

# OPINION

DAILY JOURNAL

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"The Daily Journal is dedicated to community service, to defense of individual rights and to providing those checks upon government which no constitution can ensure."

SCOTT ALEXANDER  
founding editor, 1963

## Opinion roundup

**EDITOR'S NOTE** — Today the Daily Journal presents a sampling of editorials from around the state and nation:

### Address need for primary care physicians

The Journal Gazette, Fort Wayne

Indiana has 222 physicians per 100,000 people, considerably fewer than the national average of 281. And demographic trends suggest the state is headed for a serious shortage of doctors.

Those statistics are chilling to the physicians who lead the Indiana State Medical Association. And they should be equally chilling to all Hoosiers.

A physician shortage could make the task of finding a doctor next to impossible, especially for Medicaid and Medicare recipients. A medical association survey found that more than 40 percent of primary physicians in Indiana don't accept Medicaid patients. Many cite bureaucratic hassles and low reimbursement rates as reasons for opting out.

The state should consider forgiving medical school loans for new medical school graduates who agree to practice primary care medicine in Indiana. And despite the state's ongoing financial problems, officials must address the profit margin issues in the Medicaid program. Doctors can't be expected to take part in programs that leave them poorer.

While the growing problem of insurance coverage dominates much discussion about health care, Indiana's leaders need to seek incentives to encourage physicians to practice in the state.

### Legislating against behavior doomed to fail

The Times Herald-Record, Middletown, N.Y.

Come with us, fellow Americans, to another time, another century in fact, when life was simpler and better — in the view of the governor of South Dakota, at least.

The century of which we speak is not the 20th, but the 19th. That's when South Dakota first passed a law making abortion a crime.

Gov. Mike Rounds signed a bill passed by the equally backward-looking South Dakota state legislature that bans all abortions except when the life of the woman is in danger. It does not provide exceptions for rape or incest, which happens to be the Supreme Court-approved law of the land.

Somehow, making abortion a crime again is supposed to make the world, at least in South Dakota, a better place.

This ignores the reality that legislating against behaviors never works when people see a need for them. The government couldn't get Americans to stop drinking by prohibiting it. In truth, laws that inject the government into people's private decisions generally result in creating more criminals.



ROUNDS

### Line-item veto tool in thwarting waste

The Daily News, Longview, Wash.

President Bush asked Congress to give him line-item veto authority to help control spending. The request deserves serious consideration. This big-spending Congress certainly could use the help, and every member knows it.

Virtually every president since the Civil War has sought the authority to veto individual spending items in bills, rather than having to veto the bill in its entirety.

President Clinton was granted a line item veto in 1996. He used it 82 times, saving the government about \$2 billion, before the U.S. Supreme Court ruled it unconstitutional two years later. The ruling held that the line-time veto violated the separation of powers by allowing the White House to amend laws passed by Congress.

Bush is proposing a modified line-item veto, which the White House believes would pass constitutional muster.

Rather than having the authority to strip specific items from bills, the president would be able to send individual spending items back to Congress for an up-or-down vote.

While less direct than the veto authority struck down by the high court, this modified version of the line-item veto could serve as a powerful tool against one of the more wasteful spending practices, earmarking.

The authority the president wants could work in compelling members of Congress to stand up and justify questionable spending items. That could prove a useful exercise with regard to stemming the growth of earmarks.

### Tighter rules on dining with lobbyists proper

The (Charleston, S.C.) Post and Courier

Members of Congress who dine with lobbyists would have to start paying for their own meals — or as one senator noted, eating more at home — under a welcome tightening of ethics rules endorsed by the Senate recently.

The Senate proposal barring legislators from taking gifts from lobbyists initially made an exception of meals. That changed on a bipartisan amendment that correctly added meals to the proscribed list.

