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Is your newspaper under 50,000 circulation or above 50,000 circulation? Under

Please give a brief explanation of issues discussed and the results achieved. (This space will expand as you type in your comments.)

This pair of editorials advocates better compensation for – and attention to – our state's public workforce.



OPINION

Walter E. Hussman Jr., Publisher
 Todd Frantz, Vice President and General Manager
 Gerry Tritz, Opinion Page Editor
 Gary Castor, Managing Editor

A family owned and operated independent newspaper

OUR OPINION

Deserving state workers might get raises ... next year

It's official, state workers: Among the budget priorities at the Capitol, you don't rate high enough for pay raises. Or even cost-of-living raises.

Maybe next year.

It likely doesn't come as a surprise if you've worked for the state for any length of time.

You've heard the talk before: "You're dedicated, hard-working public servants, and you provide valuable services to the residents of Missouri. You do a great job, and we appreciate your service. You deserve a pay raise, and we're going to work to get you one."

Maybe next year.

Toward the beginning of this year's legislative session, we urged lawmakers to spike Gov. Eric Greitens' recommendation not to include state employee pay raises in the budget.

After all, Missouri ranks dead last among states when it comes to paying their state workers. Even last year, when state workers did get a small cost-of-living raise, it didn't keep up with inflation.

But let's face it: To the governor and most lawmakers, getting you out of the pay cellar isn't a priority. After all, lawmakers represent different parts of the state, and most legislative districts don't have that many state workers. Out of sight, out of mind.

Your governor has looked at the problem and determined there's just too many of you. If we could get rid of some of that "big, bloated bureaucracy," as Greitens collectively described you, we could raise pay for the rest of you, he suggested. No word, so far, on which agencies are bloated or how the state will further reduce its workforce.

But don't fret. There's another plan you can look forward to — the pay study. Two years ago, lawmakers, knowing you are underpaid, commissioned a study to see whether you are underpaid. Last year, the study confirmed you are underpaid.

The study also revealed some other issues that apparently don't rise to the level of needing attention, such as the fact low pay for state workers has caused a high turnover rate, which costs the state more through increased overtime and training.

Sometimes studies serve as an inexpensive way to show concern. Implementing the recommendations is another thing.

Maybe next year.

