

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

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Reader wants less Bangstad, more international coverage of consensus issues

To the Editor:

As a summer/vacation resident of this beautiful area for decades, I have always made it a point to read *The Lakeland Times*. Whereas I do agree with a recent letter to the editor that the *Times* often unfairly blurs the borderline between news reporting and editorial writing, I respect that the *Times* has a perspective and can be interesting reading, even though I personally disagree with the *Times* overwhelmingly. However, given the dire state of journalism and especially local journalism, differing perspectives have value most of the time.

As a local newspaper, certainly the *Times*'s mission is to cover and comment on local news. Sadly, this has resulted in years of a trivial battle between a local brewery over a few parking spots. The *Times* claims to support transparency, free speech, human rights and freedom. Again, sadly this has resulted in juvenile shots at President Biden and generalized rants about the so-called "deep state" and "globalists." The *Times* continually warns us of great threats "from within," ignoring substantial threats to freedom and democracy across the globe.

Of course the extreme political polarization in the United States is of great concern. People are moving to areas where the vast majority of folks look alike, think alike and vote alike. Extremists on both sides win congressional elections leading to a representative body without moderates and operating with little motivation to compromise; a necessary component of a functioning democracy. This is of great concern.

However, I submit that substantial threats to democracy, free speech and human rights exist outside our borders. The Putin-led invasion of Ukraine, China's increased crackdown on free speech and the imprisonment of Muslim Uighurs, India's Hindu nationalism, the threat to Taiwan's democracy etc. The list goes on. Why doesn't the *Times* expand its focus and educate us on international issues? Finding common

ground can bring the realization that there are issues where there is some semblance of consensus. Rather than constantly demonizing and insulting those who have differing opinions, finding areas of agreement can lead to civil discussions. One doesn't build a coalition or gain followers by driving people away and categorically dismissing their opinion.

There is a model for a small town newspaper to have a major impact. Art Cullen won a Pulitzer Prize for his work on environmental and cultural issues in a small town in western Iowa. His newspaper and book brought international recognition. Cullen does come from a different ideological framework. Also, Cullen's style is more folksy and milder than *The Lakeland Times* strident and often uncompromising writings. Perhaps a broader perspective and a change in tone could benefit the *Times* and transform it from a cranky parochial publication to one that brings people together in protecting governmental transparency, free speech and freedom.

Christopher Bryant
Bloomfield Hills, Mich.

AI is killing actual intelligence

To the Editor:

If you have been around for about a half a century or so, like me, you can literally say that you are older than the internet. As a UW-Madison graduate of the 80s, I can proudly say we also watched video kill the radio star. Between the gaming industry and the mass marketing of products, Big Tech eventually went after the most precious resource on the planet, us. Our time, attention, money, children's education, our voting and ballot box processing, banking, medical care, phone calls, photographs, text messages, e-mails, in short our privacy was lost, given away, sold or stolen.

We grew up with boundaries and limits on addictive items generally being audited by our parents. If not our parents, our parents trusted our teachers and school administrators to expect the same standards. The people we elected to represent us were held to the same set of



high standards. Kindness nor moral conduct however can be mandated. It is at best self-regulated. Early Americans knew their own struggles and knew that part of humanity would not change. Their desire was a more perfect union.

We as Americans have agreed on the two standards set in the combining threads of the Ten Commandments woven with the Bill of Rights. Pull either out of our school, home, church or government and we get exactly the unraveling that one would expect. Who teaches fear in America? Who promoted fear in your home? How did it get delivered?

Once captured, especially in our youth, can then be easily reprogrammed. I am seeing the now generational result of the children who have now been disconnected from learning about God, his plan for creation, his laws for us to abide by and the fact that our Bill of Rights to life itself only come from God. That is the truth of American history. We start at the beginning, God's word, the holy Bible.

