

OPINION

OUR VIEW

An easy fix: vaccinate

Call them what you want — immunizations, vaccinations or the good ol’ fashioned shot, but the important part is get them because they are one of the best weapons our nation has against a number of serious diseases.

We think it’s a pretty simple idea: You don’t want to get the flu or give it to your family and friends, so get a flu vaccination.

Contrary to rumor, you cannot get influenza by getting a flu vaccination. That’s the science; it is an inactive virus that cannot give you the flu. It can, however, make you feel some of the minor symptoms of the flu after the vaccination. But those feelings go away in about 24 hours.

Yes, getting a shot from a needle hurts a little, but helps a lot in keeping a potentially serious illness from settling into your body and the bodies of the people which you come into contact. Those bodies may include vulnerable people, including babies, elderly people, and others with health issues, who could die if they contract the flu.

Just like a flu vaccination, other immunizations have helped our nation rid itself of diseases that were once prevalent and impacted many people. Among the diseases preventable by vaccinations are chickenpox, diphtheria, mumps, and polio.

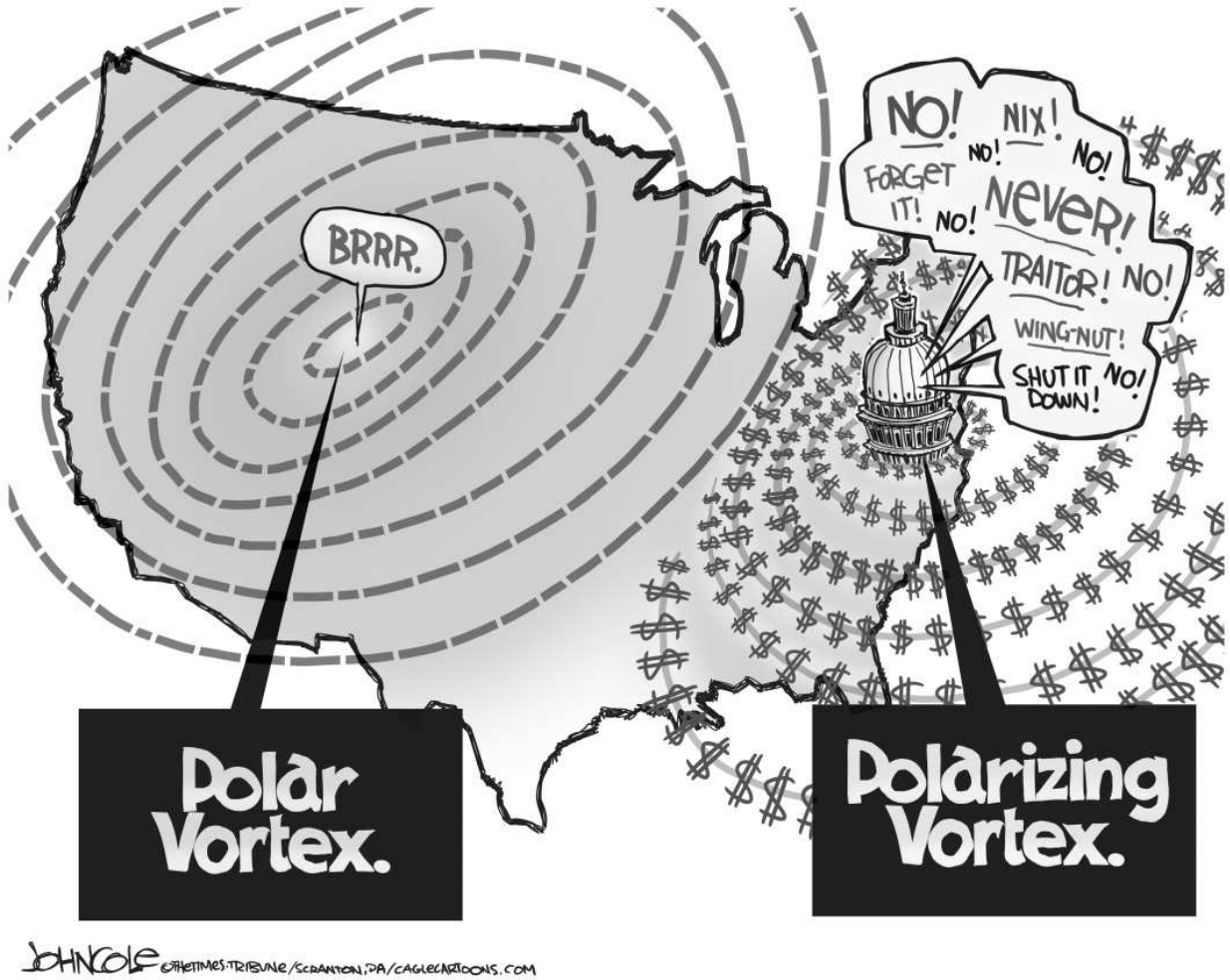
Take polio, for example. Polio is caused by a virus that lives in the throat and intestinal tract. It is spread through contact with the bowel movements of an infected person, for instance, by changing diapers. Polio was eliminated from the United States in 1979. However, polio still exists in some developing countries, according to the Minnesota Department of Health.

