

OPINION

“Representative government demands an ongoing conversation between legislators and constituents.”

Alan Siegel

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Zing!

READERS' OPINIONS
STATED SUCCINCTLY

Not long ago, controlling women included involuntary sterilization.

From the Duke of York to the Dork of Yuck.

A 4.6% increase in wages and salaries last 3rd quarter. That study definitely didn't include Florida state workers.

You are paying for the COVID tests whether you take them or not.

Florida, where developers have freedom to exploit land. A less-free Florida would be a better Florida.

Listen up – nobody is pro-abortion. The accurate term is pro-choice. Our bodies, our choice.

It's so windy today, there are whitecaps on our birdbath.

Instead of recorders on teachers, they should put muzzles on all legislators that sponsor crazy bills!

Florida's new COVID strategy: Don't test, don't tell!

Annoy DeSantis. Vote by mail!

Why are Tallahasseeans so in love with trees?

Cameras in the classroom? With the surge of the virus, Florida is lucky that there are still teachers who willingly show up.

Where, exactly, would our city commissioners like for the City Walk residents to move to during this frigid spell?

Herd immunity or herd mentality?

The faithful love it, but the rest of us are tired of the constant lies spewed by Republican leaders.

Martin Luther King had the right dream for all Americans.

Florida state dessert? Key lime pie! Duh!

Why change a sweet thing that's not broken? Visit tallahassee.com/zing to submit your Zing!



Low-income families will feel it now



Sky Beard
Your Turn

The U.S. Senate's inaction on the Build Back Better Act was felt by families across Florida last week when their Child Tax Credit payments didn't arrive in the mail. In fact, 91% of families in our state will lose out because of the enhanced CTC being allowed to expire.

The families hit hardest will be those already struggling to make ends meet.

In 2021, the enhanced CTC payments lifted nearly a million children out of poverty across the state, according to the Center on Budget Policy and Priorities. Now, these families are at risk of losing any gains they made to create a better life for their households.

The loss of this critical lifeline comes as coronavirus cases are surging statewide, keeping people home from work without a paycheck, and forcing some to choose between rent or groceries.

According to a survey conducted by the Census Bureau, families receiving up to \$300 in monthly assistance per child used the payment on school expenses, food, and other household costs.

It's not too late for legislators to help prevent childhood hunger and poverty. The Senate can resume the enhanced CTC payments by passing the Build Back Better Act, which contains provisions to fight child hunger year-round by giving states and school districts the means to ensure kids have access to healthy meals at school and at home.

For example, one provision in the bill would ease hunger during the summer, the hungriest time of year for kids who would usually eat at school. Build Back Better would expand the Summer Electronic Benefits Program (Summer EBT) to all 50 states,

The U.S. Senate's inaction on the Build Back Better Act was felt by families across Florida last week when their Child Tax Credit payments didn't arrive in the mail.

giving parents and caregivers an additional benefit to buy groceries during summer break.

In Florida alone, this will help more than 2 million kids get the nutrition they need when school is out for summer.

Expanding the Community Eligibility Provision is also necessary to ensure kids have access to the healthy food they need year-round.

This provision in Build Back Better helps schools feed more kids with less red tape during the school year, so they can focus on learning and not their empty stomachs. If passed, the CEP expansion would provide free meals at school to a projected 1.1 million additional Florida students.

We've already seen it work in many schools across Florida, where they've been able to make breakfast and lunch free for all students.

Passage of the Build Back Better Act offers a rare opportunity to lift millions of children out of poverty and prevent their parents from having to make desperate choices. It's a fundamental investment in the health and futures of our next generation.

You can help them by letting Florida Sens. Marco Rubio and Rick Scott know why this matters to you, and that passage of a strong Build Back Better Act could be a life-changer for Florida's children living with poverty and hunger.

Sky Beard is the director of No Kid Hungry Florida, a campaign launched by the national nonprofit Share Our Strength.

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Conservationists owe Carlton Ward Jr. a big debt of gratitude

Last spring, the Florida Legislature unanimously passed the Florida Wildlife Corridor Act, covering nearly 8 million acres of our state, not only securing access to the reclusive Florida panther and other wildlife, but also protecting the headwaters of major watersheds, including the Everglades.

The law helps sustain working ranches and preserves forests and waters of coastal estuaries, such as the Big Bend's.

The act grew out of a lobbying campaign by renowned conservation photographer and filmmaker Carlton Ward Jr. and made him only the sixth Floridian ever to be awarded honorary membership in the Garden Club of America, composed of 200 clubs nationwide.

My garden club nominated Ward for this rare honor, with the notable support of the National Geographic Society, The Nature Conservancy of Florida, the International League of Conservation Photographers and White Oak Conservation.

Carlton Ward is Florida's 21st century Marjorie Stoneman Douglas, great champion of the Everglades. What Douglas achieved with her pen; Ward has achieved with his camera.

We who care about saving Florida's heartland for centuries to come owe him a debt of gratitude and continuing support before the legislature this

session.

Susan Smathers, Jacksonville, FL, fljrmis71@gmail.com

Gov. DeSantis needs to change his stance on value of vaccines

Gov. Ron DeSantis needs to get his priorities straight and focus more on Florida and less on his presidential and personal interests.

What DeSantis has been missing in action is promoting vaccines. He refuses to use federal dollars to run positive TV ads.

Instead, our governor promotes monoclonal antibody treatments, sold by Regeneron.

My spouse and I and two friends gathered roughly five days before we all became symptomatic with COVID-19 on New Year's Day. We're all fully vaccinated and I'm 76 and only had flu-like symptoms for one day only.

Two days later I tested negative for omicron and the others were still positive but up and about.

Yes, vaccinated people can get infected and pass on this variant; however, odds of dying and hospitalizations are minimal for those who are vaccinated.

Seven of my family members, friends, or work associates have died from COVID-19 in the past two years, who were not vaccinated.

*Gov. DeSantis, Hello!
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