

## Standard online reader survey

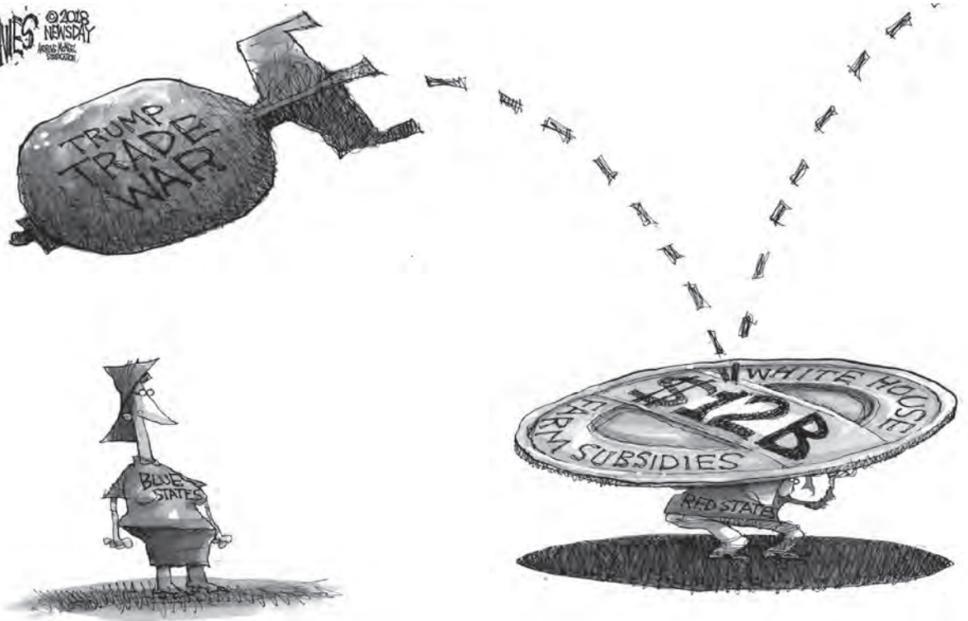


**Q: In what has become a nasty race, who would you like to see get the Republican nomination for Tennessee governor?**

- Bill Lee
- Beth Harwell
- Randy Boyd
- Diane Black

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## GUEST EDITORIAL

# Election security an issue for all America

In the recent indictment by special counsel Robert Mueller of a dozen Russian intelligence officers, there is an alarming detail.

"In or around July 2016," the indictment states, "(Anatoly Sergeyevich) Kovalev and his co-conspirators hacked the website of a state board of elections and stole information related to approximately 500,000 voters, including names, addresses, partial Social Security numbers, dates of birth and driver's license numbers."

We already knew that the Department of Homeland Security notified 21 states in 2017 that they had been targeted by Russian hackers during 2016. Although the list was not made public, Illinois identified itself as a state that had its voter database breached by hackers.

Election integrity activists in Georgia were startled to see the Mueller indictment identify it, for the first time, as one of the states targeted by the Russian operation. "On or about Oct. 28, 2016, Kovalev and his co-conspirators visited the websites of certain counties in Georgia, Iowa and Florida to identify vulnerabilities," the indictment states.

In California, Secretary of State Alex Padilla has approved the use of electronic poll books and other computerized voting equip-

### Orange County Register

ment. Local polling places are being replaced by larger vote centers, and counties will begin mailing absentee ballots to every registered voter without waiting for a request.

Does the secretary have procedures in place to verify that voter files have not been breached and election equipment has not been hacked? Do election officials in California's 58 counties have adequate training and personnel to prevent or catch security breaches?

It does not appear so. In Los Angeles County, 118,000 registered voters were inexplicably left off the printed voter rolls in the June primary. Until we know why and how that happened, voters should be deeply concerned about the integrity of California's elections.

For decades, political opponents have traded charges of voter fraud and voter suppression whenever the issue of election integrity was raised.

We now have incontrovertible evidence a hostile foreign power hacked voter registration files in U.S. states and counties. We should all be on the same side to secure our elections from interference.

# GOP says tariffs not smart

Of all the inane and inaccurate things to come out of President Trump's mouth, this March tweet was one of the worst: "Trade wars are good and easy to win." He recently doubled down on that foolishness, tweeting "Tariffs are the greatest!"

Trump is testing that theory now by initiating trade skirmishes -- if not full-blown wars -- with China, Europe, Canada and Mexico. And early returns clearly indicate the president is dead wrong. His trade policies are already causing major ruptures with traditional allies, threatening the economic boom and jeopardizing his party's prospects in the fall elections.

Many fellow Republicans agree with Sen. Ben Sasse of Nebraska who told *USA Today*, "Tariffs are stupid. ... They're tax increases on Americans, they don't work, and apparently we're going to see more of this."

Sen. Orrin Hatch of Utah, a Trump loyalist, wrote to the president: "I strongly urge you to reconsider the reckless guidance you have received on trade policy from some of your advisers."

Other Republicans fear economic damage will lead to political damage in the fall. GOP strategist Kevin Madden says, "There is a significant risk that the benefits of tax reform and the overall good feelings about the economy could all be negated by the actions on tariffs."

Business leaders have reacted with almost universal hostility. *The Washington Post* filed a report from Columbus, Indiana -- the hometown of Vice President Mike Pence as well

as the headquarters of Cummins Inc., a manufacturer of large industrial equipment that depends heavily on the export market.

"I'm very worried," said Tom Lineberger, the company's chief executive. That's because higher tariffs hurt Cummins in two ways: by raising the cost of raw materials like steel, and by inviting retaliation against its finished products sold abroad.