In the beginning, God created the heavens, and the earth. Our own U.S. astronauts proclaims this to all of Earth on Dec. 24 1967 when on Christmas Eve, they read Genesis 1 1-10 via radio broadcast to all of the people waiting on Earth. The first photograph of Earth from space

was taken on that same Apollo 8 mission. How childlike we are to think we know better than God about any matters? When we have only just begun to discover his universe by taking a baby step.

We either respect God's law of the Ten Commandments and respect that America was built on trust in God with the God-given right to life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness. The alternative has played out repeatedly in world countless history platforms. It's interesting how our elected officials and their trust in God drives the policy of the day. Our Founding Fathers knowing their own hearts anticipated human nature to manipulate and rule over others would resurface time and again, thus they built in protections in anticipation of such events. We believe in and will defend our personal liberty over the mob of the moment. Are you standing with a mob or standing with God? Only God knows.

Artificial Intelligence (AI) now is designed to prompt you to relax, let it do your thinking for you, your research for you, just trust it. In God we trust that we wake up and start thinking for ourselves and sever the cord now attached to our children. America is always one generation away from collapse. Fix it now please.

Teresa Dorn
Land O' Lakes

OPINIONS

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Smears for money

The Southern Poverty Law Center just released a report claiming there are 1,225 hate and anti-government groups in America. These groups cause "fear and pain (in) Black, brown, and LGBTQ communities."

The SPLC lists such groups on its "hate map."

I once believed the center. Well-meaning people still do. Apple once gave them \$1 million.

But what donors don't know is that today, the SPLC smears good people, not just "haters."

Ayaan Hirsi Ali grew up Muslim in Somalia, but now she criticizes radical Islam and sometimes (maybe this is what really bothers the SPLC) fraternizes with American conservatives. The center put Hirsi Ali on its list.

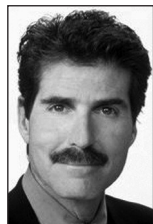
The center also smears the Family Research Council. I sometimes disagree with the council. But they don't belong on a "hate map."

"When they don't agree with you politically, they're going to list you as a 'hater,'" says council Executive Vice President Jerry Boykin in my new video.

"You are a hater!" I tell him. "You hate

gays."

"No, I don't hate gay people!" he responds. "I know gay people, and I've worked with gay people." The council merely opposed gay marriage, an opinion they shared with Joe Biden, Barack Obama, Bill and Hillary Clinton ...



John Stossel
COLUMNIST

One man became so enraged by what the SPLC wrote, he went to the council's headquarters to kill people. He shot a security guard. Fortunately, that wounded guard stopped him before he could shoot anyone else.

"He told the judge that he was there to kill as many of us as possible because we were a 'hate group,'" says Boykin.

The center also smears the Ruth Institute, a Christian group that believes adoption agencies should first try to place children with straight couples.

I told Ruth Institute President Jennifer Morse that she must be "a hater."

"I like gay people!" she laughs. "I have no problem with gay people! That's not the issue. ... There could be cases where the best person for a particular child would be their

Uncle Harry and his boyfriend. ... But we owe it to the children to give them the best we can, which generally is a married mother and father."

When the SPLC put the institute on its hate map, its bank cut them off.

"You're an organization that promotes hate, violence ...," wrote the bank. "Therefore we're not doing business with you."

The Ruth Institute and Family Research Council are still on the hate list.

"There's no appeal. I sure don't know how you get off," Morse complains.

I suspect the center keeps its hate list long to bring in lots of money.

The center pays some of its people more than \$400,000 a year.

"More than my entire annual budget," Morse says. "So yeah, whatever they're doing — it pays."

It sure does. Harper's Magazine once reported that the center was the richest civil rights group in America, one that spends most of its time and energy trying to raise more money.

They promised they'd stop fundraising once their endowment reached \$55 million. But when they reached \$55 million, they raised their goal to \$100 million, saying \$100 million would allow them to "cease costly fundraising."

But when they reached \$100 million —

they didn't cease. They collected \$200 million. Then \$400 million. Now they have \$730 million.

Yet they still raise money.