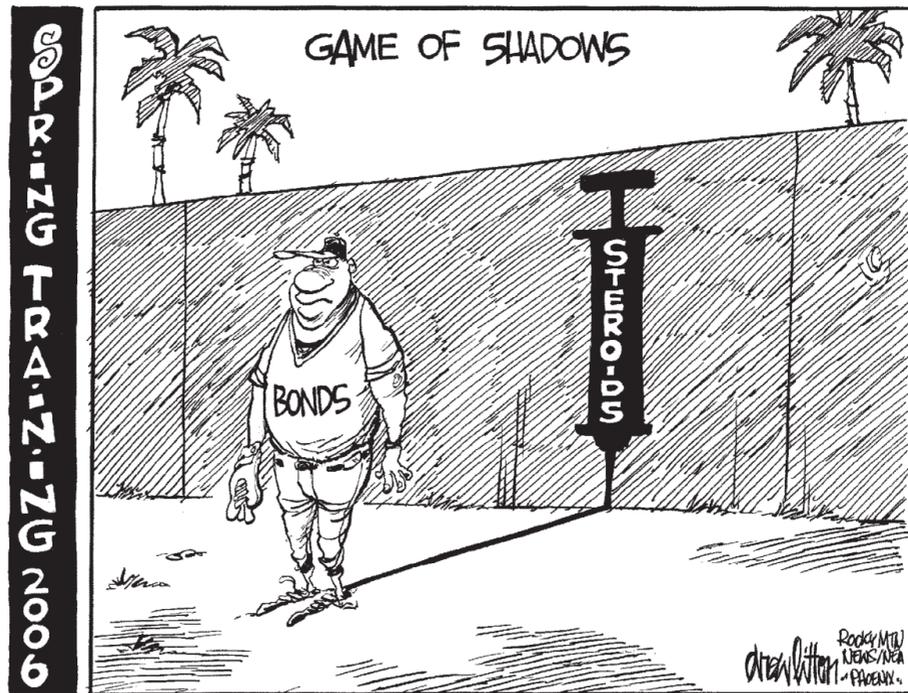
Sen. Trent Lott, R-Miss., described the change as "totally ludicrous," adding, "I'll be eating with my wife and so will a lot more senators after we pass this one."

Dining within the family circle can strengthen those family values that our congressmen so frequently praise and recommend to the nation. Having to forgo some of the dining opportunities provided by lobbyists would bring our lawmakers a little closer to life as their constituents know it.

Tougher ethics rules are required to restrict the unseemly relationship between lobbyists and some members of Congress that became apparent in the Jack Abramoff scandal. As lobbyists are put at arm's length, the ethical climate of Congress can only improve.



LOTT



## Failing to prepare scientists puts America's future at risk

In the late 17th century, Europe, and England in particular, was intoxicated with the pursuit of modernization. The essence of modernization at the time was the advancement of technology and the use of scientific knowledge for practical means. Life changed dramatically during this period.

China, the self-portrayed Middle Kingdom, continued to exist isolated from the West. The emperor lived in Beijing during this time and emphasized human relations through Confucianism.

Westerners, motivated by extravagances such as silk, tea and porcelain, expanded their business interests into China. Missionaries, diplomatic envoys and merchants traveled to the East.

Westerners were always treated with courtesy in the port areas but never allowed by the Chinese to penetrate farther into the country.

Gifts were routinely brought to try to persuade the Chinese leaders. Clocks and music boxes of all varieties were meant to demonstrate the pinnacle of technological advancement of the time. To the Chinese leaders, these gifts were nothing but toys.

Today, Beijing boasts the largest collection of clocks in the world.

Later, China would come to understand the errors of history in its failure to recognize the importance of scientific and technological advancement. Missed signals led to the country's collapse and defeat as it did not respond to the cues of the West.

As a result, China was repeatedly humiliated in the years to come by the more advanced Western powers.

Chinese leaders eventually came to understand that their defeats were the result of a failure to keep up with the rest of the world.

Today, based on news accounts, China's eighth-grade students rank at the top in science and



Yu-long Ling

math among industrial nations. The world's most populous country also produces 500,000 engineers each year. Primary school students learn math, science and English along with Chinese language and history.

Because English is the international language, and science and math are basic tools for modernization, China is ready to compete with the best the world has to offer. And China is not alone. Other countries in that part of the world, particularly Japan, South Korea and India, are similarly focusing their efforts.

By all accounts, these countries are doing better than just competing. Based on current projections, 90 percent of the world's engineers will live in Asia by 2010.

