

The Marietta Times

700 Channel Lane
Marietta, Ohio 45750
Phone: (740) 373-2121
Fax: (740) 376-5475

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www.MariettaTimes.com

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Jennifer Houtman
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Ann Troutman
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OUR OPINION

Immigration plan could be a fair compromise

With much of the nation's attention last week focused on reining in North Korea's aggressiveness, conservatives in Congress were making progress on another critical issue — immigration laws. Votes on the issue in the House of Representatives could occur as early as next week.

House Speaker Paul Ryan told fellow Republicans Wednesday that a compromise immigration bill, one with a real chance of being adopted, has the support of President Donald Trump. That is excellent news for two reasons. First, of course, is the president's support. Second is the prospect of a measure without hardline provisions that could doom it.

Details of the plan have not been released. One thing that is known is that it would provide "Dreamer" immigrants — those brought here at young ages by their parents or others — pathways to remain in the United States legally.

In addition, the proposal would toughen border security.

Clearly, the nation needs new immigration laws. They need to be fair but also strict in terms of keeping new illegal immigrants from coming into the country. If Ryan has come up with such a plan, it ought to be viewed favorably by House members.

PUBLIC OFFICIALS' ADDRESSES

OHIO EXECUTIVE BRANCH
Ohio Governor: John Kasich (R-Ohio), Riffe Center, 30th Floor, 77 South High St., Columbus, Ohio, 43215-6117; 614-466-3555.

Ohio Lieutenant Governor: Mary Taylor, Riffe Center, 30th Floor, 77 South High St., Columbus, Ohio, 43215-6117.

Ohio Attorney General: Mike DeWine, 30 E. Broad St., 14th Floor, Columbus, Ohio, 43215; 614-466-4986 or toll free at 1-800-282-0515.

Ohio Auditor of State: Dave Yost (Athens office): 743 E. State St., Suite B, Athens Mall, Athens, Ohio, 45701, 740-594-3300 or 1-800-441-1389, fax: 740-594-2110; (Columbus office): 88 East Broad St., 10th Floor, Columbus, Ohio 43215, 614-466-3402, toll free: 1-800-443-9275, fax: 614-728-7199.

Ohio Secretary of State: Jon Husted, 180 East Broad St., 16th Floor, Columbus, Ohio, 43215; 614-466-2655, 877-767-6446, TTY: 614-466-0562, TTY toll free: 877-644-6889.

Ohio Treasurer of State: Josh Mandel (R), 30 E. Broad St., 9th Floor, Columbus, Ohio, 43215, 1-800-228-1102, Columbus office: 614-466-2160; Southern Ohio office: 8118 Corporate Way, Suite 140, Mason, Ohio, 45040; 513-492-8297. Department emails — Office of Constituent Affairs, con-

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There shouldn't be 'welfare for coal'

In the past week Donald Trump has issued a directive to Secretary of Energy, Rick Perry, requiring transmission operators to purchase electricity from nuclear-generated and coal-generated power plants. The claimed rationale for this directive is to provide "resilience" for a secure system of electrical generation, but most experts regard this explanation as a false narrative.

In a recent article in this Viewpoint feature of the Marietta Times, the writer presented persuasively the argument against subsidizing nuclear power. As is the case for nuclear power, the propping up of the coal industry is misguided and poorly chosen option for federal intervention. The portion of electrical generation from coal has dropped from 49% to 30% nationally in the last 10 years. In 1979 there were 250,000 jobs in coal-related industries; in 2016 according to the Bureau of Labor Statistics, there were only about 52,000. Jobs in the field of solar energy number approximately 260,000, and another 100,000 jobs exist in wind-power industries. The number



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George Banziger, Ph.D.

of solar-related jobs has increased 82%, and the number of wind-power related jobs has risen 100% in just three years, according to the International Renewable Energy Agency. In countries outside the U.S. job growth in these two renewable energy fields has increased at even higher rates.

Although the coal industry has tried to promulgate the notion that there has been a "war on coal," represented by federal regulations, there are really two factors accounting for the decline of coal: the relatively less expensive resource of natural gas and automation of coal mining (the transition from manual labor to extract coal to huge extracting machines, which do the job more efficiently). Trump's recent directive leads to another characterization to describe the effort to resurrect coal—we now have

"welfare for coal," that is, a strategy that defies market forces and, by federal decree, places the burden of propping up coal and nuclear energy on consumers, who will ultimately pay in billions of dollars through their increased electric rates for this unneeded subsidy.

