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# DIALOGUE

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150-word limit. Writers must include home address and day and evening phone number.

## If we the people are in charge

Is it true that it's within the president's power to immediately stop the cruelty of separating children from their parents on the border with one phone call? If that's true, could he really be cruel enough to use these kids as pawns toward forcing Congress to pony up your (and my) money so he can keep his political promise to his base of a border wall? Isn't it true that he said Mexico would pay for it? If this isn't fake news, what kind of alternate reality are you and I living in to allow this kind of viciousness? If we the people truly are in charge, and if we get the government we deserve, every day this continues, what does this say about us?

✉ Alan Gardner, Blackwood, algardner46@gmail.com

## This is a stain on our honor

Our recent policy of separating mothers from their children after being caught crossing our border is un-American. We are the greatest country in history and this is a stain on our honor. All Americans should protest this brutal, cruel policy, which causes damage to our future and to the health and well-being of those innocent children.

We are a nation of immigrants and we benefit from immigrants coming to America to live better lives. All across the world people look to America to live in freedom. This atrocious policy tarnishes us and could cause future citizens to look elsewhere.

This is a rallying cry to stand up for what America is: We all have the right to pursue Life, Liberty and Happiness. These families deserve justice. Please contact your congressional representatives and ask them to fight this horrible treatment to innocent children and their mothers.

✉ John T. McGrath Jr., Pennsauken

## A problematic amendment

The hypocrisy of the State Senate is astonishing. Senate Bill 22 (SB 22) creates an Independent Citizens Commission to draw legislative and congressional districts in a fair, open and transparent way. SB 22, passed by the State Senate, violates this bill's principles.

Senators, in the last three days, introduced the Aument (Senator Aument) amendment that attaches the creation of judicial districts as part of the SB 22 redistricting process. There were no public hearings on the Aument amendment. The amendment was introduced the day before the full Senate voted on SB 22. In other words, those who voted for the Aument amendment violated the principles of a fair, open and transparent voting process established in the bill (SB 22) they voted on.

Shame on those who permitted this hypocrisy.

✉ John R. Heapes, Harrisburg

## Journalistic courage, and more

The articles in the Sunday Inquirer by both Harold Brubaker (Home Sanctioned for Neglect) and Ronnie Polaneczky (How Many Bruises Must Tommy Bear?) speak to journalistic courage by these fine reporters and the Editorial Board of the Inquirer. You know and you care.

A shout out, as well, to Attorney General [Josh] Shapiro, who is responding to injustices, long ignored by the Catholic dioceses, who deserve to be



A protester at Lackawanna College, where U.S. Attorney Jeff Sessions was speaking on immigration policy and law enforcement last week. BUTCH COMEGYS / TIMES-TRIBUNE

sanctioned and more.

And to think that the Diocese of Philadelphia sold those four nursing homes to the Center Management Group, in part to satisfy debts associated with making some modest restitution to people abused by clergy. In the end, the Catholic Church is the antithesis of dignified and hypocritical, as well.

✉ Marianne Roche, Oreland

## More difficult for care providers

Lawmakers across the state are crunching numbers to ensure the state can pay for vital programs. At home-based care agencies like JEVS at Home, we go through the same process, crunching numbers to ensure we can cover costs to provide care and services to seniors and people with disabilities in their homes. However, several factors are making this more and more difficult.

Current Medicaid reimbursement rates are inadequate, so home-care agencies can only afford to pay direct care workers \$10-\$11 per hour.

In addition to low reimbursement rates, in the last six months alone there have been increases in fees for state police background checks and child abuse clearances, which we are required to get for employees. With these unfunded mandates — and Philadelphia's paid sick leave law — the cost for my agency to hire just one worker is more than \$43 higher than it was last year. Yet there was no increase in the Medicaid rate to offset the cost.

Every day, 10,000 baby boomers turn 65, and most want to stay home as they age. It is critically important that our lawmakers from Philadelphia recognize the important role home care plays in keeping people healthy, independent, and with their families.

✉ Aurora Kripa, CEO, JEVS at Home, Philadelphia

## COMMENTARY

# Intolerance for inhumanity at the borders

A series of shocking reports over the family separations have come with the "zero tolerance" at the border scheme announced earlier this spring by Attorney General Jeff Sessions: a mother alleging her young child was taken from her while she was breast feeding, sobbing kids being told at one packed shelter that they're not allowed to hug each other, a grief-stricken dad committing suicide after his son was forcibly taken.

These stories have brought the immigration debate out of the political realm and into a new, dark place. In the 242nd year of the American Experiment, how can such official cruelty be morally justified?

At a White House briefing late last week, journalist Brian Karem gave up trying to get press secretary Sarah Sanders to explain the border policy, instead lashing out, in exasperation, at whether at long last she had left no sense of decency. "You're a parent." Karem exclaimed. "Don't you have any empathy? Come on, Sarah, you're a parent! Don't you have any empathy for what these people

American politics has been allowed to redefine morality as restricting women's reproductive rights or returning Christian prayer to public schools — even as we increasingly ignore the advice of Jesus to tend to the poor, the desperate, and to people who don't look like us.

Michael Curry, the presiding bishop of the Episcopal Church, told



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MSNBC this weekend that there's no Christian justification for taking toddlers from their mothers and that the current policies go against every teaching from Jesus about loving our neighbors, even our en-

emies. "Love of neighbor trumps everything," the bishop said. "That is fundamentally Christian — and American." Many other top spiritual leaders — the U.S. Catholic Bishops, even some top evangelicals — have also sharply criticized the Trump "zero tolerance" policies.

Recently in the space, I wrote about the ongoing Poor People's Campaign, led by the Rev. William Barber, the North Carolina minister on a mission since the dawn of the Tea Party era to define lack of health care, cuts to the safety net,



U.S. Attorney General Jeff Sessions speaking about immigration in Indiana last week. Fort Wayne Journal Gazette

are going through?"

Just moments earlier, Sanders had turned to what struck many as an odd place to find a moral defense of taking children away from their parents: the Bible. "I can say that it is very biblical to enforce the law," President

and restrictions on voting rights as fundamentally immoral. In a speech last year, Barber noted that the struggle for America's soul is drenched in the crusades against slavery, against Jim Crow laws and in the efforts of the Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. and

# Cartoonist fired for skewering