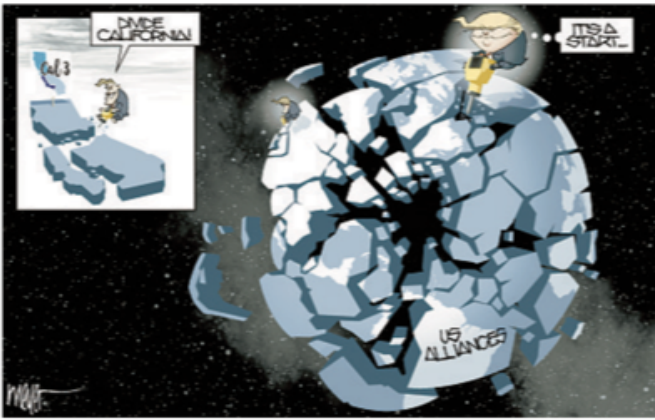


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STEVE BREEN has the day off.

EDITORIALS

ONLINE SALES TAXES: COMMON SENSE WINS OUT

The U.S. Supreme Court's 5-4 decision to allow states to impose sales taxes on online purchases by their residents is a triumph of common sense. Factions didn't break along the usual ideological divide. It was striking to see both Ruth Bader Ginsburg and Clarence Thomas — arguably the court's most liberal and conservative members, respectively — agree with swing Justice Anthony Kennedy's argument that a 1992 decision governing interstate commerce that was issued before the emergence of the modern internet wasn't relevant enough to justify the finding that states can only tax stores with physical presences within their borders. No, it's not logical or obvious that a tax ruling re-

lated to purchases made via mail-order catalogs should apply to today's e-commerce. In dissent, Chief Justice John Roberts wrote that this was another case of judges playing a role intended for Congress. But Kennedy wrote that the court was instead cleaning up a mess it created in 1992 and that its actions were consistent with past decisions related to interstate commerce. Given that 19 of the 20 largest retailers already collect online sales taxes — regardless of whether they have a physical presence in a state — the court majority has essentially given its blessing to a taxation framework that's already in place. But the clarity this ruling provides is still needed and welcome.

WHEN DRY NUMBERS HAVE STARK IMPLICATIONS

Dry-sounding studies based on academics sifting through U.S. health statistics may not sound like headline news. But that's not the case for a new study released by the Applied Population Lab. Researchers found that in more than half of the 50 states, more whites died than were born in 2014. This finding has at least three huge takeaways. The first is that less educated whites are only likely to feel even more isolated as America emerges as by far the more diverse major nation in the world. Political scientist Ruy Teixeira told The New York Times that this is likely to lead to even more political infighting over race and immigration issues as Republicans grow more dependent on this group. So

much for hopes of the culture wars receding. But two other issues raised by the study are also provocative. The first has to do with the correlation between declining white births and the still-raging opioid epidemic. Despair and addiction, unsurprisingly, discourage having children. The second has to do with how this study reinforces what experts call "one of the big demographic mysteries of recent times" — U.S. fertility rates falling to record lows among women of nearly all races and ethnicities. The long-term implications are stark. U.S. leaders of all backgrounds, not just policy wonks, should start worrying about what happens to a population that seems steadily less interested in reproducing.

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Use-of-force measure endangers our police

Re "Measure advances on police use of force" (June 20): The Legislature and Assemblywoman Shirley Weber, while well intentioned, are on the wrong course on this. Officers are trained to de-escalate situations and have 10 users. Officers are trained to use deadly force as a last resort. Further handicapping an officer's ability to make a quick decision is dangerous and unnecessary. Measures like this will endanger public safety, encourage second-guessing by law enforcement, result in less effective policing and potentially severely impact recruiting. Put yourself in a split-second, life-or-death situation and you will soon realize the enormity of the decision. Everyone is for less use of force, but how about asking the public to obey police requests and be compliant? Virtually all deadly shootings occur when the above actions are absent. When police chiefs, sheriffs and line officers are all against these increased and potentially punitive measures, I think legislators should heed their side before making a politically correct decision. Ron Pregonio, Oceanside

Kelly Cunningham's argument against requiring solar panel demand first, and the industry responds with new technology that rapidly brings down the capital costs and/or increases the efficiency of the capital. A better comparison might be to the cost of fossil fuels. What are the true costs of fossil fuels when you factor in the costs of the environmental damage? If this is the benchmark, solar roof panels may even make sense at today's costs. I'm still trying to fathom Cunningham's suggestion that we currently have a surplus of renewable energy during midday hours. Given the brown-outs of recent years and mandatory plant closings, is this a plus or a minus? Bob Schmidt, La Jolla

Ending the separation policy is not enough

Re "Trump orders end to his family separation policy amid national furor" (June 20): One lives 83 years thinking you've pretty much seen everything. Then the "Land of the free because of the brave" is discovered to have taken hundreds upon hundreds of immigrant children from their parents at the Mexican border away to unknown facilities all around the country. As good Americans we're reacting in horror; the president is reported to have come to and reversed the process. But not in time to reverse the inevitable scars about to happen reuniting those families, or the psychological damage to the young ones who were matched by strangers off to strange places. I don't care how clean and neat the facilities were. There should be repairs. Julia Vera, Coronado

Can Republicans still defend their own party?

Re "Laura Ingraham suggests migrant child

detention centers are 'essentially summer camp'" (June 18): I'm a registered independent who is socially liberal (which the Democrats embody) but fiscally conservative (which the Republicans used to champion). I wasn't thrilled with George W. Bush, but at least he tried to be a "compassionate conservative." Today's Republican leadership and base seem to be vying for the title of "Mean Party." Where did all the reasonable Republicans go? If any remain among U-T readers, are they willing to speak up? Mike Weisberg, Downey

A trade war with China will only hurt the U.S.