The inevitable truth about the future of coal is that it is the "eight-track tape" of our array of energy resources — it is outdated, irrelevant, and not cost effective. Coal is expensive in terms of its health impact on miners; black lung disease or "coal miners' pneumoconiosis" accounts for 125,000 deaths per year (as of 2010). Coal's wider negative impact, however, affects all of us. Coal is the largest contributor to carbon emissions, most often from coal-fired power plants. Since 1990 carbon dioxide in the atmosphere has increased 30%, and in April 2014 carbon in the atmosphere reached the unprecedented milestone figure of 400 parts/million. Human-induced climate change, which we are all experiencing already is an idea which is endorsed by 97% of the sci-

entific community and by the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change. It is happening before our eyes in the form of acidification of the oceans, disappearance of glaciers, rise of sea levels, desertification, increased intensity of storms, and a global temperature rise of 10-18 degrees Fahrenheit over 100 years. The major culprits driving climate change are fossil fuels, particularly coal, and the countries producing the most emissions from coal-fired power plants are the U.S. and China. Why can't we resolve to transition coal-fired power plants to natural-gas power, an abundant resource, especially here in southeastern Ohio, as a bridge to carbon-free energy sources such as solar, wind, and geothermal power?

In moving away from coal as an energy resource, we need to treat those communities in eastern Kentucky, West Virginia, and southeast Ohio in a humane and supportive manner. This means, for example, providing job training to move the labor force from coal-related jobs to 21st century occupations in employment sectors like

tourism, advanced manufacturing, and renewable energy.

Apologists and unquestioning supporters of the coal industry, such as Congressman Bill Johnson, Donald Trump, and Rick Perry are locking us into unhealthy, expensive, and environmentally destructive policies by promoting this myth that federal regulations are the source of problems in the coal business. There was no "war on coal," and there should not be "welfare for coal," but what there should be is a national strategy of environmental sustainability to phase out coal as source of energy in favor of cheaper natural gas in the short run and in favor of renewable energy in the long run.

George Banziger, Ph.D., was a faculty member at Marietta College and an academic dean at three other colleges. Now retired, he is a volunteer for the Devola MultiUse Trail Committee, Mid-Ohio Valley Interfaith, and Harvest of Hope. He is a member of the Green Sanctuary Committee of the First Unitarian Universalist Society of Marietta, and of the Mid-Ohio Valley Climate Action group.

READERS' LETTERS

Beware: Not all licensed contractors are qualified

With spring coming to an end and summer fast approaching, beware of the so-called contractor with the professional looking signs advertising their up and coming booming business. Well, booming for them, but not for you or me. I've been taken by one of these young men. You know, the kind, smooth talking, yes ma'am, yes sir. They pull you right in. Let us remember all sheepdogs are not protectors. Some are more like a wolf in sheeps' clothing waiting and watching to reel us in and then they set the hook with a quick tug and reel us to the shore hook, line and sinker.

I speak from experience. I was that fish at the end of the fishing line. I signed a contract, then it all began. The footers and the walls were poured, floor joist and sub-floor put down and the shell was put up and last came the rafters. Then I was asked for more money for the next stage. Well, the next stage never happened. This started the first of many problems to come. The two big ones were no house wrap and the major one, no roof! He told me he had a small roof job that needed done before winter, it's November now, and he would be back in a couple of weeks. I saw him during the Christmas season and he assured me he would be out after the holidays. February came and went, still no communication from him. So I called and text him. You got it, he didn't respond. So, I called around and got the prices of what he had spent so far at the area businesses. I then figured up a fair price for labor as I called around again and got estimates of labor for doing what had been done so far. I text him and said, "obviously you don't have time to finish my house, let's get together and see what you owe me and I'll hire someone else." (Now I have a record of our conversation, it was delivered and read). Three seconds later my phone rang. He wants to know what's wrong with me. I so wanted to say, I'm the one whose house burnt down and have a signed contract with you to

build me a new house that was started but has no roof. Wow, what a short memory he has. What's wrong with me, really? But, what I said was I need my house finished. That's when he told me he had to be honest, he had spent my money. I guess you could call that being honest, but my parents taught me that was stealing. Now we all know things are different now than when we were kids. So nowadays if you admit you stole something that didn't belong to you, it's now called being honest. My go-to manual for how to live my life is the Holy Bible and nowhere in there does it say that stealing is right. It is a "sin" whether you admit it or not. Needless to say, I was shocked beyond what my infinite mind could comprehend. After praying to God to help me, I decided that my God is a forgiving God, and I would give this man another chance. So I gave him a month and a half to return. Just in case he was in the middle of another job. I also told him if he didn't show up, I would have to go to the sheriff and report him. You guessed it, he didn't show or call.

