

# EDITORIAL

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ESTABLISHED 1924

Andrew Koppers / Assistant managing editor  
Frank Grandjean / Operations Director



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Executive  
Editorial Editor  
and Managing Editor

## The American Revolution lives ... and lives

The fourth of July is nearly upon us, with all that entails — this column goes to press on “between” dates, with the fourth falling between, so my thought is to hit you up now as opposed to after the fact.

Warning: This is going to be a very sappy column, reflecting directly my sometimes difficult, loving, critical but heartfelt and definitely permanent romance with this country, and all that’s in it.

When the founders declared independence from Britain, they were angry — the Declaration of Independence was an angry rant, a political, social and philosophical manifesto, proclaiming they had been cruelly betrayed by a dilemma, desecrating sovereign. If you’ve not read it, do. The philosophical stuff comes up front, calm and to the point.

“We hold these truths to be self-evident, that all men are created equal, that they are endowed by their Creator with certain unalienable rights, that among these are Life, Liberty and the pursuit of Happiness — That to secure these rights, Governments are instituted among Men, deriving their just powers from the consent of the governed...”

A sly smack to the autocrat, that “created equal” stuff, and more to the point, the “deriving their powers from the consent of the governed.” Not the stuff monarchs want to hear at all.

But then:

“Whenever any Form of Government becomes destructive of these ends,” they wrote, “it is the right of the People to alter or to abolish it, and to institute new Government...”

BOOM. Message sent.

What follows is the dirt. The section starts with “when a long train of abuses and usurpations, pursuing invariably the same Object evinces a design to reduce them under absolute Despotism...” and the “long train” is then provided in a detailed list, with the sense that they can’t be corrected, and that there’s no going back.

Getty for a bunch of gentlemen farmers writing from a place with few roads, no army, and little more than grit and smarts to push them through it, adorning arguably the most powerful man in the world, along with all his henchmen, armies, navies, and gold to back it all up.

Chancy stuff, and a pretty risky venture. Riskier, in some ways, once we’d actually won and had to create from scratch the first true representative republic.

An “attitude of gratitude” seems to be something lacking these days, not only for what the founders did, but what they allowed us to become. The journey of this nation has been one of constant argument, amendment, false steps, corrective action, making it work. Change has always been the rule, here, and change is inherent in the very nature of the thing. Our nation is simply un-American, and a disloyalty to our political roots. If something needs to be corrected, fix it. Work to repair it, resolve it, make it work.

We live in a nation with one of the highest standards of living in the world. We have, and have kept, a representative democratic republic in which the opinions of both the majority and the minority are considered.

We disagree, debate, disagree and sometimes are divisive with one another, and yet here we are. American freedom, in Union, united as just by our heart, our right to disagree and survive the process. We respectfully and calmly allow other nations to work in our ability to defend these rights against those who would take them away.



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## LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

### Florida's right to privacy

Florida's Constitution defines a right to privacy as: "Every natural person has the right to be let alone and free from governmental intrusion into the person's private life except as otherwise provided herein."

That seems clear. The clause identifies who deserves privacy and it defines the offending organization. Paraphrasing the clause could read: "People in Florida should be free from governmental intrusion."

The idea was put into effect by a federal court's reversal of a Florida law banning medical care for transgender people, maintaining that the state "cannot flatly deny transgender individuals safe and effective medical treatment" when the purpose of that denial "is not to support the patient's transgender identity."

In other words, the Florida legislature cannot intrude upon a person's natural life just because they don't like that nature. As the deciding judge stated, "gender identity is real."

It was a powerful decision, a step toward making life a bit better for all of Florida's transgender population.

I only wish the same would happen with reproductive rights, where an equally unethical intrusion is occurring in the natural lives of women in Florida.

But we can help turn things around in November — please vote "yes" on Amendment 4.

Ben Graffert, Lakeland

### Trump's flip-flop backs RINO Laurel Lee

I'm disappointed by Trump's endorsement of a RINO [Trump endorses Laurel] Lee in U.S. House 15 race after previously calling for challenge, June 14, The Ledger.

Lee never responded to our press inquiry asking her to cut our budget's largest pork, as our GOP Platform requires. "The federal government should not be in the business of originating student loans." Student debt is over \$1 trillion. Students have overpaid taxpayers \$1.5 billion. Department of Education, on average, receives \$1.22 for every dollar paid out in default claims, forbes. But this won't continue. Students — fed up — can't continue if loan origination aren't cut.

Forbes reports that Trump Proposes Limits On Student Loan Borrowing, but even when Trump had a Republican-led House and Senate, he didn't keep his word.

Without restoration of bankruptcy affordability to student debt, as a "check" in the DOE, they won't cut loan origination.

Trump — who often gets bankruptcy discharge for billions — backs a "bankruptcy fix" for me, but not for these double standard, violating the golden rule of his claimed religion, Christianity.

Border funding won't happen without needed cuts to pork spending, so Lee needs to go.

Gordon Wayne Watts, Plant City

## More can be done for immigrants caught in broken system



Yusef Turay  
Miami, Florida  
Guest Contributor

At Faith in Florida, we advocate for justice, compassion and dignity for all individuals, regardless of their background or immigration status.

Our state, known for its diversity and hospitality, has long been a melting pot of cultures, faiths and traditions. And this rich legacy, there is a pressing need for comprehensive immigration reform to maintain family unity and provide peace of mind to hard-working Florida residents.

I am glad that President Trump is taking steps to address the plight of spouses of citizens who are

like and fully integrated themselves into our communities. Providing them with additional stability to remain together and in the communities they call home provides meaningful comfort to many Florida families.

I encourage the Trump Administration to address the urgent needs of individuals from countries experiencing conflict, natural disasters or other humanitarian crises by extending and expanding the Temporary Protected Status program to countries like Haiti, Somalia, the Democratic Republic of the Congo and Myanmar. TPS is a vital lifeline for those who cannot safely return to their homelands.

As Floridians, we can understand the devastating impact of injustices and other natural disasters firsthand. We must extend the same empathy and solidarity to our neighbors from other nations who seek refuge and protection on our shores.

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## Dem Don

Here's a list of which, if any, of the President's picks for the Supreme Court are Democrats.

1. As a pick, the President has chosen 13 Democrats, 2000 for 13 of the 13 spots. The President's picks were 13 Democrats.

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Andrew Kupperts | Assistant managing editor

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**LETTERS | Opinion** *This piece expresses the views of its author(s), separate from those of this publication.*

# Voice of the People (June 30, 2024): Vote for Florida's right to privacy

Lakeland Ledger

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