

OPINION

OUR VIEW

Act is a good start

Stronger bullying laws for public schools approved this session by the Legislature and Gov. Mark Dayton are a good start to providing a safer, more comfortable place for children to learn. But how districts apply the guidelines forwarded by the Minnesota Department of Education will be the test of whether the laws are truly going to benefit our youth. The real path to a world without bullying starts at home. Parents, family and friends must do all they can to keep children from learning from their family how to bully. When children witness bullying, by one parent to another, by a parent to a child or even a child to a pet, they bring what they've learned to school, where they practice the art of bullying on their peers. However, it's difficult to legislate behavior in the home, so the Safe and Supportive Minnesota Schools Act can help. The act more clearly defines what is considered bullying. It calls bullying, in part, behavior that causes physical harm or fear of physical harm and "constitutes intentional

infliction of emotional distress." The act extends from bullying in person to bullying online. It allows schools to adopt and implement their own policies, provided they are at least as comprehensive as the new state rules and it puts more emphasis on staff training and consequences for bullying. Schools will be required to designate a bullying contact person and investigate reports within three days. The law includes 19 bullying categories, from physical appearance to sexual orientation and gender identity. During the debate, some lawmakers appeared to be reaching for some reason to oppose the act. Some wondered whether the act will result in kids being punished for expressing religious beliefs. Others argued it would do little to reduce bullying, would remove local control and would be too expensive to implement. We're confident our local schools will simply use this act as way to bring clarity to students and staff about what behavior is is now allowed in our schools and what will happen if this behavior occurs.



LETTER TO THE EDITOR

Donahue property costs too much

To the editor,
 What does building a trail through a bug-infested wetland, which is what the Donahue property is, have to do with economic development?
 And now, the city council will want to annex this property. Complete and total waste of tax money.
 Take a drive around

town. The streets are deplorable, shot, horrible. I hunt on roads in the middle of the woods better than the streets in town.
 All this wasted money could be going to the town where this money is supposed to be spent. Not on a whim of four individuals who must have their way at all cost — taxpayers' cost.
 Oh, and I forgot. A rail spur to the multimodal district. Do any of them have a clue what it takes to maintain rail and who pays for that maintenance? The taxpayer.
Darren Wallen
International Falls, MN

How to contact your lawmakers

FEDERAL OFFICES
President Barack Obama
 Democrat
 The White House
 1600 Pennsylvania Ave. N.W.
 Washington, D.C., 20500
 202-456-1111
 Website:
 www.whitehouse.gov
 E-mail:
 president@whitehouse.gov

U.S. Rep. Rick Nolan
 2447 Rayburn House Office Building
 Washington DC 20515
 202-225-6211
 Website: www.nolan.house.gov
 Facebook: US Rep Rick Nolan
 Twitter: @USRepRickNolan

Duluth Office of Congressman Rick Nolan
 11 East Superior Street Suite 125
 Duluth, MN 55802
 Phone: 218-464-5095
 Fax: 218-464-5098

Brainerd Office of Congressman Rick Nolan
 Brainerd City Hall
 501 Laurel Street
 Brainerd, MN 56401
 218-454-4078

U.S. Sen. Amy Klobuchar
 Democrat
 302 Hart Senate Office Building
 Washington, D.C. 20510
 202-224-3244

Minnesota Office:
 1200 Washington Avenue

South, Suite 250
 Minneapolis, MN 55415
 612-727-5220
 Website:
 www.klobuchar.senate.gov

U.S. Sen. Al Franken
 Democrat
 Senate Hart Building 320
 Washington DC 20510
 202-224-5641
 Website:
 www.alfranken.com
 E-Mail:
 info@franken.senate.gov

STATE OFFICES
Gov. Mark Dayton
 130 State Capitol
 75 Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Blvd.
 St. Paul, MN, 55155
 800-657-3717
 E-mail:
 Mark.Dayton@state.mn.us

Rep. David Dill
 571 State Office Building
 St. Paul, MN 55155
 651-296-2190
 800-339-0466
 rep.david.dill@house.mn
 Assistant: Joan Harrison

Sen. Tom Bakk
 75 Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Blvd.
 Capitol, Room 226
 St. Paul, MN 55155-1606
 Capitol Office phone:
 (651) 296-8881
 Email:
 www.senate.mn/senatorbakkemail

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GUEST COLUMN

The big bang, the multiverse and you

In 1979 Robin Williams declared, "Reality...what a concept!" Today his exclamation might be, "Infinite realities: way too much concept!" To be sure, science fiction and comic books have for decades exploited the idea of a multiverse (e.g. our universe — with an estimated observable width of 92 billion light-years — is just one of many universes); but the mind-boggling idea is just now reaching the mainstream media. According to the Huffington Post, National Geographic and other sources, astrophysicists report that (you'd better be seated for this) they've detected gravitational waves from the aftermath of the so-called Big Bang. Studying the oldest light in the universe (I think it was faintly blinking "Eat here and get gas"), researchers giddily found support for the theory of "cosmological inflation," and by extension, multiple universes. The project's original scientific papers are intimidatingly chockablock with ten-dollar words such as "primordial ripples in spacetime," "cosmological constant" and "superstring



Danny TYREE

TYRADES!

theory." Luckily, the nation's newspapers have simplified it for the layman and boiled the message down to "Shop Locally." Okay, it's ironic that the media think Joe Sixpack will appreciate the reports of these mysterious realms impossibly far away, considering all the interviews that start out, "What? Nice old lady what's-her-name next door has been sitting dead on her porch for the last three years? Guess I got kind of tied up in my man cave. Hey, do you reporter guys have any inside information on whether Saddam Hussein will ever surrender those weapons of mass destruction?" These theoretical other universes would operate with different rules. Maybe galaxies, stars and planets never coalesced in

some. Gravity, inertia and the speed of light might be unrecognizably different. More intriguingly, there would probably be universes where "what goes around just stays there," homeowners with glass houses are encouraged to throw stones, horses are regularly led to the water and made to drink, old dogs are taught new tricks and everybody likes a wiseguy. Knowing nothing except a four-dimensional existence, it's hard for us to wrap our minds around the nature of some of the possible universes. Perhaps colors have SOUNDS and everything has alarming dimensions, trajectories and parameters. I know: think of a universe made entirely of bridesmaid dresses. The theological implications are staggering. Given that some universes might be populated by subtly different doppelgangers of ourselves, folks might be tempted to exclaim, "It's five o'clock somewhere AND I'm in church somewhere. Get off my back!" Granted, many scientists scoff at the multiverse theory,

declaring it to be UNTESTABLE — because of the insurmountable distances involved, because of shaky assumptions and mostly because no one thought to request "Common Core, may I?" Some institutions like a challenge and are undaunted by the general understanding that we would never ever be able to communicate with or visit these other universes. The U.S. Supreme Court, for one, is determined to see to it that altruistic corporations are able to funnel emergency rations of unlimited campaign donations to whatever bizarre creatures might inhabit those universes. I'm sure that when all is said and done, some of you will be unimpressed by the practical applications of the research and still ask, "Who gives a rat's rump?" Coincidentally, one outlying researcher theorizes a universe in which light is made up, not of photons, but of rat's rumps, and hypothetical "dark energy" is really just ... **Tyree's weekly column is distributed exclusively by Cagle Cartoons Inc. newspaper syndicate.**

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