

Greed over safety causes wrecks; letters

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Body

Newspaper engages in 'political theater'

Well, well, The Roanoke Times continues its attacks on Virginia's elected officials. But, as usual, it's an attack on a conservative, such as U.S. Rep. Morgan Griffith (Nancy Liebrecht, "Political Theater," commentary, Feb. 14). Liberals cannot stand living in a red state like Virginia.

We also just learned that The Roanoke Times has apparently assigned their "ace" investigator/reporter, Dan Casey, to the "Griffith" case. He is to follow Morgan everywhere, and report anything that Morgan says that might be embarrassing. Dan anxiously awaits the slightest comment, even utterance, that could be used against Republicans.

Will they ever understand that people such as Griffith, Rep. Ben Cline, Gov. Glenn Youngkin, etc. have to stand for election, and often reelection, and therefore, are public servants, who can be taken out of office any time the public wants.

They apparently are happier with their elected officials than they were with their local newspaper

Talk about "political theater." Why not publish an occasional critical letter, rather than pretend you are the editor of the USA TODAY?

Phillip W. Unger, Daleville

School board gives poor showing to bullied teen

On March 16, I attended a meeting of the Roanoke County School Board in support of a transgender girl and her mother who would be speaking about the bullying the student is experiencing at Glenvar High School. The bullying is coming not only from her fellow students, but from parents who are spreading misinformation and insults via social media.

While we waited for the time allotted to public comment, we heard several presentations about meritorious activities involving students, some of whom addressed the board. These students received smiles and words of encouragement from the four board members present (Brent Hudson, Tim Greenway, Cheryl Facciani and ***Mike Wray***). Board members even invited proud parents to come up for photos. All of that was great; these students warranted accolades.

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But when the **transgender** student's mother spoke, followed by her daughter - each candidly describing the bullying underway and the terrible impact on the student, including suicidal depression and an eating disorder - not one board member responded. Not one board member acknowledged the extraordinary courage on display, the heartbreaking vulnerability these two already vulnerable people were submitting themselves to in an effort to make the school a safe place for this young person's learning.

A child stood before them - a child whose safety and education is their responsibility - and not one board member said a word. They barely met her eyes. It is a measure of the poisonous atmosphere for transgender children in the county school system that the adults in charge of their well-being could not even bring themselves to say: we hear you and we care; we know this must be frightening for you; we commend you for your courage in appearing before us tonight.

None of these words would have committed them to any particular policy regarding how to best integrate transgender students into our county school system. These words would simply have been humane and mature. I was appalled at their absence and the board members' behavior.

Cindy Lollar, Roanoke

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Do you notice an increase in train derailments lately? Do you wonder why?

Some years ago, Shaffers Crossing was the place trains went to be checked for safety problems. Members of the train crews would notice something like a bearing with a flat place. The car with the bad bearing would be pulled and sent to Shaffers to have the bearing replaced. Then the Norfolk Southern decided to save money and pull crew members who did this work. Shaffers Crossing was shut down. I would bet that many more shops that did safety work were closed across the rail lines.

Maintenance of Way workers rode the rail lines themselves looking for problems with train beds and signals. These workers were trained to get a crew to fix these problems before a serious derailment happened.

Saving money by employing fewer workers and ignoring safety concerns can be seen in the number of derailments happening now.

Years ago an N&W president said he would make only a certain amount above the lowest worker. Now it's a race to see which railroad can pay the most to their top white-collar employees. I hope all of these well-paid workers are happy on their way to the bank while people living along rail lines suffer because of the lack of employees to run a safe railroad. Greed is more important than running a safe railroad. Right?

Vicki Wray, Roanoke

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