In contrast, the United States has ranked near the bottom in math and science among industrialized countries. We produce around 60,000 engineering students each year, and many engineering schools and other scientific fields are seeing increased enrollment of foreign students.

Our American students are either unqualified or unwilling to enter the field.

The problem begins before our children even reach the college level. The Associated Press reported last fall that 15-year-olds in the United States rank below average in math when compared to Europe and Asia.

At the same time, Indiana is preparing to lower graduation

standards by giving high school students the option of taking lower-level courses that are less challenging.

Athletics, along with alcohol awareness, drug prevention and sex education, have taken an increased importance in our schools while science and math have been de-emphasized. Buildings and stadiums receive increased funding, while teacher salaries and curriculum funding have decreased.

While we are building new stadiums and gyms, Asia is building new laboratories.

Education in Asian society is a family affair: Parents are actively involved in making sure their children are successful in academics. A family's success is often measured by where its children study. Here, the perception is that parents are more involved in their child's sports tryouts.

This is not the first time we have heard of this impending problem. Recently, an Indianapolis newspaper said, "The U.S. is in danger of losing its edge in fields that have made us the most prosperous nation in the world." Clearly, the issue is important and not dealt with seriously.

It is true that our country is currently the richest and most advanced country in the world. But the current education statistics will determine our future standing among other countries.

Worrying is not the problem; the lack of worrying is. Some will say this view is little more than paranoia, like arguing that the sky is falling. But as dark clouds approach, only a fool will still prepare for a picnic.

*Professor Yu-long Ling holds the Williams Chair in Law and Public Service at Franklin College and is an internationally respected expert in foreign policy. He writes this weekly opinion column for the Daily Journal. Send comments to letters@thejournalnet.com.*

## Breaking nonexistent rules on drugs is no reason to say players cheated

An economist I know claims that Barry Bonds did nothing wrong when he apparently ingested a cornucopia of performance-enhancing drugs. Indeed, this scholar of the dismal science insists that, by reportedly turning himself into a walking pharmacy, Bonds was merely maximizing the value of his services to his employer and his teammates.

Though some might consider this argument a refutation of the charge that economists have no sense of humor, my somewhat wacky academic friend has a point.

In the days since excerpts from the forthcoming book "Game of Shadows" were published, detailing what appears to be a well-sourced account of Bonds' extensive use of performance-enhancing drugs between 1999 and 2002, dozens of articles have appeared decrying Bonds' "cheating."

Sen. Byron Dorgan, D-N.D., has even suggested that the Roger Maris' major league home run record, which was broken by Mark McGwire in 1998 before Bonds surpassed McGwire's mark in 2001, be returned to the state's favorite son, given the possibility that both McGwire's and Bonds' feats were drug-aided.

This outburst of sanctimony has for the most part avoided answering a simple question: assuming the allegations against them are true, in what sense did Bonds and McGwire cheat? Baseball had no policy against the use of performance-enhancing drugs prior to the 2003 season. So, leaving aside any allegations regarding more recent behavior,



Paul Campos

it simply isn't true that McGwire (who retired four years ago), or Bonds, at least to that point, broke the rules of their sport.

Consider the arguments for the claim that Bonds and others cheated.

The claim that what they did was wrong because they may have acquired performance-enhancing drugs without legally required prescriptions is an obvious red herring: Nobody who thinks Bonds is a cheater would argue that his alleged drug use would have been acceptable if he had valid prescriptions for his drugs.

All such arguments depend on the assumption that using performance-enhancing drugs is inherently wrong. But why is drug use wrong, assuming it doesn't violate the rules of one's sport?

It's said that the accomplishments of athletes who use performance-enhancing drugs are tainted because their feats are a product of their drug use rather than the hard work necessary to fully develop natural athletic talent. But this claim is based on a misunderstanding of how performance-enhancing drugs work.

No drug in and of itself enhances athletic ability; the value of such drugs is that they allow athletes to

train harder; to build greater muscle bulk and endurance and to recover more quickly from the stress such intense training causes to their bodies.

