

# Editorial Opinion

## Naples Daily News

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### HUMAN TRAFFICKING

## Helping those who live in fear of speaking up

Editorial Board  
Naples Daily News

The #MeToo movement has brought vital attention to the need for zero tolerance of sexual harassment and assault. It's unmasked unacceptable behavior by well-known figures in the entertainment and media industries. It's left seats vacant in Congress and the Florida Senate.

Much praise is due to those victims who bravely stepped forward to say, "Enough. This has to stop."

As the movement gains momentum, we're also reminded this is a specially designated month for attention to other victims who are trapped, too afraid to speak out and without the means to readily do so.

These are sexual assault victims in forced prostitution rings and financial occupational prisoners of human traffickers. Yes, these women and children who are modern-day slaves are among us in Southwest Florida just as anywhere else.

January is Human Trafficking Awareness Month. The state and region are fortunate to have government, institutional and community organizations and leaders collaborating to raise awareness and bring traffickers to justice, along with tending to the victims' needs.

Among many, there's Florida Attorney General Pam Bondi, Gov. Rick Scott, lawmakers, sheriff's offices in Collier and Lee, Florida Gulf Coast University's Human Trafficking Resource Center and organizations such as the Women's Foundation of Southwest Florida and Shelter for Abused Women & Children in Collier County.

Why so many resources? FGCU center statistics show there were 75 law enforcement investigations into human trafficking in a seven-county region from Naples to Sarasota in 2014 and 2015.

### Done, yet to do

■ The federal Frederick Douglass bipartisan act passed in July was "the most significant legislation regarding human trafficking," shelter officials said in a statement. It "allocates \$520 million over four years toward programs to identify and aid victims of trafficking and prevent it from occurring."

■ Florida lawmakers have passed several laws since 2014 to crack down on human trafficking, from creating harsher penalties to measures ensuring the continued safety and solidifying the futures of children who become trafficking victims. Notably, there was the 2015 law requiring the posting of human trafficking awareness signs at rest stops, airports, emergency rooms and strip clubs.

Collier Sheriff's Office officials said in a statement the posters have been an asset, though it's "difficult to assess their direct value as an investigative tool because many of our human trafficking tips come to us anonymously through our tips line or the National Human Trafficking Resource Center tips line."

As to the effectiveness of other measures? "We can say that we support any legislation that helps take human trafficking criminals off the streets," Sheriff's Office officials said.

■ Pending is a federal act that would provide money to the Labor Department for training law enforcement officers on how to identify victims. "The more education we provide to emergency personnel, the more victims we will be able to save," the shelter statement says. The Collier shelter says the 49 trafficking victims it's helped were identified by law enforcement.

■ A bill pending in the 2018 Legislature would require hotels and motels to have training programs for employees on identifying and reporting suspected human trafficking.

■ Nearly a year ago the Collier shelter began a campaign to raise \$10.4 million in 18 months toward providing a shelter in the Immokalee area for victims of human trafficking and domestic violence. More than \$7 million is donated and pledged so far, a spokeswoman said. More information on donating: naplesshelter.org/immokalee/

■ If you suspect someone is a victim, the always-staffed National Human Trafficking Resource Center hotline is 1-888-373-7888 or text 233733 (BE FREE). Locally, call the shelter's 24-hour crisis hotline at 239-775-1101.

BillDay  
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### LETTERS

#### Concerned for public schools

An open letter to Collier County School Board member Erika Donalds:

You and fellow board member Kelly Lichter ran as parent advocates. Early on, it became clear that you represent a specific group of parents: those with a grievance with the school district, parent-attorneys who represent them and parents whose children attend charter schools (like the one you co-founded with Lichter).

I would like to remind you that you represent Collier County parents who choose traditional public schools too.

You and your husband are deeply involved at the state level. You are on the state Constitutional Revision Commission and your husband is a state House representative. You are in a position to advocate for more resources for our district, to restore state education spending and to stop diverting millions of tax dollars to privately managed charter schools. You acknowledged the need for more resources for instruction when you shared your reasons for opposing the district's intervention against House Bill 7069, a bill your husband helped to pass. The bill requires districts to shut down low-graded schools, allowing charter schools to replace them.