There's blood in the water in farm country, as well, since American agricultural exports amounted to \$140 billion last year. And China's threats to

retaliate against U.S. soybean growers has "caused the market to collapse in recent months," reports *The New York Times*.

The blowback has been so fierce Trump offered a \$12 billion

bailout package for farmers. But Republicans like Sen. Rand Paul immediately denounced it. "If tariffs punish farmers, the answer is not welfare for farmers," said Paul. "The answer is to remove tariffs."

A study by the Center for Automotive Research estimates Trump's proposed tariffs would add from \$980 to \$4,400 to the price of each American-made vehicle -- a devastating development for carmakers and car buyers alike. As Republican Sen. Lamar Alexander of Tennessee, a big auto-producing state, put it, "These tariffs are dangerous. They are going to cost us jobs and lower our family incomes."

Dangerous. Stupid. Reckless. And that's just what Republicans are calling Trump's trade policies.

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### COLUMNISTS

STEVE & COKIE ROBERTS



# What's this Montenegro talk?

Do you want your child fighting and dying for Montenegro? It's something you should be thinking about.

That may seem like an odd question, given the more sobering ones about Russia, North Korea and China that face us every day.

But our president, though himself no specialist on geography, tells us angrily that Montenegro is of great importance to us. In fact, it was, by my accounting, the first issue he dwelled on after his meeting with Vladimir Putin.

Montenegro is a country of only 640,000 people and a 2,000-man army tucked into the southern fjords of the Adriatic in what was once Yugoslavia. The question about the tiny, unforgettably beautiful land came up and then proceeded to dominate an interview between President Trump and Fox News' Tucker Carlson right after Helsinki.

It was raised, frankly, because of Montenegro's enthusiastic entry into NATO just a year ago, which irked President Trump, with his clear hatred of NATO and especially its Article 5, which says that an attack on one of the 28 members is an attack on all.

Thus it was that Carlson asked Trump hypothetically if, say, Montenegro were attacked, why should his son go to defend it? The president leapt at this opportunity to deflect attention from Putin.

He had "asked the same," Trump said first, apparently referring to the unlikely circumstance that any Trump would serve in the military to defend the country. Then he added pointedly that, although Montenegro

was small, it was full of "very strong people ... very aggressive people ... who may get aggressive and, congratulations, you're in World War III!"

Montenegro does have a heroic warring tradition. During the long years of the Ottoman Empire (13th-20th centuries), Montenegro was a rare example of a state that had some success preserving its independence.

But in more recent years, it has been close to Russia. In fact, it is said that, in 1904, during the Russo-

### COLUMNIST

GEORGIE ANNE GEYER



Japanese war, it was SO close that it declared war on Japan (that must have scared the devil out of Tokyo!) just to support Moscow.

After the Soviet Union and Yugoslavia itself dissolved in the late 20th century, the little country enthusiastically went West. NATO, first. Now it awaits European Union membership. There are even Montenegrins fighting alongside Americans in Afghanistan, a fact both Carlson and Trump chose to make fun of.

More important, it didn't seem to occur to either Carlson or the president that we have a volunteer army. So supposing the virtually impossible happened and there was a war involving NATO, and thus Montenegro, THEIR sons and daughters would not be part of an American army. Others' children? Obviously not their concern.

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### THE SCOOP

JAMES CLARK



# Final thoughts on this election

One of the great mysteries of this election cycle is who will emerge from a six-candidate field to be named Warren County's next sheriff.

I'm not about to try and predict a winner in this space, but I will make a couple slight modifications to predictions I made months ago when the field was set in February.

Way back then, I figured Warren County's next sheriff would be elected with 2,000 votes. I was basing that estimate on voting numbers from the 2014 sheriff's race when just a notch over 8,000 voters cast ballots.

This is shaping up to be a year with more robust voting. It's even been suggested we will approach 6,000 in early voting, a plateau I think we'll come close to reaching.

The end result, when the dust settles, is I believe we'll have right at 10,500 Warren County voters cast ballots in this county election. That's my fearless prediction.

What that means is I have to revise my vote count for what it's going to take to become Warren County's next sheriff. After crunching numbers and doing some math with a pencil on a napkin, I believe our next sheriff will gain nearly 30 percent of the vote and be elected with 3,106 votes.

For all the talk about this race coming down to a handful of votes, my napkin math says the winning candidate will win by about 103 votes over the second-place finisher, give or take 1 vote.

As for other election observations, I'm thrilled Warren County has overcome our embarrassing voter turnout in the May primary to post some respectable numbers for the county General Election. Local residents seem engaged in deciding who will serve as our next batch of county leaders and they're showing up to early vote by a clip of about 409 per day. This isn't anything to put on a Christmas card, but it is a giant step in the right direction.

As for my thoughts on the Warren County Commission, I'm going to stick with an earlier prediction and say 12 of the 24 seats will change hands. Perhaps these new county leaders will be bold enough to reduce the size of the County Commission to 12 members before they get too comfortable with their seats.

Last but not least, it's still troubling the number of Warren County residents who are not registered to vote. In recent months I've had several in-depth conversations with people who keep up with local issues and who are concerned with the direction of the county.

Any time I talk politics with someone for more than a few minutes I always have to ask: Do you vote? All too often, the answer is no.

I've never fancied myself a preacher but I will say this. It only takes five minutes to register to vote and it only takes about five minutes to vote. Instead of talking about what this community should do, take a stake in it. Go vote and help determine our future leaders.

If you're not registered, it's too late for August, but there's plenty of time to get on the voter rolls for vital elections this November that include statewide races such as Tennessee governor.

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