"Much of which is in offshore accounts in the Caymans," says Boykin.

It's true. You can see it on their tax forms.

Today the SPLC even smears groups like Moms for Liberty and Moms for America, calling them anti-government extremists because they oppose sexually explicit content in schools, and seek school board seats to try to "stop ... school districts (from) disregarding the opinions of parents."

Give me a break. The center puts Moms for America on its "hate map," but not Antifa, the hate group that beats up people on the right.

Today the Southern Poverty Law Center is a hate group itself.

It's a left-wing, money-grabbing smear machine.

Every Tuesday at JohnStossel.com, Stossel posts a new video about the battle between government and freedom. He is the author of "Give Me a Break: How I Exposed Hucksters, Cheats, and Scam Artists and Became the Scourge of the Liberal Media."

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OPINIONS

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THE LAKELAND TIMES : OUR VIEW

Our views represent the institutional voice of The Lakeland Times. They are researched and written independent of the newsroom.

GREGG WALKER, Publisher | RICHARD MOORE, Columnist

As the saying goes, the Devil is in the DNR

Ok, maybe the saying goes a little differently, but you get the picture.

The Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources is one of the nastiest, most dishonest, most underhanded and most vicious of any Wisconsin bureaucracy that has ever existed. OK, except for maybe state and local public health bureaucracies, but that's a separate story.

Naturally, this evil character comes out more when there is a Democratic governor. When Democrats are in power, Dr. Jekyll becomes Mr. Hyde.

Back during the days when Democrat Jim Doyle was governor, things got so bad — and so many lives were destroyed — that we compiled an entire book from the investigative stories we developed. Many of the stories about DNR actions and officials demonstrated such warped behavior and outlook that many people put them in the 'Surely this can't be true' category.

But they were true. To cite just one example, one of our favorites, a DNR water specialist once had a house on a lake near Rhinelander. It's funny how DNR officials who don't think people should live on lakefront properties somehow end up living on lakefront properties. Anyway, this official added a deck, but, oops!, county officials said it wasn't allowed because it was too close to the ordinary high water mark.

Not to worry. The official got a second opinion — as it happened, from a co-worker he supervised in the DNR water division. Yup, she put on waders, waded out into the water, and miraculously found a new ordinary high water mark that allowed said deck after all. All this from two officials who mercilessly persecuted average citizens for minor and even non-existent infractions.

That's when the saying, 'the Devil's in the DNR' was born! Details didn't matter; only the DNR did.

Things quieted down during the Scott Walker years, when evil Republicans decided that maybe, just maybe, an agency whose very mission had become trampling on people's constitutional rights wasn't a very good idea after all.

But of course along comes Tony Evers, and we have back to the future.

Now the agency has gone rogue again. Its recent behavior in the land grab known as the proposed Pelican River Forest easement purchase is quintessential evidence that the agency should be shut down and rebuilt from scratch.

In order to steal land and put an untold number of people into perpetual poverty — thousands and thousands and their children and grandchildren — the agency lied and cheated and failed to follow statutory requirements. Among other things, it failed to properly notice affected local government officials, and it filed opposition resolutions in the circular file so

they could report no known opposition to the Natural Resources Board.

What a fun bunch!

Now we have Oneida County's good-faith and common-sense effort to revise its shoreland zoning ordinance to be more user friendly and logical, not to mention more efficient in permitting.

And suddenly, the DNR says it won't support some of those revisions because they are illegal, even though they have allowed them in some places since at least the time of Moses. Actually, the story is that the author of the Ten Commandments planned to settle in northern Wisconsin but found the DNR's shoreland restrictions too onerous, so he went to Egypt instead, where he whittled everything down to 10 easy-to-follow logical rules.

The rules are anything but logical in Wisconsin. For example, the state enacted a law allowing the rooftops of flat boathouses to be used as decks. Curiously, though, the DNR is telling Oneida County that people cannot have any stairs to access those decks.