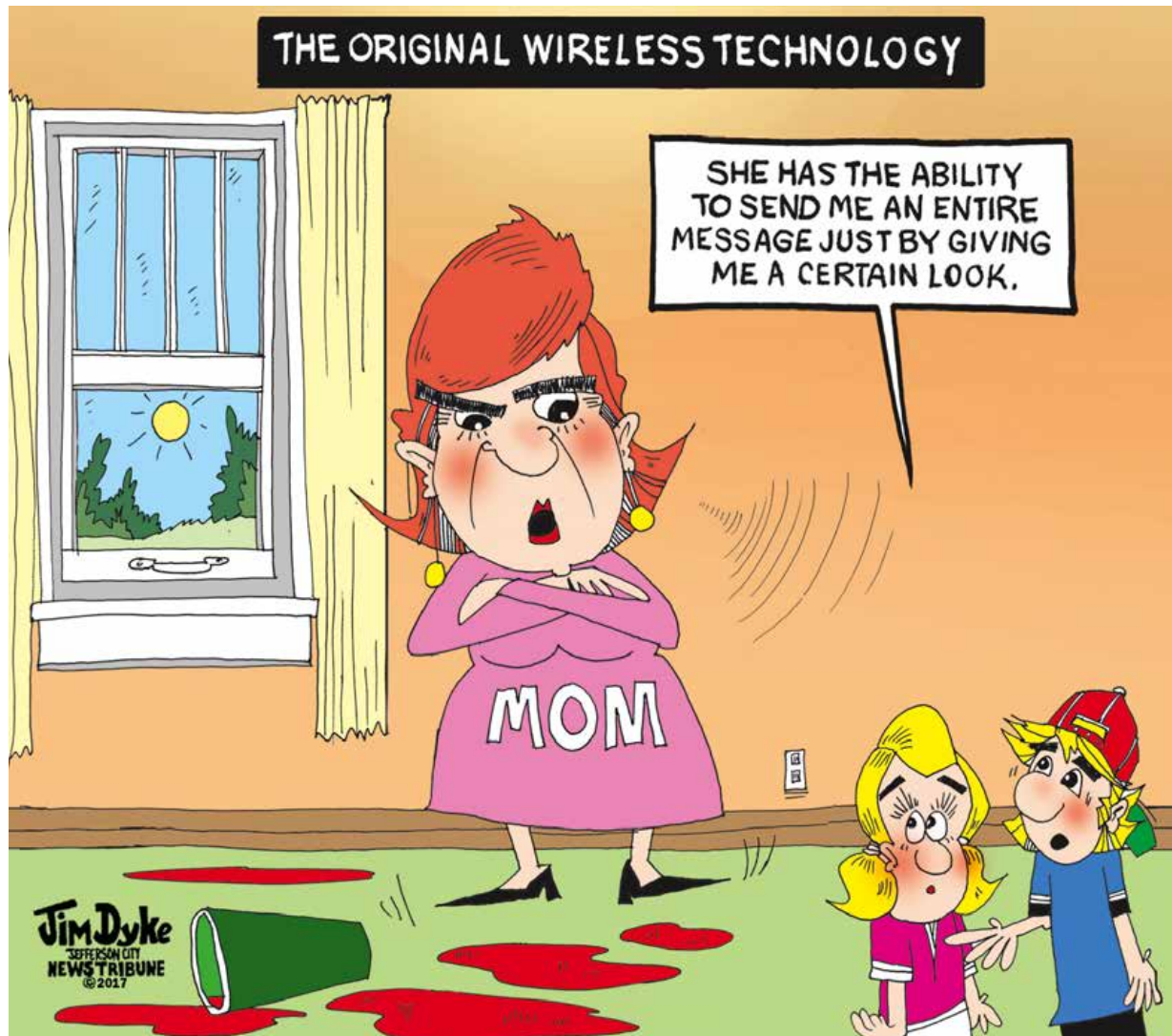
There's always next year. Cubs fans said that long enough and it finally happened, right?

By next January, lawmakers will have had more than a year for the pay study results to sink in.

"Missouri's state employees are its No. 1 asset, and these employees have grown weary of decades of political-speak about improving their pay," Sen. Mike Kehoe said last year. "This study will provide a mechanism to move from talk to action."

We hope, next year, Kehoe and our local lawmakers will be able to spur their colleagues into action.

News Tribune



Culture thrives when it's all shook up

WASHINGTON — In July 1954, a 19-year-old Memphis truck driver recorded at Sun Studio the song "That's All Right." When a local disc jockey promised to play it, the truck driver tuned his parents' radio to the station and went to a movie. His mother pulled him from the theater because the DJ was playing the record repeatedly and wanted to interview the singer immediately. The DJ asked where the singer had gone to high school. He answered, "Humes," an all-white school.

The DJ asked because many callers "who like your record think you must be colored, singing the way you do." Elvis Presley from Tupelo, Mississippi, had committed "cultural appropriation."

According to Ray Connolly in "Being Elvis," Arthur "Big Boy" Crudup, a black Mississippian, had popularized "That's All Right." When Presley first entered the recording studio, he was asked, "Who do you sound like?" He replied, "I don't sound like nobody." Actually, he sounded like someone melding the sounds of gospel, country and what was then called "race music" — music by Southern blacks — to make something new.

The hysteria du jour, on campuses and elsewhere, against "appropriation" illustrates progressivism's descent into authoritarianism leavened by philistinism. This "preening silliness" — the phrase is from The Federalist's David Marcus — is by people oblivious to the fact that, as Marcus says, "culture blending is central to the development of, well, everything."

Indignation about appropriation is a new frontier in the ever-expanding empire of cultivated victimhood: "Marginalized" persons from a particular culture supposedly are somehow wounded when "privileged" people —

those who are unvictimized or less victimized — express or even just enjoy the culture of more pure victims without their permission.