Closing schools is highly disruptive. What can you say to reassure parents that closing Village Oaks Elementary will help their kids? Share your evidence that the alternatives (state-approved "schools of hope" or district-appointed charters) will be better. Have you asked what parents prefer?

These questions keep me up at night. I watch School Board meetings on video at home through the Collier County Public Schools website, so I hope to hear a few answers in your board comments. I'm not the only one concerned about the future of our public schools.

Anne Hartley, Naples

#### Column should replace comic strips

I gave up reading Ann McFeatters' column some time ago because all she ever wrote were negative columns about President Donald Trump. On Jan. 6, I decided to try again to see if anything had changed. After reading the entire column, I came to two conclusions:

First, she continues to be delusional. Every action she describes is mischaracterized to attribute negative intent to Trump. She completely ignores the fact that what he is doing is systematically implementing the campaign promises that resulted in his election. Perhaps she just can't understand a politician doing that.

Second, her column belongs in the comics section. I believe the space devoted to "The Argyle Sweater," "Close to Home," "Brevity" and "Arlo and Janice" would be sufficient to fit her column. Whatever would be lost in intelligent content by making this change would be more than compensated for by improved comedic value.

Mike Zeigler, Naples

#### Where are the priorities?

Help. I don't get it. Maybe there's information I don't have, but I noted your Jan. 2 editorial regarding 2018 priorities asked, "After Irma, will we be ready for the next one?" Further, it states "hurricane hardening is one of seven community priorities the Daily News editorial board has ID'd for 2018." Also, "We don't want to be asking the same questions a year or a decade from now about concerns that arose

but were deemed less urgent with the passage of time."

We experienced the lack of generators for pump stations, etc., and heard that it would cost too much money to be that well prepared for an event that may not happen for a while and questions about how often would we need those generators compared with the cost.

I have nothing against sports arenas and more sports opportunities for visiting sports teams, etc., but the planned park, according to recent figures made known, would cost about \$60 million. So, it comes to my mind, as much as Collier County wants to create venues, programs and increase visiting team opportunities that would add to community income, might we not want to ask ourselves and county commissioners who approve these expenses, where are the priorities?

Granted, we may not have another Irma in the near future, but we might. Have you noticed that Mother Nature has thrown some hefty curve balls lately? Are the county and other powers that approve expenditures for our benefit asking the right questions and spending in the right places? I am just asking.

Diane Davis, Naples

#### Relates to lack of restaurant hygiene

The letter in the Jan. 7 Naples Daily News about restaurant hygiene makes me think about the Army mess halls and field messes in which I had to eat in various parts of the world during my 20-year Army career and the truck stop restaurants I ate in all over the country during my subsequent 30 years as a coast-to-coast Teamster truck driver.

The incident that comes to mind was in a truck stop restaurant where the tables were all set up with coffee cups upside down and napkin-wrapped silverware. Upon turning my cup over I noted stains inside it, the kind that could be wiped out with a finger, so I informed the waitress who brought me another cup, which was also stained.

Once again I told the waitress I needed a clean cup. The next one she brought me was full of coffee.

Lawrence Cutting, New London, Ohio

#### Fooling some, some of the time

The current occupant of the Oval Office rails non-stop about fake news, hoaxes, liars, rigged elections and anything else that casts an aspersion on the legitimacy of his office while practicing what he preaches against in spades.

In my view, he has not put forth even one commendable initiative in his time in office. As if from a list, he has continued to methodically disassemble each of former President Barack Obama's legislative successes, much to the detriment of advances at home and abroad. Such vengeance and spite are acts of a true sociopath, aka the leader of the free world.

The leaders of both houses of Congress stand back and exploit the president's flawed intellect with glowing praise, certain he will rubber-stamp their draconian agenda.

Case in point: Tax "reform." The Republicans, who brazenly trampled the democratic process in the dark of night, behind closed doors, without debate, will not get away with it when the votes are counted in 2018. And the deficit hawks and champions of the middle class went along to get along.

As they say, you can fool some of the people some of the time.

Jerome Shapiro, Naples