

The Butler County Banner

OPINION

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LEGISLATIVE UPDATE State Representative Steve Sheldon

Heroes of History

This Memorial Day weekend, we will remember the heroes who sacrificed everything for the ideals and values that our country represents. Many see the holiday as a long weekend kicking off the summer, yet it is something much more. It isn't about the cookouts or about being a three-day weekend. We set aside this time to pay tribute to the courage of men and women who paid the ultimate sacrifice to protect their loved ones and those who call this great county home. Their bravery is the price paid for our nation, our freedom, and our democratic republic. Their sacrifice will not be forgotten.

We are fortunate to have a rich military history. It is deeply woven into the fabric bounding this beautiful Commonwealth together. Kentuckians' call to service dates back further than even our nation's, as the pioneers who called the Kentucky territory home fought with great distinction in the French and Indian War. It continued through the American Revolution and into the 19th century when more of our soldiers fought than any other state in the War of 1812. Kentucky patriots have pushed back against the forces of evil around the world—leading the fight in the Pacific, in Europe, and in the Middle East—to keep this country safe. They made the ultimate sacrifice so that the greater good could prevail.

Kentuckians know freedom's price. In fact, the Medal of Honor, the military's highest recognition, has been awarded to a total of 60 Kentuckians. That is why, on this and so many other memorial days, we remember. And as we remember, I'd like to share a few stories lost in time about heroes who donned camouflage and gave their lives in the cause of freedom.

Morris E. Crain, Technical Sergeant, U.S. Army, of Ballard County, received the Medal of Honor for his actions during the final days of World War II. Facing powerful German forces across the Moder River in France, Crain's outstanding valor helped Americans preserve the hard-won bridgehead. The Americans fell back from the house to house as the Germans pressed forward. When a house defended by some of his men came under deadly fire, he ordered his men to retreat. He held the position alone while bullets crashed through the walls and hit all around him until the enemy destroyed the building.

John W. Collier, Corporal, U.S. Army received the Medal of Honor for his bravery in the breakout of the Pusan Perimeter during the Korean War. The Greenup County native and three fellow infantrymen volunteered and moved forward to neutralize an enemy machine-gun position which was hampering the company's advance, but they were halted twice. On the third attempt, Collier exposed himself ahead of his comrades and destroyed the enemy's machine-gun nest despite heavy barrages of fire. After rejoining his squad, an enemy grenade landed in their midst. Shouting a warning, he unhesitatingly threw himself upon the grenade and selflessly smothered its explosion, saving the others from death or injury.

Joe C. Paul, Lance Corporal, U.S. Marine Corps, went beyond the call of duty in the Vietnam War. The Whitley Countian received the Medal of Honor for his heroic actions that saved the lives of several fellow Marines. In a violent battle where his platoon was pinned down, wounded marines could not move from their exposed positions and rejoin the rest of their platoon. Facing almost certain death, Paul chose to disregard his safety and boldly dashed across the fire-swept rice paddies, placed himself between his wounded comrades and the enemy, and delivered suppressive fire. He continued to divert the Viet Cong long enough



Big Biz, Big Govt: Voters are wary



By Jim Waters

Four days before the Primary Election, Rep. Adam Koenig, an Erlanger Republican, tweeted about Fayette County Constable Wade McNabb – with whom he's sparred regarding legislation restricting constables' police powers – hoping his nemesis would lose a reelection bid while apparently entertaining no possibility he might fall short in his own campaign.

"Happy we got my bill passed this year so I don't have to deal with him again," tweeted Koenig, who was first elected in 2006 and was running to represent the 69th District for a ninth term. "Hopefully the voters will take care of him on Tuesday."

Actually, voters "took care" of both, sending McNabb and Koenig packing.

Voters also dismissed Union Republican Rep. Sal Santoro – another eight-term legislator – and Hebron Republican Rep. Ed Massey, chair of the House Judiciary Committee.

Positions on critical issues matter and citizens are paying more attention than given credit by the political establishment.

Consider what happened to Massey, an avowed school choice opponent seeking a third term.

While we've praised Massey in this column for his innovative work in helping bring reform to the Teachers' Retirement System, he ignored the voices of parents and citizens by opposing more

educational alternatives for children.

Voters responded by handing Massey his walking papers, indicating a growing rejection of what an increasing number of citizens regard as "big education" – a monolithic establishment often hostile to parents that isn't successfully educating children, either.

Free-market-minded voters in Kentucky, like elsewhere, also show increasing concern about the coziness between government and business, making them both bigger.

Consider Marianne Proctor's 52% to 48% defeat of Santoro despite his huge \$122,000 campaign war chest, "much" of which "was from road contractors."

Santoro raised that re-election money while chairing the influential Transportation Budget Subcommittee.

Voters were willing to give up whatever Santoro's seniority might mean for their region – a consequence bemoaned by the local political and even establishment media in Northern Kentucky – for someone who isn't so beholden to the big business elements permeating our transportation budget and policies.

It matters to voters that Santoro served as the point person for big business during a failed five-year campaign to raise the state's gasoline tax by a whopping 10 cents a gallon, which would have added a half-billion dollars to Kentuckians' already heavy overall tax burden.

Road contractors and big business went to the mat for the gas tax increase but, fortunately, came up way short.

Such policy and political defeats of tax-and-spending policies favored by entrenched

lobbyists in Frankfort indicate "different attitudes toward big business, a fault line between the establishment and liberty factions within the GOP," observed Bluegrass Institute Visiting Policy Fellow Andrew McNeill, who's worked with Republicans in Frankfort for two decades.

It also signals concerns among voters who are pro-small business, pro-entrepreneur, and very skeptical of the big-business lobby's consistent efforts to get special treatment.

Tuesday's primary results fit with what's happening in other places – voters more determined to make changes ensuring that those chosen to represent them will govern with the same skepticism.

While Republicans will continue to enjoy a supermajority status in both chambers of the legislature, McNeill sees "a market correction of ideas" reverberating throughout Republican caucuses nationwide – a shift away from the mindset that "the pro-business, pro-Chamber agenda is the dominant strain of conservatism within the Republican Party."

Previously, party leaders may have not had any reason to question that orthodoxy, but now McNeill says it's coming into focus.

"A significant portion of the conservative movement is becoming as skeptical, and rightfully so, of big business as they are of big government and they certainly don't like seeing the collaboration between the two," he adds.

Jim Waters is president and CEO of the Bluegrass Institute for Public Policy Solutions, Kentucky's free-market think tank. Read previous columns at www.bipps.org. He can be reached at jwaters@freedomkentucky.com and @bipps on Twitter.

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