The wearing of sombreros at tequila-themed parties triggered — to speak the language of the exquisitely sensitive — the anti-appropriation constabulary at Bowdoin College. Oberlin College's palate police denounced as "appropriative" an allegedly inauthentic preparation of General Tso's chicken. Such nonsense is harmless — until it morphs into attempts to regulate something serious, like writing fiction: Do not write about cultures other than your own.

With characteristic tartness, novelist Lionel Shriver responded to this "climate of scrutiny" when, at a writers' conference, she clapped a sombrero on her head and said: We're not supposed to try on other people's hats? That's what we're paid to do. Instead, "any tradition, any experience, any costume, any way of doing and saying things, that is associated with a minority or disadvantaged group is ring-fenced: look-but-don't-touch."

Eugene Volokh, law professor and maestro of the Volokh Conspiracy blog, drooly says: If only there were a word for "telling people that they mustn't do something because of their race or ethnic origin." Asks Franklin Einspruch, writing in The Federalist, "Where does new culture come from? It is copied, with alterations, from existing culture. The process is reproductive. Sexy, even. So of course, the outrage-as-a-lifestyle wing of the progressive left wants to dictate rules for its proper enjoyment."

The Federalist's Robert Tracinski says appropriation is actually learning through admiration, adding: "The left

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loudly promotes its flattering self-image as ... more culturally open and advanced — more intellectual, artistic, and cosmopolitan," but its "appropriation" tantrums reveal how its fixation with "racial identity and resentments ends up imposing the narrowest kinds of parochialism."

The University of Pennsylvania's Jonathan Zimmerman, writing in the Chronicle of Higher Education, says "the mostly left-wing quest for cultural purity bears an eerie echo to the right-wing fantasy of national purity, which peaked during the so-called 100-percent-American campaigns of the early 20th century." Of Chuck Berry, Zimmerman writes: "His first big hit, 'Maybellene,' adapted an old melody that had been recorded by country-music performers like Bob Wills and His Texas Playboys. Berry combined the 'hillbilly' sound of white country with the African-American rhythm and blues that he imbibed in his native St. Louis." For this, he was heckled in Harlem.

John Lennon said, "Before Elvis, there was nothing." Not really: There was Crudup, and before him there was a long, creatively tangled line of precursors. Elvis, said Mick Jagger, was "an original in an area of imitators." Actually, no cultural figure is entirely original.

Listening to Radio Luxembourg late one night, teenaged Keith Richards heard "Heartbreak Hotel," and "when I woke up the next day I was a different guy." Bob Dylan, a freewheeling cultural appropriator himself, said, "Hearing Elvis for the first time was like busting out of jail." Those who would wall off cultures from "outsiders" are would-be wardens.

George Will's email address is george.will@washpost.com.



George Will

It's time for an independent investigation into Russian ties

By the Dallas Morning News (TNS)

President Donald Trump's abrupt firing of FBI Director James Comey is more than merely troubling. It's destabilizing.

The FBI is in the midst of a high-profile investigation into whether members of Trump's campaign broke the law through their contacts with Russia while Russian agents were actively trying to help Trump win the presidency.

Just days before he was fired, Comey met with Justice Department officials to ask for more resources for the Russia inquiry, according to officials who spoke to the New York Times, the Washington Post and the Wall Street Journal. The Justice Department denied the reports.

Comey's firing came one day after Trump urged an end to the investigation, calling it a "hoax" and "a taxpayer-funded charade." He began his letter to Comey with a bizarre thank you for Comey's allegedly having assured him "on three occasions" that he was not personally under investigation.

Hours after the firing, Trump's depu-

ty press secretary said "it's time to move on" from the Russia query. She added: "It's been going on for nearly a year. Frankly, it's getting kind of absurd."

Despite these efforts to undermine the investigation, the White House insists it had nothing to do with Comey's firing.

Instead, Trump said, he fired Comey because he tarnished the FBI's reputation last year in how he handled the conclusion of the FBI's investigation into Hillary Clinton's private email servers.

The White House released a memo from the Justice Department laying out the administration's justification for the firing: The department does not fault the FBI inquiry itself, nor Comey's conclusion no charges should be brought. Rather, it says Comey overstepped his bounds in calling a news conference to announce those conclusions and for saying Clinton had been "extremely careless" with classified information.