Re "Trump threatens new round of tariffs on China" (June 19): Donald Trump will never win a one-on-one trade war with China. China is fully prepared to handle any U.S.-initiated tariffs and restrictions that are made without the support of our other trade partners. For instance, the U.S. adopts metal tariffs and China puts a tariff on U.S. cars. Instantly, U.S. cars are 20 percent to 50 percent higher in price in China, which loses a huge amount of market share for its cars in China. Who will suffer? U.S. citizens, U.S. jobs, U.S. companies and the U.S. economy. By the way, China is both the largest and the fastest-growing car market on the planet. The only positive result from Trump's point of view is that he will become the

Bill would protect California's ocean life

Re "Scripta scientist

Keep watchful eye on Trump's future pardons

Re "Marsiglio indicted on new charges" (June 9): If Donald Trump pardons his henchmen for crimes they committed in furtherance of his ends, that in itself makes him complicit in those crimes and is grounds for impeachment. Gregory West, Poway

Climate change deniers need some education

Re "Scripta scientist

RUBEN NAVARRETE

A BROKEN DEBATE

It's not often that President Trump finds the courage to do the right thing when it comes to immigrants and refugees. In fact, he usually does the wrong thing — and sometimes for a ghastly reason. That's what happens when you spend your days pondering to the racist sliver of America worried that immigration threatens the culture, demographics, identity and language of the United States. So it is worth taking a moment to note Trump's wise decision this week to sign an executive order that is supposed to keep immigrant families at the border together. But how the Department of Homeland Security handles families — something it was never designed to do — is the only thing that is broken. After a couple of weeks of hearing Americans talk about this issue, in ways that were either hyperbolic or hateful, it's clear that the national conversation is also badly in need of repair. Liberal Democrats have been on an emotional roller coaster. One minute they're weeping at images of families being divided in a way they never did four or five years ago when President Obama was the one doing the dividing. The next minute, they're flying into a rage at the mere intimation that they're not as bighearted as they pretend to be, because where is the fun in being a liberal if you can't feel morally superior to others? Conservative Republicans have spent the last several days reflexively circling the wagons in defense of the Trump administration. They should simply say, "We support the president, and he has done a great job cutting unemployment, reconfiguring trade and handling North Korea. But he was wrong to separate immigrant families at the border." Instead, their instinct is to downplay the negative impact of the policy.

Although the president made clear at the signing ceremony that his administration would continue its "zero tolerance" policy of prosecuting everyone who crosses the border illegally, Trump also said he didn't like seeing families separated. "Anybody with a heart would feel this way," he insisted. Of course, when it comes to brown-skinned foreigners trying to gain entry to the United States, there are many Trump supporters out there — camped out in the GOP's "Tin Man" wing — who don't have hearts. They're too busy being afraid of immigrants, or looking down on them, to master any compassion. Conservative commentator Ann Coulter accused the toddlers who cried for their mommies of being "child actors," while Fox

News host Laura Ingraham glibly described the horror these kids were put through as being like "summer camp." And when it comes to immigrants and refugees, there are also more than a few right-wingers — in the Republican Party's "Scarecrow" wing — who don't have a heart. Even with polls showing up to two-thirds of Americans opposing the idea of separating refugee families at the border, some conservatives tried to defend this indefensible policy of government-orchestrated kidnapping by doing something that wasn't smart: blaming the parents for putting their kids at risk. Here's a fact of life: Desperate parents do desperate things. During the Cold War, when parents in East Germany crossed the Berlin Wall so that they could live free even if it meant never seeing them again, was that a form of child abuse? I don't think so. In fact, even 60 years later, we weep at their sacrifice and marvel at their strength. Maybe those mothers from Central America need a better publicist so they can tell their story. Or maybe we just shouldn't judge people until we've carried on our shoulders the same burdens that they must carry on theirs. Still, even as he signed the executive order to keep families together, Trump used the word "compassion" so that the country is not "overtaken by people, by crime, by all of the things that we don't stand for, that we're not used to, that we're not used to." If we're making a list of things Americans don't stand for and don't want, I would include a few lines about the dyscalculical way in which we talk about crisis like this: "Everyone covers their backside, and no one admits fault. It's not enough to attack the other camp, you've got to go your year as pure and innocent of any wrongdoing. It's a dishonest mess. Unfortunately, our defective political system is not fixed with the stroke of a pen."

Navarrete, a Carlsbad resident, was a syndicated column for the Washington Post Writers Group. He can be reached by email at nben@rubenavarrete.com.

Bill would protect California's ocean life

While some may see recreational fishing and conservation as contrasting terms, the Driftnet Modernization and Bycatch Reduction Act currently under consideration on Capitol Hill proves they are actually two sides to the same coin. For years, California has been the only state to allow massive catch-all driftnets that have killed countless fish, whales, dolphins, sharks, sea turtles and myriad other species. It's time for that to stop.

As an angler, I want to be able to pass down my beloved hobby to my children and grandchildren, and driftnets severely threaten that. After all, how will future generations be able to go fishing if there aren't any left to catch? This effort demonstrates that anglers and environmentalists often share common goals. Let's come together to fight as one. Join us by urging your representatives to support the Driftnet Modernization and Bycatch Reduction Act.

Bill Shedd
Owner and CEO, AFTCO

Climate change deniers need some education

Re "Scripta scientist

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Steve Loucks
Executive

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