Longer story shortened, I have a

court judgment against him. In the process of getting this judgment he filed for bankruptcy and is protected by the same (so to speak) justice system that protects you and me.

I'm still in the process of finishing my house, five and a half years after the fire. I have been blessed to have found several competent contractors to fix the multiple mistakes that the first contractor messed up. Praise the Lord! Please learn from my mistakes, all contractors are not qualified contractors just because they are licensed this doesn't mean they can do a professional job.

This man is still out there doing work. I'm not the only one he has scammed. Beware, get references and check them out, ask around. Word of mouth is better than any internet or facebook post. They can make themselves look like the ultimate contractor to impress you. If you have to put money up front, they are probably someone you don't want to do business with, as they do your job to pay for the next job and so on. The lowest price is not always the best. Don't be taken by the next low life guy looking

to make a quick buck without an ounce of sweat, at your expense.

Mama said it is a good day when you learn something new. Well, I've had a lot of good days, praise the Lord, and have learned a lot.

If you haven't guessed it yet, there is one person that has been

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Getting published

The Marietta Times welcomes letters to the editor of general publication interest. To be considered for publication, letters must be no longer than 400 words, and must contain the writer's complete address and phone number. This information will not be published, but is required for verification before publication.

All letters should be written to the editor, and not a third party. The newspaper reserves the right to edit letters for length and content.

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Any man can be a father but it takes someone special to be a DAD.

Happy Father's Day

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War on trucking industry can cripple the whole economy

In recent years there has been a lot of talk about the war on one group and another but there is a war going on in this country that will cripple the whole economy if it isn't stopped. That is the war on the trucking industry.

People are taught to keep off rail road tracks and that trains have the right of way. Safe boating classes teach people that large boats have the right of way over smaller boats. They are taught that barges take a mile to stop going up stream and two miles to stop going down stream and they are to stay out of their way.

People are not taught how far it takes to stop a truck or how much room it needs to make a turn and thus are causing wrecks with trucks all the time. Most police officers don't know much about trucks either and often truckers are ticketed for what a car driver caused.

Not long ago there was a van full of people going too fast on a highway on black ice. The driver lost control

Viewpoint

Scott E. Fisher

crossed the medium and hit a truck that was going very slow and under control. People from the van have sued the trucking company for 80 plus million dollars. The judge said the trucking company shouldn't have had the truck on the road and awarded the suit.

In another case the road was iced and traffic was stopped. The road was elevated and the truck that was sitting still began to slide side ways and bumped into a car. That trucking company is being sued for bodily injuries.

This is long but explains just how far the war on truckers goes. In years past a state highway department added another lane to a two lane highway by starting at a much lower elevation with an on ramp and slowly bringing it up to the level of

the existing highway passing a business just as the two lanes were at the same elevation. With the difference in elevation and the angle of entry there is no way for traffic on the existing highway to see traffic on the new road so they have a yield sign on the ramp to protect traffic on the road and turning into the business.

Years later a person late for work and talking on their phone ignored to yield sign and hit a truck turning into the business. Most likely the truck driver didn't know the car was there until the impact was felt.

Almost immediately the significant other of the car driver was there and took the driver and left the scene and then came back. No one knows if they were ditching drugs or what they were doing. The car drivers insurance paid for the damage to the truck and investigators acknowledged that there was nothing the trucker could have done to prevent the crash.

A few days later that

states highway department removed the yield sign. A little later they put up barricades so the trucks couldn't turn into the business thus forcing them to spend more time going around and coming up the ramp and the business had to make a new entrance. Now there are frequently cars crashing into trucks.

Some time later the car driver decides they were hurt in the crash and sues the truck driver. An ambulance chaser keeps after the truck insurance for money but they don't give. It eventually goes to a jury trial. On trial day the ambulance chaser conspires with the judge to not let the truck insurance company's lawyer bring up the yield sign and to not let the investigating officer testify. At this point the insurance company lawyer gives up and pays them. Now they have a highway set up to cause more crashes and the ambulance chaser is there ready and waiting and has a judge to do what ever he

wants.

That state's highway department should put the yield sign back up and put reduced speed limit signs until traffic is past the business. That judge should be put in jail with people he has put in jail, the ambulance chaser should never be allowed to practice law again and someone in the state highway department should be looking for a job. The significant other and driver should have to pay in some way.

These are the kinds of things that happen to truckers everyday. They weigh on a drivers mind all the time they are behind the wheel and some times keep them up at night. Drivers are hanging it up everyday because of these things. Shippers are calling for trucks saying they will pay anything but are told, we have trucks but no drivers. Scott E. Fisher lives in Lower Salem.