This tracks almost identically with criticism from Democrats, including



Clinton herself, who have long argued Comey's missteps helped make Trump president. But if these faults were so grave, why wasn't Comey fired months ago?

In fact, Donald Ayer, a former depu-

ty attorney general under President George H.W. Bush whose criticism of Comey was cited in the memo, called the firing "a sham" today. He noted

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... and I have filled him with the Spirit of God, with wisdom, with understanding, with knowledge and will all kinds of skills.

Exodus 31:3

YOUR OPINION

Issue-oriented letters to the editor are welcome. All letters should be limited to 400 words in length; longer letters may be edited to conform to the specified length. The author's name must appear with the letter, and the name, address and phone number provided for verification. Letters that cannot be verified by telephone will not be published.

A recipe for 'Trump Blunt Cake'

Bernice Decker
 Jefferson City

Dear Editor:

Does anyone have a recipe for a "Trump Blunt Cake"? When the Watergate scandal broke, and then-President Richard Nixon fired Archibald Cox, someone made a recipe for a Watergate Cake so that at least something good would come from Watergate. The cake was good; better still was the president's resignation, which showed that no one, not even the president of the United States, is above the law.

Although there are similarities between Watergate and this administration's behavior, the fact is that our nation is far more imperiled by the possibility of collusion between the president of this nation and a foreign government than the fact of a coverup to win an election. Furthermore, our congressmen and women at that time had a firm grasp of their responsibility to impeach the president of the United States. The comparison stops there. I applaud Sen. Claire McCaskill for her courage and her willingness to meet openly with the people to listen to their concerns and respond in a responsible manner. I deplore Sen. Roy Blunt's statement, posted on his Facebook page: "Director Comey has served the country well in a number of different roles. Many, including myself, have questioned his actions more than once over the past year. I believe new leadership at the FBI will restore confidence in the organization and among the people who do the hard work to carry out its mission."

What can be said? Does Sen. Blunt truly believe that when a person under such a serious investigation fires the person investigating him will restore confidence? Jeff Sessions had to recuse himself because he had lied about his relationship with Russia. How is it that he can reclaim his position long enough to fire one of his investigators? Furthermore, this is not the first person to be fired. Sally Yates was fired for doing her job, also investigating collusion with Russia. I am appalled.

We need to have an independent prosecutor and an independent investigation because firing the one who is investigating a serious offense does not instill confidence.

Liberal fascism

Larry Russell Johnson
 Jefferson City

Dear Editor:

The Constitution is being taken out of context. We have raised a generation of little Nazis.

In Jonah Goldberg's book "Liberal Fascism," Goldberg argues that both modern liberalism and fascism descended from progressivism, and before World War II, "fascism was widely viewed as a progressive social movement with many liberal and left-wing adherents in Europe and the United States."

Meriam-Webster defines fascism as a "A way of organizing a society in which a government ruled by a dictator controls the lives of the people and in which people are not allowed to disagree with the government."

A favorite tactic employed by leftists is to describe the Nazis as right-wing, with Adolf Hitler as their leader. Rewriting history is pretty common for left-leaning liberals, as their history is littered with injustice, the KKK and the Jim

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OPINION

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OUR OPINION

Survey sheds partial light on public workforce

A recent survey by state workers sheds some — but not much — light on the state of Missouri’s public workforce. The same could be said for Gov. Eric Greitens’ reaction to the survey.

State workers were polled in July. They most frequently describe Missouri’s government as “caring,” “underpaid,” “good” and “unorganized,” according to the Associated Press.

None of those descriptive words surprise us. We’ve always believed state employees to be a caring group, and it’s no secret they are underpaid. We’ve chronicled Missouri’s bottom-of-the-barrel pay compared to other states in news stories, and we’ve pushed for salary raises in editorials.

Greitens told the AP most workers who answered the survey questions say they care about state government and find work meaningful. But most also said the state is not focused on what residents need and how to help them. According to Greitens, many workers also reported agencies lack clear direction.

We’ve heard our share of anecdotal stories about mismanagement, chaos and general disorganization. And we’ve all seen the audits that highlight these faults, which occasionally even rise to criminal offenses.