But the effects of this disease can still be seen in a few Borderland residents who walk with difficulty caused by the paralysis polio can cause.

Continued success in keeping polio from spreading and disabling depends upon maintaining high immunization rates.

For some people, the plethora of information on the Internet may make it difficult to distinguish between propaganda that vaccinations cause a variety of issues, such as autism, or hard science that shows no link between those issues and vaccinations. But, science has shown — again and again and again — vaccines do not cause the harm they’ve been accused of causing.

The answer to avoid serious complications of influenza or several other potentially dangerous diseases is easy: Get vaccinated for yourself, your family and friends, and your community.



LETTER TO THE EDITOR

Create jobs for people who need them

To the editor,
The job created by the Economic Development Authority was an example of using the power of office to create a job for a friend — that is not democratic.

Not including the people of International Falls on that created job is unfair. And if the people of International Falls would have had a say, that created job would have never happened.

Out of what,13 other applications, how many other

people were interviewed for that created job? How many thousands of dollars have been spent on that created job, and what’s to show for it? Where’s the employment for the people of International Falls?

With the town losing it’s tax base day by day, you want to waste more money on this created job. Is it not the job of city council, city administrator and mayor to bring employment to a town?

That created job is what prompted the people of

International Falls to want change on how the town is being run and who is running it.

I believe elections can’t get here fast enough for the people of International Falls. I think they will send a very strong message on how they want their town to be run and how their money is to be spent.

How about creating jobs for the unemployed? You created a job for Shawn Mason easy enough.

Darren Wallen
International Falls, MN

How to contact your lawmakers

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BY JASON STANFORD

A reality TV star speaks out about gays and loses his job, albeit temporarily. Meanwhile, a professional football player speaks out about gays and loses his job, apparently permanently. Some conservatives argue that tolerance means what’s good for Duck Dynasty’s Phil Robertson is good for ex-Viking punter Chris Kluwe, even though the former denigrated homosexuals and the latter advocated for their equality. But to equate the cases of Robertson and Kluwe equates tolerance for an unthinking acceptance of prejudice.

“When we heard about Phil Robertson from progressives, we’d hear, ‘that it was his right to say whatever he wants, but everyone’s right to not watch or employ him.’ In the Kluwe instance from the same crowd we hear, ‘it’s his right to say whatever he wants and it was disgusting to fire him.’ There’s a double standard,” said Tim Young, director of marketing for the Liberty Alliance, a conservative new media venture. “The message is a hypocritical one from progressives. They’re only cool with your opinion if they agree with it. Otherwise you should lose your job.”

I should point out that Tim Young, despite his right-wing tendencies, is my friend, but he and I disagree when it comes to politics. That is, he’s wrong and I’m right. I tolerate his abject wrongness in matters political because I value his intelligence and humor, but tolerating his

views does not mean that I accept them. Tolerance and acceptance are two different words because they are two separate concepts.

When Robertson’s views about gays, blacks, and women drew liberal censure, some conservatives such as Young saw the blowback as evidence of a lack of tolerance. Tolerance, for fans of dictionaries, does not require agreement. In fact, disagreement means that someone treated Robertson’s remarks seriously instead of ignoring them as the half-mad rantings of a reality TV star.

So when Young says that liberals are being hypocritical by defending Kluwe, he misses the point. If you’re not aware, Kluwe was the punter who alleged in an article for the sports blog Deadspin that he was cut from the Vikings because of his outspoken activism for marriage equality. Kluwe wrote that his position coach became so frustrated with his opinionated punter that he told a stunned players’ meeting, “We should round up all the gays, send them to an island, and then nuke it until it glows.”

For the record, the Vikings say that anti-gay prejudice has no place in their organization, and the team has hired outside counsel to investigate.

For his park, Kluwe doesn’t see any double standard in how he and Robertson were treated.

“I think that both Phil Robertson and I have the right to speak our minds, but we also have the right to the consequences of speaking our minds,” Kluwe said. “The

Vikings were well within their rights to cut me if they wanted to, but I also get to tell my story and let society judge whether or not we want to live in a world where speaking out on behalf of other people costs you your job.”

If liberals and conservatives reacted differently to Robertson and Kluwe, said the latter, it’s because people applied the same standard, not different ones.

“I think the key difference between me and Phil is that he was speaking out against a group of people, while I was speaking out for a group of people who are being denied their freedom,” said Kluwe. “It’s a subtle distinction, but it’s very important.”

It’s not that subtle. Robertson has said that gays are “ruthless” and “full of murder,” an opinion he derives from a version of the Bible I was never taught in Sunday School. Kluwe took the radical view that we are all endowed by our creator with certain inalienable rights, that among these are life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness. Where he got that idea, I’ll never know.

If there’s a lesson to be drawn from Robertson and Kluwe, it’s that we live in a country where it’s easier to get fired for fighting prejudice than for expressing prejudice, at least when it comes to gays. If you’re looking for a double standard, there it is.

Stanford is a Democratic consultant who writes columns for the Austin American-Statesman and MSNBC.

The Journal welcomes letters from readers

Letters should be limited to 500 words or less. Longer letters may be edited. Letters must be signed and include the telephone number and address of the letter writer. Only the author’s city address will be published.

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