In other words, the DNR didn't like what the legislature did, so, noticing the absence of any explicit mention of stairs in the statutory text, banned them. So people can have decks they cannot use. That's perfect bureaucratic logic, and it spells out the DNR's First Commandment: Thou shalt not cross the DNR.

Never mind that stairs attached to a structure should logically be considered part of the structure. The DNR said no, even though, as mentioned, other counties routinely permit them.

Now Oneida County is fighting back, and we urge every resident to vocally support the county's zoning committee as it hires outside counsel to take up the fight.

A couple of points are worth making.

At last week's county administration committee meeting, corporation counsel Mike Fugle cautioned that Oneida County could face a very big bill if this battle goes to court and the county loses. The county would be on the hook for all the costs of the agency coming in to write and implement a superseding "compliant" ordinance.

Fugle is right; in that scenario the expense would be great. Fugle was also doing his job as counsel for the county, advising on the worst-case downsides of any lawsuit or action. His advice was responsible and legally proper, if not the politically proper advice that needs to be followed.

Indeed, taxpayers should not be too concerned that any such bill would come our way.

First, those of us who have been around long enough should remember the late-great Gary Baier, one of the fiercest defenders of property rights in Wisconsin, who, as Oneida County zoning committee chairman, constantly took on the DNR. In those days, in the early 2000s, Baier instigated

changes, and the DNR repeatedly threatened to come in with superseding ordinances and bill the county. Baier, with the courage to stand his ground, called the agency's bluff and enacted revisions anyway.

The DNR never challenged them. The agency never followed through.

There's an old adage that bureaucrats are ferocious and fearless, at least until they come face to face with a judge and, worse, a jury. Then they run for the hills. The DNR is simply not likely to have any stomach for a court battle that would quickly become a statewide property-rights flashpoint, with the agency's oppressive agenda on trial.

To be sure, times change, and maybe the DNR will be more aggressive. They also have a new liberal Supreme Court that should embolden them. But nipping at the heels of the agency's case is some very inconvenient and damning facts that limit their chances for success.

Most of all, the DNR is on shaky ground precisely because it allowed — and in some cases explicitly certified — ordinances that contain the practices the agency is now saying would be illegal in Oneida County. As Oneida County supervisor Steven Schreier suggested, it's almost a battle we would want to see.

To be sure, the DNR might challenge the ordinance and it's conceivable it could win. But that brings up the final reason for the county to stand strong with this proposed ordinance and to withstand DNR pressure to change it: It's the right thing to do.

The committee is in the process of enacting the people's will. In fact, it all started in a packed meeting of stakeholders in Minocqua. Even if the DNR prevails in court, the agency would win the battle only to lose the war.

An ill-advised court battle could pave the way to a public rebellion that could lead to a complete transformation of shoreland zoning, not to mention of a recognition that land conservation and land development need not be hostile neighbors. Through the compatible virtues of responsible growth and private stewardship, we can revamp our way of looking at property rights.

The stakes are enormous. A DNR victory over the provisions would bestow legislative authority upon the bureaucracy. It would also obligate the DNR to battle all those other counties. Think of the newcomers denied common-sense use of their properties. Think of all the owners of now nonconforming properties. Think of the backlash against the DNR.

A short-term travesty, for sure, but it would galvanize a property rights movements that has been dormant for a long, time, and whose time has now come again.

The message for Oneida County is clear: Now is not the time to let the DNR bully anyone in this county.

The brawler: Chris Christie's not mincing words

Last week's release of the second quarter's fundraising figures for the 2024 presidential candidates produced two notable news stories.

One was that President Joe Biden and his associated fundraising arms raised \$72 million between his late-April reelection launch and June 30. This financial haul, double what former



Jeff Robbins
COLUMNIST

President Donald Trump raised in the second quarter, poured 72 buckets of cold water on the "Dementia-Joe-isn't-supported-by-Democrats" narrative that had gained currency, pushed and peddled by Republicans.

