

OPINION

FIRST AMENDMENT “Congress shall make no law respecting an establishment of religion, or prohibiting the free exercise thereof; or abridging the freedom of speech, or of the press or the right of people peaceably to assemble, and to petition the Government for a redress of grievances.”

OUR VIEW

Move toward odd number

An effective school board encourages its members to express their individual opinions, respect others’ opinions, and vote their conscience, according to the The Minnesota School Board Association’s guidance.

We believe that is among the most important functions of a school board in governing a school district.

But to effectively achieve this goal, we encourage the International Falls School Board to seriously consider doing what’s necessary to seat an odd number of members.

Just a few minutes on the Internet shows many school districts in Minnesota have seven or nine members, while the same time shows just as many have even numbers of six and eight members.

But recent history has shown the Falls School Board split on several very important decisions, most recently in selecting a district superintendent.

Board Chairman Gordy Dault did what was necessary to move the issue forward by setting aside his own opinion to cast a vote that would result in a decision Wednesday. Delaying this decision would have only delayed the time a new superintendent would have to learn the duties and responsibilities

under the guidance of the current superintendent.

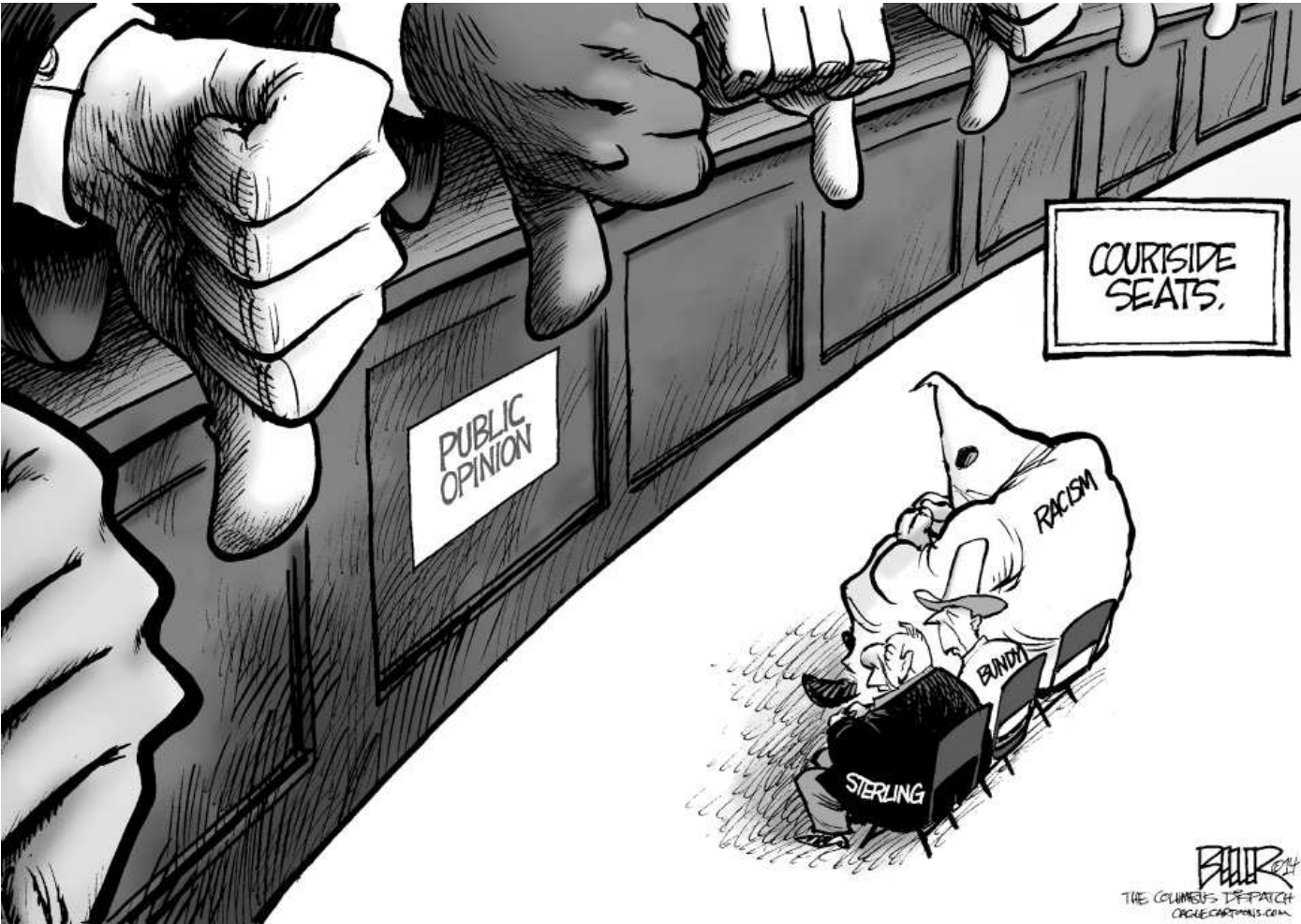
Few governments are guided by an even number to avoid ties, or split votes. In those cases, nothing is accomplished; no motion or directive or action is moved forward.

Locally, we can think of no council or board made up of an even number of members other than the school board.