But that’s not the norm, and government and its workers always should expect such oversight and scrutiny.

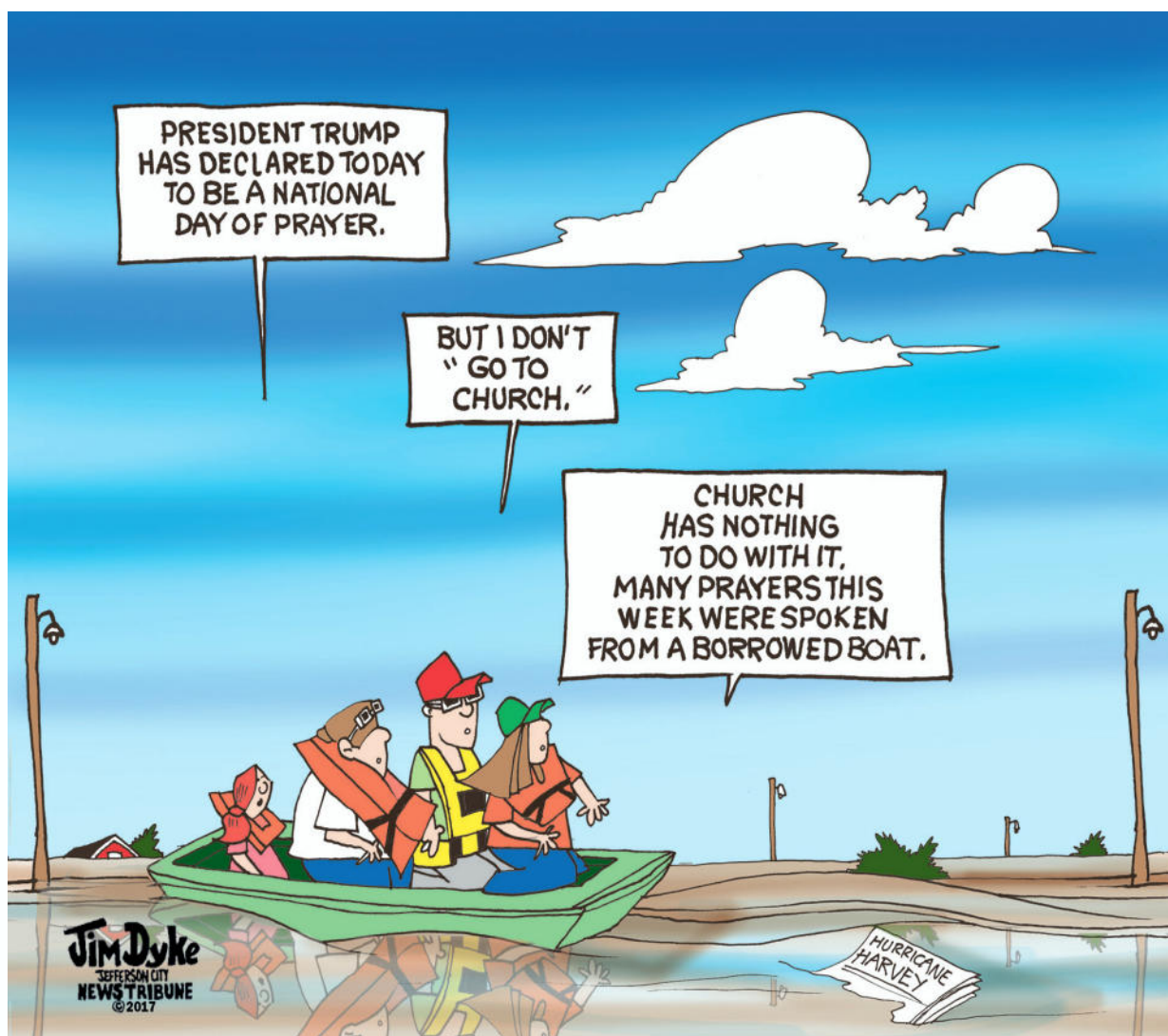
The survey was voluntary, but 35,000 — a good portion of the state workforce — took it.

