

The most important person on Capitol Hill one recent weekday was not Paul Ryan or Mark Zuckerberg or anyone with a position of political or business power. He was a 10-year-old boy, whose hand I shook before his birth mother told the story of how he is in the world today.

The star speaker was a radiant Kelly Clemente, who told her story of being a pregnant teenager in 2008. She had a family who supported her as she faced the emotional challenges of her situation. Because of this — and because of Bethany Christian Services, which helped her in the adoption process — she was able to make the right choice for herself and her unborn child.

That baby turned into an articulate boy who has thanked Clemente for placing him for adoption. And as Kelsey Harkness points out in the piece accompanying the video interview she did with Clemente, "According to the National Council for Adoption, a nonpartisan group that advocates adoption, for every 1,000 abortions and births to unmarried women, there were only 6.9 adoptions."

Whatever your politics on abortion, it's hard to look in the eyes of a 10-year-old boy, a birth mother and an adoptive mother, and see anything but courage, gratitude and love.

As important as the abortion debate itself is, adoption can be a meeting ground for people from different sides of the issue. At an event at the Heritage Foundation where Clemente spoke, Ryan Bomberger, a fellow panelist, declared that we cannot talk about abortion without talking about

adoption. "We're failing as a nation in rising to the challenge of finding forever families for children in foster care," he said. This should be a nudge to our consciences, whatever our politics on abortion or anything else.

The testimony of the likes of Kelly Clemente — and presence of her son and his adoptive mom — is an invitation to take a deep breath as a culture, and a few steps back. Let's not lose sight of a little boy saying "thank you" to a woman of courage, who as a teenager made a choice that was hard, but so tremendously loving. He was clearly a living, breathing expression of gratitude to his adoptive mom, from the looks of them walking into the Heritage Foundation the other day together.

There was so much news out of D.C. this past week. But to those of us witnessing the expressions of love and gratitude at the Heritage Foundation panel, the message of the week seemed quite clear: The most important person in D.C. this week is no one who will be a household name. The most important people in the life of a child are those who love him or her most. There's such power in this country, so close to home, that we don't always appreciate, celebrate and support it. That's typically the case in life, and we must look around more and see where the Kelly Clementes and the families stepping up to the plate are — whether we are policymakers, church leaders or neighbors — and give them love and assistance.

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**COLUMNIST**  
KATHRYN LOPEZ



### Warning! You'll find TMI ahead

Well, it happened again. I had another bathroom mishap. Now, I'm no stranger to embarrassment, but for some reason public bathrooms hold a special place of humiliation for me. Recently, my husband and I spent our Saturday in Nashville. We always stop at the Green Hills Whole Foods for chocolate chip muffins, Mrs. Meyer's Lavender cleaning products and Hatcher chocolate milk.

It's also our go-to bathroom stop before driving home. That day it was crowded, but I finally got a stall. I had just pulled down my jeans when the door opened exposing me to the entire line of women waiting outside.

"Sorry!" exclaimed the blushing teen backing up quickly and exiting the bathroom. What she failed to notice was that she'd unhooked the latch, so I watched as the door slowly reopened while I sat there helplessly. Thank the Lord for the kindness of strangers. An older lady with her hand over her eyes stepped forward saying "I'll hold the door for you hunny!"

Another time, I took my niece to the Whole Foods bathroom. As she was finishing up, the lady in the neighboring stall was having a loud bowel movement. To my surprise, Zo busted out laughing.

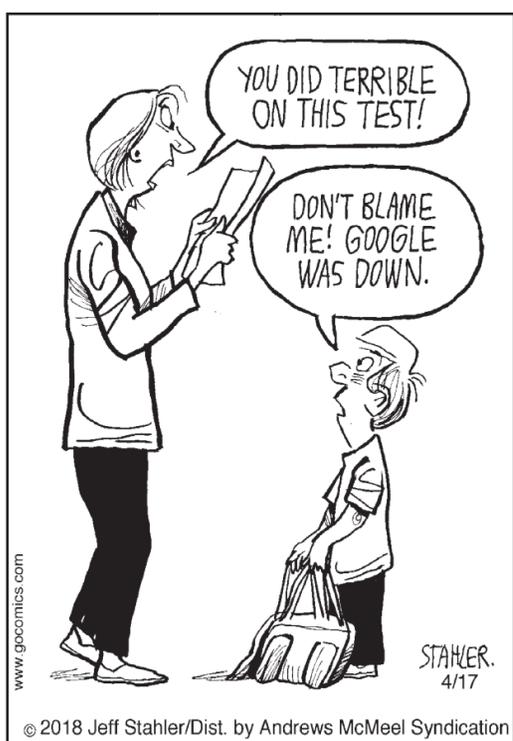
Between her giggles I heard "Aunt Lacy, did you hear that thunder from down under?" I clamped my hand over her mouth before she had the chance to utter another tooting euphemism. I couldn't get out of there fast enough. We used hand sanitizer from my purse while jogging out of the store. What can you do? Kids have no filter. They call it like they see it, or in our case, hear it.