And it was similarly unhelpful to wishful thinking in Republican circles that Robert F. Kennedy, Jr., the candidate from Pluto, poses a "headache" for the president. This isn't the case, except perhaps on Pluto.

The other news was that former New Jersey Gov. Chris Christie, whose uphill battle for the GOP presidential nomination was initially deemed by pundits to be destined for a rapid flameout, had already collected contributions from over 40,000 donors in the first 35 days of his candidacy. This lifted him over one of the qualifying thresholds for Republicans hoping to participate in the party's Aug. 23 presidential debate. Christie is not on the debate stage yet; he has to poll at 1% or more among Republicans in three approved polls. But with a recent Morning Consult poll showing him at 3%, he is getting there. Meanwhile, a super PAC supporting Christie, called Tell It Like It Is, seems likely to generate substantial financial backing from those who would like to see Trump flattened in the debate, and who see Christie as the only challenger capable of exposing the twice-indicted former president for the fraud that he is in prime time.

A former prosecutor, Christie has not minced words about Trump, which sets him very far apart from his fellow candidates, who are all mince, all the time. The reason for Trump's felonious pilfering of classified documents, Christie says, is because "he wants to pretend he's still president." While other Republicans have hemmed, hawed and hidden when asked whether they would pardon Trump if he's convicted and they're elected, Christie is unhesitatingly unafraid of heresy. "I would have a hard time considering any pardon," he says. As for Trump's threat to skip next month's debate, Christie is blunt about the old draft dodger's latest case of bone spurs. "If Donald Trump doesn't show up," Christie says, "he's a coward."

When it comes to Trump, Christie goes where no other Republican dares to go, which, of course, isn't necessarily saying much. When it recently emerged that the Money-Funneler-In-Chief had had one of his committees pay Melania Trump \$155,000 for "event planning and consulting," Christie unloaded on them both. "Trump is shameless," he tweeted. "A billionaire using donor money to pay personal legal fees and now paying his wife more than 2x what the average American makes just to pick some tableware. There's grifting, and then there's Trump grifting. Undisputed champs."

On matters relating to Donald Trump,

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NORTHWOODS POLITICAL DIGEST

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State legislators introduce tax-free retirement proposal

State Rep. David Steffen (R-Howard) and Sen. Rachael Cabral Guevara (R-Appleton) have introduced legislation to create tax-free retirement in Wisconsin.

The bill would exempt the first \$100,000 of retirement income for individuals age 67 or older and the first \$150,000 for married-joint filers. Currently, nine other states do not tax income earnings at all, and a handful of states including Illinois, Mississippi, Pennsylvania and Iowa explicitly do not tax retirement income such as IRAs, 401(k) plans and pensions.

By joining with these states, Wisconsin would be better poised to attract new employees and retain retirees, the lawmakers say.

"When our residents reach retirement age, they are faced with the impossible decision—do I stay in my home state with all the relationships and connections I've spent a lifetime building, or do I relocate to another state where I can afford to live out the retirement I've worked so hard for?" Steffen said. "They shouldn't have to choose. The bottom line is, we know the value our retirees bring to our families, communities and economy."

Under current Wisconsin law, certain retirement income such as Social Security and military earnings are already exempt from income tax. These existing exemptions would not count toward a retiree's tax sheltered income under the bill.

After evaluating a similar proposal, the Legislative Fiscal Bureau estimated that such an exemption would almost entirely eliminate the income tax burden for Wisconsin retirees.

"Retirement income and savings is something that impacts folks for years after they retire," Cabral-Guevara said. "This is then reflected by how much people spend at restaurants, on housing, and in their community. By keeping these retirees in Wisconsin, we will see an economic benefit. As I've said in the past, I trust hardworking Wisconsinites to spend their money more wisely than the government."

This bill is currently being circulated for co-sponsorship support and will likely receive a public hearing this fall.

