

Letter

Vote Arford

To all my District 49 citizens in Brunswick, I would like to ask you to cast a vote for Poppy Arford on Nov. 3 as our legislative House representative, or even better, cast an absentee ballot. Many of you know I ran for this seat, and Poppy won. It was during the campaign, when all of us were running together, that we really interacted and got to know each other. I will tell you that Poppy is a hard worker and very dedicated and will go above and beyond to work for the citizens of District 49, Brunswick and the whole state.

When I came in second, Poppy asked me if I would be part of her election team and I gladly accepted. The reason I did is that she supports and fights for all the issues that are really important to me, such as: Affordable health care and state school dollars for the towns, trying to work towards the 55% that all we citizens voted for several years ago and that the LePage era sliced and sliced.

She is also a very huge advocate for our environment, which is very important to me. I could go on and on, but will close with: we can't go wrong with Poppy Arford. She will fight for us like you have not seen before.

Kathy E. Wilson,
Brunswick

Today's Highlight in History

On Sept. 3, 2005, President George W. Bush ordered more than 7,000 active duty forces to the Gulf Coast as his administration intensified efforts to rescue Katrina survivors and send aid to the hurricane-ravaged region in the face of criticism it did not act quickly enough.

WHEN YOU WRITE

Letters to the editor and guest columns should include your first and last name, the name of the community in which you live and a phone number for verification purposes.

Limit your letter to 350 words. Guest columns should be between 600-800 words.

Letters and guest columns endorsing candidates or campaign issues must be received 10 days before an election. Letters and guest columns written by candidates on any subject must be received 30 days before an election.

Letters to the editor should be the author's own work. We strongly discourage and will attempt to weed out form letters, letters that have been mailed to other news outlets or letters that have been written and/or edited by a third party, including but not limited to political parties and public relations specialists. We try to limit printing one submission per author per month.

We reserve the right to edit, condense or reject any letter to the editor or any guest column. We do not publish anonymous letters, personal attacks, personal complaints, poetry, consumer complaints, religious treatises or letters written in bad taste.

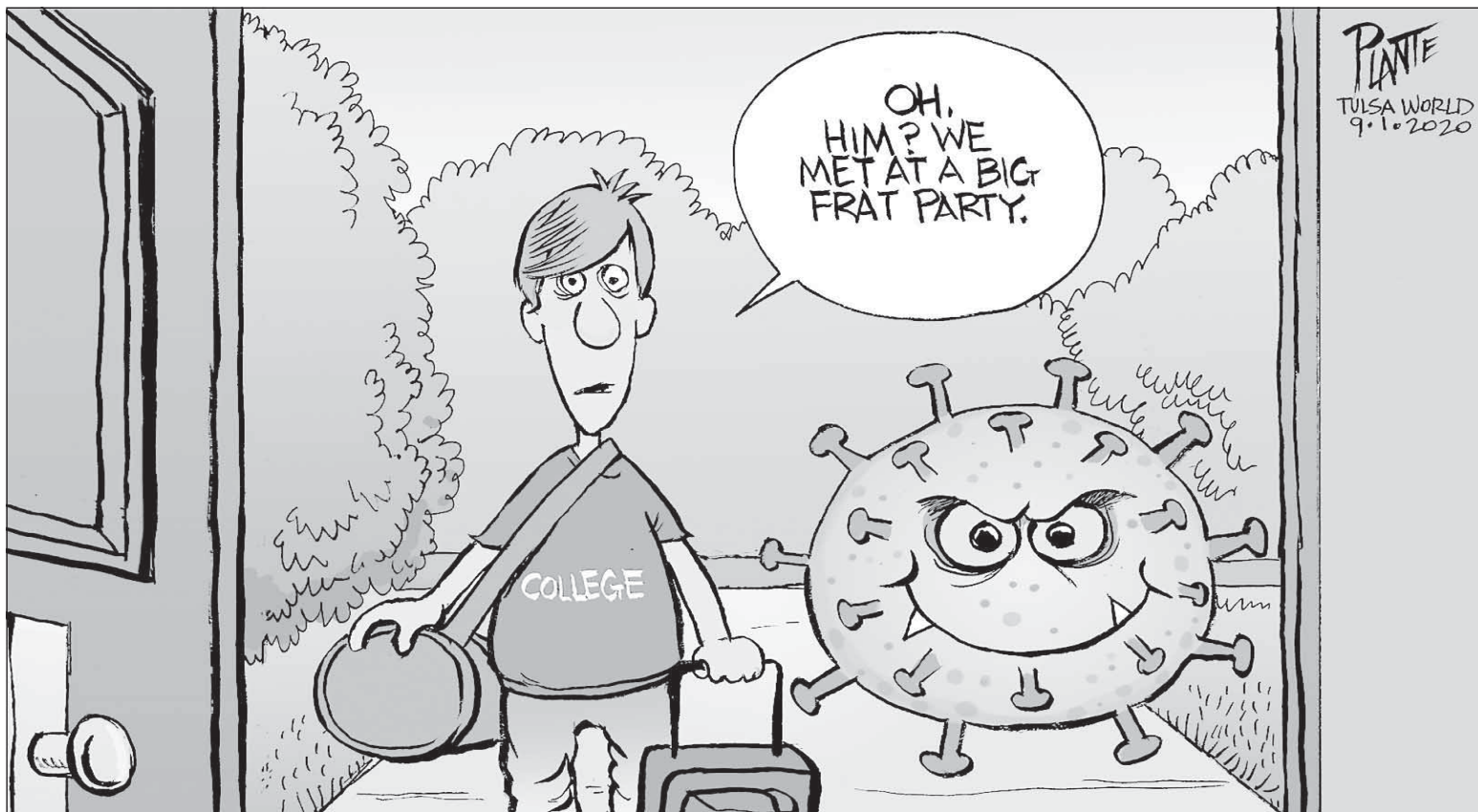
Letters and guest columns may be brought to The Times Record office; mailed to 3 Business Parkway, Suite 1, Brunswick, ME 04011; e-mailed to letters@times-record.com; or submitted through timesrecord.com. We do not accept hand-written material.

