

Standard online reader survey



Q: Do you think families should be separated after illegal border crossings?

YES 39%
NO 61%

GUEST EDITORIAL

Get ready for new state laws July 1

A variety of new laws will take effect in Tennessee on July 1. Some are useful, some confusing, and some wanting for further action by the state legislature.

Among new laws long overdue is one that states if you're trying to get a Tennessee driver license by presenting a license from another state that issues licenses to undocumented immigrants, you are now required to either establish proof of citizenship, lawful permanent resident status or gain a specific period of authorized stay. The last qualifier should be eliminated, but Tennessee should ensure anyone issued a state driver license is a citizen.

There's also a new law that if you're the parent or legal guardian of a student, local education agencies must provide written notice to you before the student participates in any mental health screening. It's hard to believe this law wasn't already on the books.

And local education agencies are now prohibited from entering into non-disclosure agreements during, or as a prerequisite to, settlement for any act of sexual misconduct.

Laws should be clear and explicit, but some of our new laws seem somewhat arbitrary. For instance, doctors may now accept barter of goods or services from an uninsured patient as payment for providing health-care services in certain circumstances. Sounds on the surface like a good idea, but does it open the door to legal issues?

Kingsport Times-News

Another new law is puzzling. When you're in public, you have almost no right to privacy. But this law seeks to establish one "for purposes of the offense of unlawful photographing in violation of privacy."

It states anyone has a reasonable expectation of privacy, regardless of the location where a photograph is taken, if the photo is "taken in a manner that a reasonable person would find offensive or embarrassing and depicts areas of the individual's body, clothed or unclothed, that would not be visible to ordinary observation but for the offensive or embarrassing manner of photography."

Say what? And then we have some new laws that clearly need more work. One states that if you're a student with a disability and an individualized education plan, you can no longer be paddled, with certain exceptions. Why single out the disabled?

And then there's a law that states that if you're a veteran, you must be given hiring preference for a state employment position if you're on the list of eligible hiring candidates and meet all qualifications.

We owe our veterans much. They put their lives on the line for our freedoms. But neither military service, sex, skin color or any other factor should put someone ahead of others for public employment.



ART BY 2018

The FB Eye



Children being used as pawns

Merriam-Webster defines the phrase "to bear witness" as "to show that something exists or is true."

This is a moment to bear witness, to tell the truth. And the truth is President Trump's deliberate policy of separating immigrant children from their parents is profoundly cruel, immoral, un-American and un-Christian. No matter how this tragedy is eventually resolved, every day that goes by, innocent youngsters are suffering severely.

"We know that family separation causes irreparable harm to children," states Dr. Colleen Kraft, president of the American Academy of Pediatrics. "This type of highly stressful experience can disrupt the building of children's brain architecture. Prolonged exposure to serious stress — known as toxic stress — can lead to lifelong health consequences."

More than 4,500 mental health professionals and 90 organizations joined a petition urging Trump and Attorney General Jeff Sessions to end their policy, warning: "To pretend that separated children do not grow up with the shrapnel of this traumatic experience embedded in their minds is to disregard everything we know about child development, the brain and trauma."

We must bear witness to a second truth: Trump's defense of his policy is a blatant lie, an argument the *Washington Post* fact-checkers called "violently divorced from reality." The president says he has no choice, he's just enforcing the law, but obviously he does have a choice.

Presidents George Bush and Barack

Obama were faced with similar problems and made very different decisions, freeing families with children who violated immigration laws until their cases came up for legal review. Trump's closest adviser on immigration, Stephen Miller, admits — and even boasts — that this administration consciously changed the old approach, causing the current crisis.

"It was a simple decision by the administration to have a zero-tolerance policy for illegal entry, period," he told the *New York Times*. "The message is that no one is exempt from immigration law."

Trump triggered this crisis for only one purpose — to make a cynical and incendiary appeal to his most loyal supporters. The president believes strongly the immigration issue helped get him elected, and he's probably right.

But Trump's latest outburst is clearly backfiring. Crying children are not criminals, and a Quinnipiac poll recently found 66 percent of respondents oppose the president's policy.

Republicans are so alarmed at the potential fallout that the party leader in the Senate, Mitch McConnell, announced that all 51 GOP senators would back an urgent legislative effort to reverse Trump's course, since the president won't do it himself.

Even if that effort succeeds, a very big "if," here's a final truth: This whole sickening episode has inflicted lasting damage — to the psyches of several thousand children, to the legacy of the president, and to the reputation of this country around the world.