The valid argument against performance-enhancing drugs has nothing to do with the supposedly unnatural advantages that come from drug-aided training regimens (there is nothing more "unnatural" about training with the aid of steroids than there is with training with the aid of aspirin).

Rather, it's that performance-enhancing drugs are dangerous, and that it's unfair to expect athletes to endanger their health to avoid being at a competitive disadvantage.

This argument has a lot of force, but, in the context of professional sports, there is also something hypocritical about it. We are perfectly happy to, for example, allow athletes to destroy their bodies by playing football, or to risk life and limb by rocketing down a ski slope at 70 mph, so why are we suddenly so concerned about their health when it comes to the potential dangers of ingesting steroids or human growth hormone?

The strong feelings elicited by performance-enhancing drug use seem to involve much more than concerns for athletes' health. And the almost universal belief that Barry Bonds cheated when he broke nonexistent rules just underlines the confusion that surrounds this issue.

*Paul Campos is a law professor at the University of Colorado. Send comments to letters@thejournalnet.com.*

## YOUR VIEWS

### Failure to run city like business costs public

To the editor:

Dear Mayor Brenda Jones-Matthews,

I may be presumptuous, but your constituents and I are tired of city government gouging us on our property taxes. I moved to Franklin in 1993.

In that year, I paid approximately \$800 in property taxes. This year I will pay roughly \$1,818 if the 12 percent increase becomes a reality. This is an increase of \$1,018 in 12 years, or an increase of 7 percent per annum.

In comparison, the average annual rate of inflation has been 2.54 percent during each of the past 12 years; according to the Bureau of Labor Statistics. I am incredulous.

It has been stated that the most recent increase is due to a "bookkeeping error" in 2001. I should say that this is more than a "bookkeeping error." This should be labeled gross negligence in lieu of a "bookkeeping error."

If one of your constituents does not balance his checkbook for five years, do you think that his or her employer is likely to give them a raise to cover the ensuing debts they will incur in the future? This is what you are proposing. I am incredulous.

It has further been stated by your administration that the ensuing debts are due to a lack of income. Since I have lived here, the population of Franklin has increased approximately 70 percent. If government is managing its finances, I would think it could surely manage to pay the bills with the increase in property taxes.

If you want to fall back on the argument that businesses have left Franklin, then I will indict past and present administrations, as well as remind you that the fine state of Indiana transferred the primary tax burden from businesses to residential homeowners.

Nonetheless, new homes have grown by leaps and bounds in recent years. There were 1,194 new homes built in Franklin between 2000 and 2004.

If these new homeowners' taxes are insufficient to pay for the increase in required services, then either they should not have been built or their assessed values are too low and lessening the values of existing homes.

In any case, you are asking existing, longtime residents to pick up the slack. I am incredulous.

It is not lost on me that a large portion of these property taxes are used to pay for the community's schools. Well, they don't need to cost as much as they do. I did quite well in a 100-year-old public school with no air conditioning, no pool, no artificial turf, etc.

We were lucky to have indoor plumbing. I am now a well-paid citizen of this community and provide significantly to its tax base. I think the amenities at our public schools are absurd. I cannot speak for all of your constituents on this count, but I for one am incredulous.

In conclusion, I am asking you to begin running this city like a business. The citizenry of Franklin should not be subjected to negligence on the part of its public officials.

We deserve better from our elected officials. You have been elected to look out for our interests and to spend our money wisely.

I am deeply disappointed in the current and past administrations and will expect an increased focus on the financial needs of the community, especially with regards to the accounting of our finances and the measured growth of residential real estate development.

Stephen P. Hivnor  
Franklin

## WRITE A LETTER

The Daily Journal invites readers to submit letters, opinion columns and e-mail comments for the opinion page.

### GUIDELINES

- Letters published in the Daily Journal must contain the writer's name and city or town.
- Letters sent to the Daily Journal must be signed and must include a daytime telephone number for verification to be considered for publication.
- Letters should be kept as brief as possible.
- Make sure the e-mail letter includes the writer's name, mailing address, telephone number and e-mail address for verification.
- Because of space and legal considerations, the Daily Journal reserves the right to edit any letters or articles and to limit comments.

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