But the few results of the survey given to the press don’t tell the whole story. What percent of workers are engaged in their work and how is morale? What do workers believe needs to be done to address disorganization? Have there been past similar surveys to compare answers and look for trends?

Greitens, who took office in January, said he met with his Cabinet last week to review answers. He says they’re committed to change.

We hope the survey, as well as its analysis by Greitens and others, is shared with the public, which can give input to their elected officials as to what the promised “change” entails.

News Tribune



Football’s enjoyment is on a fade pattern

WASHINGTON — Autumn, which is bearing down upon us like a menacing linebacker, is, as John Keats said, a season of mists and mellow fruitfulness and chronic traumatic encephalopathy (CTE). Actually, Keats, a romantic, did not mention that last part. He died before the birth of the subject of a waning American romance, football. This sport will never die but it will never again be, as it was until recently, the subject of uncomplicated national enthusiasm.

CTE is a degenerative brain disease confirmable only after death, and often caused by repeated blows to the head that knock the brain against the skull. The cumulative impacts of hundreds of supposedly minor blows can have the cumulative effect of many concussions. The New York Times recently reported Stanford researchers’ data showing “that one college offensive lineman sustained

62 of these hits in a single game. Each one came with an average force on the player’s head equivalent to what you would see if he had driven his car into a brick wall at 30 mph.”

Boston University researchers found CTE in 110 of 111 brains of deceased NFL players. In 53 other brains from college players, 48 had CTE. There was significant selection bias: Many of the brains came from families who had noticed CTE symptoms, including mood disorders and dementia. A BU researcher says, however, that a 10-year NFL linebacker could receive more than 15,000 sub-concussive blows.

Football’s kinetic energy — a function of the masses and velocities of the hurtling bodies — has increased dramatically in 50 years. On Alabama’s undefeated 1966 team, only 21 percent of the players weighed more than 200 pounds. The heaviest weighed 223;



George Will

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the linemen averaged 194. The quarterback, who weighed 177, was Ken Stabler, who went on to a Hall of Fame NFL career — and to “moderately severe” CTE before death from cancer. Today, many high school teams are much beefier than the 1966 Crimson Tide. Of the 114 members of Alabama’s 2016 squad, just 25 weighed less than 200 and 20 weighed more than 300. In 1980, only three NFL players weighed 300 or more pounds. Last season, 390 weighed 300 pounds or more, and six topped 350.

Players love football, and a small minority will have lucrative post-college NFL careers. Many will make increasingly informed choices to accept the risk-reward calculus. But because today’s risk-averse middle-class parents put crash helmets on their tykes riding tricycles, football participation will skew to the

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Let’s stop the next Wells Fargo scandal before it happens

By Harold Meyerson
 Los Angeles Times (TNS)

What’s the biggest criminal enterprise in California? MS-13? The remnants or successors to the Crips and the Bloods? The Mexican Mafia? If we’re talking about the sheer volume of offenses, the answer is clear: Wells Fargo.

It’s no easy task to keep track of the San Francisco-based megabank’s misdeeds, but here’s a rough tally: Wells has admitted that, beginning in 2011, it opened approximately 2 million bank and credit card

accounts for customers who did not need, seek or even know about them, plunging a number of these unknowing customers into default. Earlier this month, the bank announced it may have “significantly” undercounted the number of unauthorized accounts. Goldman Sachs estimated last year that more than half a million of the customers who’d been saddled with these accounts may have had to pay an extra \$50 million to borrow money as a result of their damaged credit.

This July, Wells also acknowledged, starting in 2012, it had charged a further 570,000 customers for auto insurance they neither needed nor sought,

pushing 274,000 of them into delinquency on their combined car-and-insurance payments, which led to nearly 25,000 wrongful vehicle repossessions.

Just last Thursday, attorneys for the bank argued in an Atlanta federal appellate court that the judges should toss a lower-court ruling enabling customers to file a class-action suit against Wells for altering the sequence of its customers’ deposits, withdrawals and payments so it could charge them higher overdraft fees. While other major banks have settled such claims, Wells contends its bilked customers have no right to sue as a group, and they must go through an individual arbitration process that will likely cost them more in legal fees than any reward they may receive.