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STEVE & COKIE ROBERTS

COLUMNISTS

THE SCOOP

JAMES CLARK



Give privacy a kiss goodbye

My mom returned this week from a trip to the untamed frontier of Alaska where pictures show her engulfed by a toboggan and heavy coat. I don't know why you'd want to leave cozy summer weather to see a bunch of glaciers, but mom assures me it was mountains of fun.

In hopes of having an intelligent conversation with her about Alaska, I made the mistake of googling it to get some basic facts. Now every time I pick up my phone I'm bombarded by ads about visiting Alaska. I wish there was some place I could click to indicate I'm in no way interested in visiting Alaska, but there's not.

When it comes to what we do online, our privacy has vanished. When I went to purchase a car last year, the dealer knew how many times I had visited his website, and which vehicles I looked at while I was there, as soon as he entered my name in the computer.

The grocery store sends me coupons for items I might like to try based on my purchases of other items. YouTube recommends music I might like to listen to based on songs I've already heard.

If all this sounds a little creepy, the *Wall Street Journal* published an article this week by Scott McCartney discussing exactly how far companies should go in personalizing their service. It turns out some companies have an encyclopedia of knowledge about their customers, but they don't know how much to use it.

For example, would you like to be on an airplane and have the flight attendant come up and wish you happy birthday? Is this too much information for a stranger to know?

If that's too much, would you like for flight attendants to call you by name or know your drink order if you're a frequent flier? These are questions companies are asking as they work to use the data they have without offending.

Airlines, like many other companies, are trying to determine when personalized interactions could be considered invasive amid growing concerns about how companies like Facebook are using our personal information.

"There's a point where you don't want to make people feel like, 'Gee they know everything about me and they're tracking everything I do,'" United Airlines representative John Slater told the *Wall Street Journal*.

In this day when people post their life on Facebook and check in online every place they visit, it's hard to see how we have much privacy left. We even take pictures of what we eat for breakfast.

From my perspective, I'm glad to get personalized service and I'm thrilled if I don't have to answer a bunch of pesky questions to get it. A flight attendant can come up and wish me happy birthday anytime, especially if they bring a free brownie with them.

I'm willing to sacrifice a little privacy for more convenience. Standard editor James Clark can be reached at 473-2191.

Remembering Fred Rogers

America was divided, tense and angry in 1969, when Fred Rogers faced a U.S. Senate subcommittee poised to grant President Richard Nixon his requests for deep budget cuts for public broadcasting.

The news was full of assassinations, riots and images from Vietnam. The pain even soaked into the gentle, calm, safe world of "Mister Rogers' Neighborhood."

Rogers told the senators why he kept telling children they were unique and special. But he also talked about fear, anger and confusion — because that's what children were feeling.

Then he read the lyrics of one of his deceptively simple songs: "What do you do with the mad that you feel, when you feel so mad you could bite? When the whole wide world seems oh, so wrong, and nothing you do seems very right?"

The song stressed that kids can make good choices: "I can stop when I want to. Can stop when I wish. I can stop, stop, stop anytime."

The senators nixed the cuts, and the Rev. Fred Rogers — an ordained Presbyterian minister — continued with his complex blend of TV, child development and subtle messages about faith. The Senate showdown is a pivotal moment in "Won't You Be My Neighbor?," a Focus Features documentary just released to theaters nationwide.

"The bottom line for Fred Rogers was that the faith he had in God — Christian tradition and his own beliefs — infused everything that he did," said the Rev. George Wirth, a friend and pastor to Rogers for two decades.

In the documentary, Rogers summed up his approach: "Love is at the root of everything — all learning,

all parenting, all relationships. Love, or the lack of it."

Mister Rogers used a strange strategy to become a force in American culture. Basically, he took the alleged essentials of children's entertainment — shallow characters, loud action, flashy graphics and stupid gags — and ignored them all. Over and over, he slowly donned his comfy sweater and sneakers and quietly told kids he wanted to be their neighbor.

But he also kept addressing questions about why bad things happen to good people, the hard questions.

After the death of Sen. Robert Kennedy, Daniel Tiger — the puppet that frequently voiced Rogers' point of view — asked: "What does 'assassination' mean?" Another script focused on divorce.

When a fish died in the Neighborhood's tank, Rogers talked about the reality of death.

Critics accused Rogers of spoiling children with all that "special" talk. And there were strange rumors, including whispers he was gay. In the film, a gay member of the Neighborhood cast described his love and respect for Rogers — a man he considered as straight as an arrow. Rogers was married for 50 years, until his death in 2003.

More than anything else, said Wirth, Rogers was a realist who believed that "nobody is ever abandoned, no one is every really alone, because God is in the Neighborhood, too. ... That person you saw on TV was real. Mister Rogers was real. That was the real Fred Rogers."

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ON RELIGION

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