Group: Reckless lawsuit filed by factory farm groups threatens oversight

The environmental group Midwest Environmental Advocates (MEA) is warning that a recent lawsuit filed against the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources (DNR) by two factory farm groups threatens to eliminate critical environmental oversight of Wisconsin's largest livestock operations and could lead to widespread contamination of drinking water and surface water.

Wisconsin Dairy Alliance and Venture Dairy Cooperative filed the lawsuit over the DNR's authority to require concentrated animal feeding operations (CAFOs) to apply for permits under Wisconsin's Water Pollution Discharge Elimination System



(WPDES) program.

In a complaint filed on May 26, the groups allege that factory farms should no longer have to apply for water pollution permits, a change that would eliminate the main source of environmental oversight of factory farms in Wisconsin. In a response filed on July 13, the DNR denies the allegations.

"This reckless lawsuit seeks to critically weaken the state's power to regulate livestock operations that generate massive amounts of liquid manure," said Peg Sheaffer, communications director for MEA. "It's a threat to public health and to all sectors of our economy—including tourism and agriculture—that rely on clean water."

Wisconsin Dairy Alliance and Venture Dairy Cooperative claim to represent the dairy industry, although it's unclear whether they have any members beyond the small group of individuals whose names are listed on paperwork filed with the state, Sheaffer said.

"There's overwhelming evidence to show that CAFOs cannot be trusted to regulate themselves," said MEA staff attorney Adam Voskuil. "Some of the people most closely associated with the groups that filed this lawsuit have a terrible environmental track record."

According to public records, MEA says the DNR and the Wisconsin Department of Justice took enforcement action against Todd Tuls, a founding board member of Venture Dairy Cooperative, for a massive manure spill in 2016 at Emerald Sky Dairy in St. Croix County. The spill, which sent 300,000 gallons of manure into a wetland, went unreported by Tuls until the DNR received an anonymous tip four months later, the group alleges.

In 2017, MEA alleges, the DNR took enforcement action against Randy Schmidt—another CAFO operator closely associated with Venture Dairy—in response to a significant manure spill at Schmidt's S&S Jerseyland Dairy. Schmidt is listed as a board member on the most recent annual report filed by Venture with the state of Wisconsin.

In the past two decades, CAFOs

have come to represent an increasing percentage of Wisconsin's livestock industry. In 2005, there were 135 permitted CAFOs operating in the state. Today, there are more than 330.

"As CAFOs continue to proliferate and expand, the amount of manure they produce—and the potential for spills, leaks and overspreading—will only increase," said MEA senior staff attorney Dan Gustafson. "Without DNR oversight, it would be incredibly difficult for neighbors and community members to know how and where that manure is disposed of."

Military suicide amendment passes in National Defense Authorization Act

This week the House of Representatives passed the fiscal year 2024 National Defense Authorization Act (NDAA), which includes provisions that raise military pay by the highest level in 20 years, improve housing and access to health care, and provide oversight over the Department of Defense, U.S. Rep. Derrick Van Orden (R-Wisconsin) said this week.

Additionally, the NDAA includes a Van Orden-sponsored amendment that addresses military suicide among National Guard and Reserve members.

"Addressing military suicide is my number one priority in Congress, and it should be of paramount concern to the Department of Defense," said Van Orden. "Our National Guardsmen and Reserve members deserve access to any resources that will prevent them from choosing a permanent solution to a temporary problem. This amendment will save lives, and I am proud to support it."

Originally proposed by Rep. Guy Reschenthaler, the amendment encourages the Department of Defense, in collaboration with the Department of Veterans Affairs, to monitor and ensure appropriate measures are available to reduce suicides among former members of the Guard and Reserve Components who were not activated for military service.

Pocan derides nearly \$1 trillion NDAA

U.S. Representative Mark Pocan (D-Wisconsin) is strenuously objecting to the House's passage of the \$874 billion National Defense Authorization Act (NDAA) last week, a bill he says he has never voted in favor of since being elected to Congress.