Not all of these acts violated criminal statutes. But if a single individual devised a way to compel a client, without her knowledge or consent, to pay him more money or to suffer a loss of credit or her car, that individual could well face charges of theft, fraud or forgery. Confronted with exposes that began with a Los Angeles Times story in 2013, Wells has admitted to being party to such deeds on a massive basis.

Yes, Wells has had to pay penalties. The Times article led Los Angeles City Attorney Michael Feuer to file suit against Wells for its unauthorized accounts,

and joined by the Consumer Financial Protection Bureau, that suit compelled Wells last September to pay \$185 million to its defrauded customers. The bank also discharged 5,100 of its low-level employees who’d been encouraged or compelled by superiors to open the fraudulent accounts. Under pressure from Sen. Elizabeth Warren, D-Mass., and other progressives, it dropped its CEO, John Stumpf and, more recently, a couple of its longtime board members.

Some public policy reforms may soon be in the offing as well, at least in Los Angeles. For the past nine years, the city has had a contract with Wells to handle its basic banking services — payrolls, payments to vendors, the works. With that contract expiring next year, a coalition of bank reformers has asked the city council to put some teeth into the city’s Responsible Banking Ordinance so it will never again give its business to a bank like Wells. Their suggested amendments include a ban on doing business with banks that place unreasonably high sales demands on their employees, and with banks that don’t explicitly protect whistle-blowers. These amendments will likely come before the council soon after Labor Day.

These are clearly necessary changes, but they don’t

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Surely, Lord, you bless the righteous; you surround them with your favor as with a shield.

Psalm 5:12

YOUR OPINION

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Tax cut would mean pay raise for families

Mark Comfort
 5th District State Committee
 Member, Missouri Republican Party

Dear Editor:

President Trump’s recent speech in Springfield highlighted how tax cuts can reinvigorate American Main Streets, which have taken a backseat to Wall Street and K Street in recent years because of the size and complexity of the current tax code.

A tax cut would provide hard-working taxpayers with an immediate pay raise, meaning more money would stay in Missouri communities to be spent on local small businesses instead of being shipped off to Washington, D.C. to be spent on federal priorities.

A recent nationwide poll of small business owners by the Job Creators Network illustrates how a small business tax cut would do even more good. Most respondents said they would reinvest their tax savings in the form of wage hikes, new jobs, and business expansion. This economic stimulus would further help working families and Main Streets regain their former glory.

President Trump’s plan to simplify the tax code is a worthy goal. But such reform is difficult given the competing factions lobbying to protect their special carve outs. American small businesses and hardworking taxpayers need relief now and can’t digest another legislative failure. Congress should pick the low hanging fruit and pass tax cuts now, and come back for the rest of tax reform later.

Media attacks aimed at trumping Trump’s failures

Milton Garber
 Jefferson City

Dear Editor:

Being the juvenile that he is President Trump’s primary mode of argument is name-calling. In the campaign there was “low-energy Jeb Bush,” “lying Ted Cruz,” and “crooked Hillary” among others.

Today Trump’s principal target has become certain leading elements of the press, primarily CNN, The New York Times and The Washington Post, all of whom he characterizes as “fake news,” “garbage journalism,” “enemies of the people,” and “dishonest.” He speaks of their “crooked media deceptions” and refers to their journalists as “very, very bad people.”

Trump’s goal is to delegitimize the press so that people will pay no attention when they point out Trump’s failures (replace Obamacare), falsehoods (millions of fraudulent votes were cast), and possible but likely criminal activities (laundering dirty Russian money through Trump properties). He, like the Nazi propagandist Joseph Goebbels, believes that if you repeat a falsehood often enough people will come to believe it. So he talks about the “fake news” almost daily.

The major media must be sorely tempted to respond in kind and talk daily about Trump’s “failed presidency.” He said he would replace Obamacare. He didn’t. He said he would stop the North Korean missile launches. He didn’t. He said he would tear up NAFTA. He didn’t. He said he would impose high tariffs on Chinese goods. He didn’t. He said he would tear up the Iran deal. He didn’t. He said he would cut corporate taxes. He didn’t. He said he would launch a massive infrastructure rebuild. He didn’t.

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