

Standard online reader survey



Q: Do you think Tennessee should use the death penalty?

YES: 78%

NO: 22%

GUEST EDITORIAL

State lawmakers have plenty of issues to face

The August primary election is behind us now and Tennesseans have narrowed their choices for senator, governor, and federal and state legislators.

The general election candidates may be tempted to pick wedge issues to drive their turnout.

However, if they are really committed to public service and the greater good, they should address those things that affect Tennesseans' daily lives.

They should also be able to explain to voters how they can and will do something about it.

Here are a few topics for candidates to consider:

Our leaders need to ensure that Tennessee's economy stays strong.

That means ensuring access to jobs, a climate that will be inviting to business relocations and opportunities to benefit from a global economy.

Bipartisan groups of elected officials agree President Trump's tariff policy is detrimental to segments of our economy, like Tennessee farmers or auto manufacturers.

Agricultural production generates more than \$3 billion annually, per the Tennessee Department of Agriculture. Eighty-seven of Tennessee's 95 counties have auto operations.

Nashville is the private hospital capital of the United States, but Tennessee has some of the worst health outcomes in the nation.

The Tennessean

Tennessee also has the second highest level of opioid prescriptions per capita in the nation, and the fatalities from overdoses grow every year.

Earlier this year, the Tennessee General Assembly passed Gov. Bill Haslam's \$30 million investment in opioid regulation, law enforcement and treatment.

It is a good step, but that only starts to address the scope of the problem.

In 2017, President Trump declared an opioid emergency, and our members of Congress need to make sure Tennessee is getting the money and assistance to address this crisis.

Another emergency is that Tennessee now has the highest per capita rate of rural hospital closures in the country.

Tennessee legislators have refused to expand Medicaid in the state, but they have pursued no other alternatives to this problem, and our vulnerable residents need access to quality health care.

Despite excellent schools across the state like University of Tennessee Knoxville, Vanderbilt University and University of Memphis, too few Tennesseans have a degree to place them in the jobs of today and tomorrow, which require more skills and training.

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Will indictments turn corner?

In Washington in the 1990s, it was a sure bet that whenever conservative journalists and activists got together, the conversation turned to the Clintons, Kenneth Starr and the Whitewater investigation. There was a good bit of what one editor memorably called "hush-hush and heavy breathing" when insiders discussed momentous developments that were surely on the way. Somebody knew somebody who had heard from somebody close to Starr that big indictments were imminent -- just around the corner.

The big indictments were just around the corner in 1995, in 1996, in 1997. They didn't come. Then, in 1998, the Lewinsky scandal seemed to fall into the laps of anti-Clinton types. But even as the scandal rolled toward impeachment, some on the right still looked for indictments in the matters that had raised Republican hopes over the years: Whitewater, Filegate, Travelgate, the Rose Law Firm billing records, the death of Vincent Foster and more.

But 1998 passed, and then 1999, and then 2000 without the anticipated indictments. Bill and Hillary Clinton left office bruised by impeachment but without the criminal charges their adversaries once believed were coming.

Now, it is not unusual to encounter anti-Trumpers who believe big indictments from Trump-Russia special counsel Robert Mueller are just around the corner.

One doesn't have to wander around the anti-Trump web to see similar sentiments, not just about Manafort but about other top figures in the Trump circle. The indictments are on the way.

Mueller has indeed indicted a lot of people. But to this point, no one around President Trump has been charged with colluding, or conspiring, with Russia to influence the 2016 election.

Mueller has charged 32 people and three companies. Four individuals are former Trump aides. One is a lawyer in London loosely connected to the Manafort case. One is a California man charged in relation to the Russian troll farm. And the great majority of those charged, 29, are Russians or Russian companies out of Mueller's reach.

So far, Mueller has five guilty pleas, one trial under way, and 29 cases that are probably never going to go anywhere.

Starr accomplished a lot, too. While best remembered for pursuing the Lewinsky affair, Starr got 15 convictions over the course of his investigation.

Now Mueller is conducting his first trial, and he might well win a conviction. If that happens, look for the special counsel's cheerleaders to declare that this is just the beginning.

Maybe it will be. Or maybe it won't.

Perhaps there will be more indictments from Mueller. Perhaps, say, Roger Stone will be charged for something related to his business affairs, or there will be other charges against other people unrelated to collusion. In the end, though, it's likely the report will be what Mueller is remembered for, while those big new indictments remain just around the corner.

Byron York is chief political correspondent for The Washington Examiner.

COLUMNIST

BYRON YORK



Getting a first opinion

It seems every week I get another letter from my hospital saying that one of my doctors has resigned, and that I can choose from the following list of health care providers. The list seems to shrink each time around. There's one M.D. on the list, along with several P.A.s, RPNs and a few titles I haven't heard of.

Why are my doctors all resigning? Is it me? Was it something I said? Doc, I was just joking when I said, "That's all right, not everyone can graduate first in their class."

I wonder if he's really resigning, or if they're shoving him out the door. Is it about money? Something tells me it's all about money. I say that because it always is.

Who do I complain to when my doctor leaves? The person who answers the phone? Could anyone possibly have less say in how a hospital is run than the person who answers the phone? Oh, yeah, I forgot -- there is no person who answers the phone at the hospital anymore. It's just a machine. Did all the humans resign? Why didn't I get a letter about that? If you do get to speak to a person on the phone, they always want you to answer a few survey questions after the call. All the questions are about the person who answered the phone. I want to answer questions about the idiots who run the place. The receptionist isn't the reason my doctors keep resigning; it's the administrators. When do I get to answer a survey about them?

I've taken to asking my friends for doctor recommendations. Bob said, "I was going to ask you. I haven't had a doctor since 2010. My old one said he didn't get into medicine to fill out forms, and then he left the country."

They always say to get a second opinion. I'm having a hard time getting a first opinion. Who will refill my prescriptions? On one recent change of "health care providers," as my mail-order prescription company calls everyone in the business,

my new GP hadn't even heard of some of the pills I was taking. So who do I trust? The old doctor or the new one?

"Are you still seeing Western doctors?" my niece Sylvia asked me.

"Apparently not," I said. "I know a good herbalist," she said. I wondered if she knew any bad ones. And how she would know the difference.

So what can you do? I picked a random name off the new, shorter list of health care providers. I hope this one doesn't resign before she orders refills of the stuff that makes me tired and the stuff that makes me queasy and the stuff that keeps me from drinking grapefruit juice.

Sometimes I wonder if I would be better off stopping that drug and drinking the juice instead. But what do I know? I'm not an administrator.

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VILLAGE IDIOT

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