

Editorial

Red flag red flags

A threat to our rights

This week the New Hampshire Senate passed the so called “red flag bill” (HB 687) that would establish “extreme risk protection orders” to confiscate firearms and ammunition from anyone deemed to pose an immediate risk of harm to themselves or others.

Much of the discussion around this bill focused on preventing firearm suicides. Every human life lost is a tragedy and the lethality of firearms makes guns an understandable target for those looking to save lives. Taking the guns away seems like an easy solution. After all, no one really needs a gun, right?

The Second Amendment disagrees. While in practical terms a gun may not be necessary to survive day to day, the Founding Fathers thought it was important enough to put in the bill of rights. It’s right there between the redress of grievances and the part about soldiers not being allowed to bunk in your guest bedroom. New Hampshire thought it was important enough to add to our state’s bill of rights as well.

The “red flag” bill creates a scenario where this constitutional right can be taken away based on little more than the word of a single petitioner and a judge’s sign-off. The petitioner can be a current or ex intimate partner, parent, child, or any law enforcement officer. Amid cries to “defund the police” it seems odd that, in a party line vote, Senate Democrats just passed a bill to give officers more power.

This bill creates an alternate justice system. A system that can deprive one of liberty and property without due process. A system of double standards, the gun owner holding the short straw.

To take away gun rights takes only a “preponderance of evidence” but to get those rights back the gun owner must present “clear and convincing” evidence. “Clear and con-

vincing” being the tougher legal standard.

The burden of proof is pushed from the state to the accused. So much for innocent until proven guilty.

There are more double standards. Someone possessing a gun after an extreme risk protective order would be subject to a felony. Knowingly filing false allegations or filing with the intent to harass only warrants a misdemeanor. The bill even allows the seizing law enforcement agency to charge the gun owner storage fees to get their guns back, such is the price of committing no crime.

This bill seems to create a lot of burdens for those it purports to be trying to help.

If suicide prevention is the driving consideration here then it would seem this bill does not go far enough. According to the CDC, just under half of U.S. suicides are firearm suicides. Among females, poisoning slightly edges out firearms as the method of choice. By the suicide prevention logic we should be forcibly removing pills, poisons, ropes, belts, tall buildings, car keys, and anything else a distraught person may turn to, not just guns.

Actually, let’s skip all that and just have these people involuntarily committed. Then they would be safe, and better safe than sorry. Of course, this is not going to happen. Denial of liberty without due process is a right that almost all believe without question.

The right to bear arms has been diminished to the point it seems less worthy of protection.

“Red flag” laws are appropriately named. They are the red flags that should scare all that believe in our rights. This “extreme risk” just makes it easier to take away guns, the next one may declare a religion too dangerous, or a speech, or a peaceful assembly. No, that last one could never happen, right?

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An opportunity with family leave

GOVERNOR Chris Sununu’s refusal to support a mandatory paid family and medical leave program is a missed opportunity, not only for New Hampshire families but also for himself.

He vetoed a paid FMLA bill during the last session, and it appears that a similar bill, HB712, which passed this year, is heading to the same fate.

Under HB712, employees would be able to obtain up to 12 weeks of paid leave from their jobs due to an illness, or due to an illness of a family member. This is not some kind of paid vacation, as Sununu once called it. The benefit would only pay up to 60 percent of an employee’s salary and be subject to medical certification.

Four years ago, the University of New Hampshire’s Carsey School of Public Policy examined the issue of paid medical and family leave. It found that a third of New Hampshire’s workers lacked extended paid leave to tend to a personal illness. Half lacked access to paid parental leave, and



Kathleen Sullivan

two-thirds lacked access for paid leave to care for an ill family member.

Put aside the moral issue of sick employees having to choose between a paycheck and getting well, or a parent having to choose between a job and caring for a sick child. It makes sense from an economic standpoint.

A 2017 analysis published on the University of Pennsylvania’s Wharton Public Policy Initiative site examined the impact of paid leave programs in California, New Jersey and Rhode Island, as well as some major tech companies that had introduced paid leave at their businesses. It reported that 90 percent of employers surveyed in California said the program either had no negative impact or increased productivity. Ninety-six percent believed it had de-

creased employee turnover. Companies concluded that it was more cost effective to hire a temporary employee for 12 to 18 weeks than to go through the hiring and training process for permanent replacements.

FMLA also fixes some of the economic disparities faced by low-income workers. The Carsey study showed that workers in families earning less than \$60,000 a year have less access to paid leave than those with higher incomes. It would be helpful in keeping women in the workforce, as the burden of child care and caring for elderly parents often forces them to quit.

If Sununu signed the bill, he could take credit for something he is sorely missing: a signature accomplishment on a major policy issue. Instead, he opposes it with the claim that it would create an income tax. Not so. An income tax imposes a direct tax on all income, whether wage income, pension benefits, investment income, dividends, interest or lottery jackpots.

FMLA is not that. It is similar to unemployment insurance in that it requires employers to pay a small amount (.5 percent of an employee’s wages) into a state pool. Employers can pay the entire amount themselves, or pass along some or all of it to employees.

It is so cheap that an employer looking for an inexpensive benefit to attract employees would pay the cost. The New Hampshire Department of Employment Security estimates that the average cost would be \$5.11 per employee per week, or about \$270 per year per employee.

Effective, fair and cost efficient — no wonder the proposal is popular. Eighty-two percent of those surveyed by Carsey supported FMLA, with 69 percent willing to pay \$5 a week for the benefit.

Sununu should join those supporters and end his opposition.

Manchester’s Kathy Sullivan is the former chairman of the New Hampshire Democratic Party.

Letters

Why would I ever vote Democrat?

To the Editor: For the past three years, Democrats have based their entire election campaigns on the following agenda items:

Open borders for illegal aliens, abolish ICE, defund the police, sanctuary cities for illegal aliens, ban soft drinks, resistance, socialism, unlawfully destroy historical statues, global warming hysteria, rename historical schools/buildings/mascots, shared bathrooms for transgenders, higher taxes, bigger more wasteful government, race baiting, inciting and promoting rioting/protesting, more welfare programs rather than creating jobs.

I could list more but I already made my point. Why in the world would I ever vote for anyone associated with this type of ideology?

DAVID GARNETT
Hampton

Hudson golf course plan comes as no surprise

To the Editor: I’m as sad as anyone to see the beautiful Green Meadows Golf Course close after so many years, but as Hudson residents we knew it was inevitably going to happen and that property was going to change.

The family that operates the golf course has been trying to sell the property for years but have been forced to continue operations because some residents would rather have a golf course in their backyard — who wouldn’t?

The reality of the situation is that the family has a right to sell their property and the town should not stand in the way, but rather make sure the town gets the best possible deal they can.

I believe that the Hudson Logistics Center proposal

accomplishes that goal. It’s important to remember that this property has long been zoned for this kind of development.

It is an allowable use and, in my opinion, much better than other potential uses.

This project will bring in significant tax revenue into the town each year without creating a huge burden on services that ultimately minimize those tax dollars. Beyond that, the Hillwood team continues to demonstrate a willingness to work with the town, listen to the neighbors, and accommodate their requests to minimize the impact they may have.

Hudson will not get another opportunity like this and should not let this one pass us by.

JOHN O’BRIEN
Hudson

MALLARD FILLMORE



By Bruce Tinsley

“There Is Nothing So Powerful As Truth” — Daniel Webster

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“Where the Spirit of the Lord Is, There Is Liberty” — II Corinthians 3:17

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