And while split votes can occur even with an odd number of members, that’s likely only to happen when a member is absent from a meeting. Votes on controversial or divisive motions can sometimes be delayed in those cases to allow a full board to decide the issue. And that would allow each member to, as the association encourages, express their individual opinions, respect others’ opinions, and vote their conscience

As the entity legally charged with governing the school district, each school board is responsible to its community to govern efficiently and effectively, states the Minnesota School Board Association in description of the role of the school board.

In an effort toward this responsibility, we urge the board to research, take comment on and move forward with the necessary work to seat an odd number of members.



LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

No party corners market on truth

To the editor,
Right, left, who are we to believe? No one.

Before we jump on anyone’s bandwagon we best check out both sides of any statement.

Fox News got burned this past week. We can all learn from that.

The president has said “To let the ignorant keep talking” — that’s how they expose themselves. I’m sure he would like to take back some things he has

said, as all of us would. The right and the left and in between cannot point fingers at anyone.

They, like ourselves, are just as guilty of hypocrisy as anyone. No political party has a cornered market on the truth. We are as humanity a totally depraved race where no one is truly good. Only by the grace of God some are not as bad as others.

Remember Jesus Christ is not a politician. He is

not a Republican as Fox News would have you believe, nor a Democrat. He is God, He is truth and it is only He who can and will bring righteousness, loving kindness and justices along with peace to this Earth.

Do not cease to express yourself at the voting booth. The price paid for that right has and will be too great to ignore.

Just remember who is in charge of all governments

and all things on Earth and in the heavens.

Then trust your eternal destiny to Him and Him alone. He will turn no one away who will believe in Him. Only those who reject Him. His Word will stand forever, though heaven and Earth pass.

Read your Bible if you have one. If you don’t, find one and believe what it says.

George Blais Sr.
Ray, MN

Conservative climate change policy

To the editor,
Unfortunately, conservative thinking on climate change is largely ignored in the media today.

On one side of the debate we have liberals who, relatively speaking, tend to favor big government regulation and subsidies in response to climate change.

On the other side of the debate we have people who deny our best knowledge about reality.

On neither side of the debate we have the vast majority of scientists whose research informs us about the climate.

Almost unheard from are conservative voices on climate change. The only truly conservative position on the realities of climate change is the scientific consensus – very well established – is that climate change is occurring, is largely due to human activities, and is a serious threat to the

environment that sustains us.

Conservatives work within known reality to craft responses to climate change which are proportional to the threat yet emphasize market-friendly solutions and private property. They support simple yet robust regulation that is sensitive to business needs and leverages the forces of capitalism to stabilize the climate and minimize the damage. They seek to reform or eliminate laws and policies which make climate change worse. They advocate a government response which is paid for and revenue-neutral.

Conservatives also look on the bright side, enabling the private sector to take responsible advantage of the positive effects of climate change.

Conservatives are not alone in advocating responsible nuclear power and other climate-neutral energy sources,

for example, but they are more likely to emphasize the benefits to national security, the importance of streamlined regulation, and the colossal amount of money to be made in the private sector in the process.

It is no surprise that conservative responses to climate change overlap considerably with policies that conservatives already favored anyway. Liberal responses do the same. In the face of legislative gridlock, most politicians silently recognize that a crisis is too good of an opportunity to waste. If the changes are good, after all, it’s simply making lemonade out of lemons.

The fundamental conservative principles concerning climate change – stewardship of the environment and responsibility to future generations – are deeply rooted in conservative history, the Bible and most major religions

in the world. Over the last decade or more, unfortunately, the right wing of American politics has largely abandoned its conservative principles in this domain, especially at the national level.

There is, however, a surviving core who do hold conservative positions on the environment and climate change. They represent the best responses of the political right and the potential for a resurgence of mainstream conservative thought.

Don’t count on any of the major media outlets to pick up on it, however. They favor conflict over knowledge and wisdom.

Instead, search the internet for something along the lines of “climate science conservatives” or “conservative climate policy.” Then both open your mind and apply your critical thinking.

What could be wiser?
James W. Yount
International Falls, MN

‘Open on demand’ season begun

To the editor,
I thought your boating readers might appreciate a reminder that as per the operational orders issued by the U.S. Coast Guard in 2011, the “open on demand” season for the Ranier drawbridge began Thursday, May 1.

According to Chapman’s “Piloting and Seamanship,” a vessel wishing to open the drawbridge shall sound one prolonged whistle

blast followed within three seconds by one short whistle blast. The bridgekeeper responds with a similar signal if he intends to open the bridge. If the bridge cannot be opened he responds with five short blasts.

Regulations also provide for making the signal by horn, bell, shout, or any similar device who’s sound can be clearly heard. Additionally, in the case

of the Ranier bridge, the Coast Guard ordered that it have the phone number for the bridgekeeper displayed on it.

Canadian National Railway, the bridge’s owner, has been lax in operating the bridge in recent years and anyone experiencing delays should file a complaint to help keep the situation from getting even worse.

To be actionable, complaints about the

bridge operation should be made by the master of the affected vessel on an official U.S.C.G. complaint form. These are available at the Ranier city clerk’s office.

The U.S.C.G. complaint form is also available online at: <http://www.uscg.mil/d9/msuChicago/docs/Bridge%20Delay%20Form%2021May08.pdf>

Thomas Hall
Ranier, MN

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.

Mail letters to The Journal, 1602 Highway 71, International Falls 56649. Letters can also be sent by e-mail to laurel@ifallsjournal.com.

How to contact your lawmakers

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