Now I know you're thinking, that's only two separate incidents. Well, I have an arsenal of bathroom stories. I've been in the stall realizing too little too late the absence of toilet paper. What's worst is when it happens in an empty bathroom. Once this happened, and I had to wait 15 minutes for someone else to enter and hand me TP under the stall.

Last month, I saw a viral video of a four-year-old boy crawling under a stranger's stall at a Lynchburg Chick-fil-A. The little boy told the man, who was sitting on the toilet, that he needed help washing his hands. Well, I can relate. I've been in a public bathroom and seen a little head pop under the stall before crawling in. Nothing like having a conversation with a child looking for their mommy while you're trying to do your business. Guess that means I'm approachable?

My fear and slight public bathroom paranoia has faded over the years. With my track record, I guess I figure what's the worst that can happen? Word to the wise, make it a habit to knock before pushing the door open even if it is slightly ajar. This should save you from at least one of the many embarrassing public bathroom stories I've shared.

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### Some people always leave wake

If you live near the water, there's a sign you'll see at the entrance to almost every marina, "No Wake."

When you take your boat out for a day of fun, as you leave and enter the marina, it's important to go slow enough not to create waves that could smash moored boats against the dock, or even swamp smaller boats. It's not just a courtesy to go slowly, it's important safety-wise.

But there's always some fool who thinks the sign doesn't apply to him — not because he's rich, stupid, or illiterate, but because he's selfish.

Some people go through life making wakes, heedless of the damage they do to other people. Alcoholics, drug addicts, sexual abusers, in-too-deep gamblers — they all share a selfishness they won't admit to. "It's my life and I'll do what I want," they say, while they heedlessly go around wrecking the lives of everyone around them.

It's not just "your life" if you have children, if you have a spouse, if you have anyone at all who you care about. You're creating a wake that will damage their boats, that may even swamp them entirely.

Imagine a set of parents who won't let their teen son get a swastika tattooed on his forehead. Or a mom who won't let her 13-year-old date a 19-year-old. "You've wrecked my life!" the kids will probably scream. But who's really wrecking whose life?

The parents might say something like, "You can get that tattoo when you're living in your own house" or "when you're 18." But that doesn't address the problem the kid is only thinking of himself, and not others. If he does get that tattoo when he leaves home, who would ever give him a

job? How will he make a living? And if he can't get a job, who will pay to feed and clothe him?

The lesson shouldn't be whether to get an offensive tattoo or whether to have an age-inappropriate boyfriend. The lesson is to start thinking about other people, not just yourself.

I saw a college-aged kid in a coffee shop the other day. His head was shaved, and over one ear there was a tattoo that read, "That's the last time you'll tell me what to do." Would you let him take a boat out of your marina? When his hair grows out, the tattoo will be invisible, but I wonder who's paying for his education.

Sometimes I wonder why we don't want to let people into this country who have

the gumption to walk 1,000 miles over dirt roads to get jobs here, but we let this spoiled kid who can afford to buy a \$6 mocha-choco latte and a tattoo, and who thinks he's being treated badly, stay. Do you think he's doing his own laundry? Do you think he's helping out with the chores around the house? I'm sure he is whining.

We all know people who never grew out of that stage at any age. There's probably one at a bar downtown right now, on his third beer, telling everyone in the place how to solve all the problems in the Middle East and what's wrong with Facebook. If only he weren't unemployed and six months behind on alimony and child support, you might believe him.

It seems he can solve everyone's problems but his own. Don't let him on your boat or near your marina. He'll be sure to leave a wake.

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Established 1879  
**Southern Standard**  
Publication No. 506-840

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