"It's time to say 'enough,'" Pocan said. "Year after year, we spend more and more on our national defense—it's too much with too little accountability. We have troops on food stamps while at the same time, price-gouging defense contractors are getting richer by the day."

Pocan said the entire process from House Republicans has been a sham.

"They have done away with all norms and stripped all bipartisanship from this bill," he said. "They didn't allow debate on amendments from Democrats, including mine to cut the overall Pentagon budget by \$100 billion, a fraction of the overall budget, which could help address domestic priorities like housing, education, affordable healthcare, and more."

Moreover, Pocan said, the bill was

littered with poison pill riders that attack the LGBTQ+ community, restrict access to abortion, and gut efforts to improve Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion in the military, undermining national security and putting troops in harm's way.

"I'll continue to fight to ensure these provisions never become law," he said.

The House did adopt an amendment offered by Pocan to require the Pentagon to report to Congress detailing the progress made to date in its ongoing efforts to pass an audit, and outlining the remaining challenges and outstanding requirements to achieving a clean audit opinion.

However, Pocan says Republicans refused to allow debate on a number of other priorities he supported, including an amendment to cut the topline funding level by \$100 billion, as well as several others that would improve cost and pricing data transparency in government contracts and require the Departments of Defense and State to report on illegal settlement activity in the West Bank.

Other Pocan amendments would have required the Department of Defense to report on the potential health effects of exposure to jet noise, including from F-35 aircraft, and prohibit discrimination in the military and ensure that standards for eligibility for service and equality of treatment and opportunity in service may not include any criteria relating to protected categories and gender.

The National Defense Authorization Act passed the House with a vote of 219-210. The Senate will consider their version later this month.

Fitzgerald introduces bill to keep politics out of boardrooms

Congressman Scott Fitzgerald (R-Wisconsin) has introduced the Performance over Politics Act to protect retail investors from repeat ESG proposals from activist shareholders of publicly traded companies.

The bill would permit issuers to set aside for three years resubmission of shareholder proposals that are substantially similar to proposals that received less than 10 percent of the vote once in the previous five years, received less than 20 percent twice in the previous five years, or received less than 40 percent three times in the previous five years.

A 2009 study noted that costs directly incurred by companies due to such proposals were estimated at \$87,000 per proposal, totaling \$90 million annually. Fitzgerald said the goal of the bill is to respect the decisions of the majority of shareholders and encourage more rather than less public companies — and get politics out of the boardroom.

"Activist investors have increasingly transformed boardrooms across America into partisan platforms where political agendas overshadow sound financial management," Fitzgerald said. "I introduced the Performance over Politics Act to rein in overzealous actors and to empower shareholders focused on the strategic direction and long-term goals of the company."

Robbins

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the Republican field runs the gamut from kneeling to groveling. To say that Christie stands out is an understatement. A "tell" that Trump doesn't relish having Christie hanging around on a prolonged basis to tell the truth about him came with Trump's at-

tack on Christie for recommending that he appoint FBI Director Christopher Wray. "(Wray) was recommended very strongly by Chris Christie, who is, you know, a sad case," Trump told Fox's Maria Bartiromo this past weekend. Christie isn't inclined to back down. "I think Chris Wray has done a very good job," he says.

A new poll of New

Hampshire Republican voters showed Christie in a tie for second place with Ron DeSantis, poised to overtake the Florida governor, who is in free-fall. Evidently tens of millions in cash on hand cannot cure a repellent personality. But an awful lot would have to happen in order for a Republican base so ill-disposed to acknowledging the truth about Trump to

reward someone like Christie for telling it. In the meantime, however, Christie, a congenital brawler, seems to be all in, and is serving notice that he intends to keep on punching.

Jeff Robbins, a former assistant United States attorney and United States delegate to the United Nations Human Rights Council in Geneva,

was chief counsel for the minority of the United States Senate Permanent Subcommittee on Investigations. An attorney specializing in the First Amendment, he is a long-time columnist for the Boston Herald, writing on politics, national security, human rights and the Midwest.

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