Contact John Swinconeck at (207) 504-8209 or editor@timesrecord.com for more information.

QUOTE OF THE DAY

"We cannot change anything until we accept it. Condemnation does not liberate, it oppresses."

— Carl Jung



History shows militarized policing in cities can escalate violence and trigger conflict

BY ANGÉLICA DURÁN-MARTÍNEZ,
University of
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The Conversation

The U.S. Justice Department has dispatched federal agents and U.S. marshals to Kenosha, Wisconsin, where a police shooting left an unarmed Black man, Jacob Blake, paralyzed. The Aug. 23 shooting triggered fury, protest and nights of deadly conflict.

Kenosha is the latest city to see federal intervention in demonstrations against police violence. Citing its responsibility to stop "violent anarchists rioting in the streets," the Trump administration sent armed Justice Department agents to Portland and Seattle in July. In May, after the police killing of George Floyd, it deployed National Guard troops to Washington, D.C.

Wisconsin's governor assented to some federal assistance in Kenosha. But in Portland and Seattle, local leaders rejected Trump's offer of help. Armed federal agents, who clashed violently with protesters, were ultimately asked to leave.

Constitutional restrictions largely prevent heavily armed federal agents from patrolling U.S. cities; federalizing local law enforcement is historically rare. But my research on public security in countries that use this tactic finds militarized federal interventions can have unintended – and often negative – consequences.

Growing militarization

In sending federal agents and soldiers to suppress pro-

tests, the United States is part of a global trend.

France, for example, instead of designing deescalation strategies to quell its famous yellow vest protests, has been sending national police in riot gear to confront demonstrators, a decision that's come under intense scrutiny.

And last year, when a wave of protests washed across Latin America – where militarized law enforcement has been expanding for two decades – demonstrators in Ecuador, Brazil, Peru and beyond were confronted with extreme force by their countries' militarized police forces.

Chilean president Sebastian Piñera actually declared "war" on people protesting a subway fare increase and sent out soldiers in tanks.

Whether their mission is to suppress protests or stop crime, international evidence shows that deploying security forces from government agencies whose primary function is armed conflict or national security – not public safety – tends to escalate, not reduce, violence.

Mexico's war on cartels

Take Mexico, for example, which began to send soldiers and federal police to combat drug cartels in 2006. Violence skyrocketed in the places where troops were present.

Those areas were already dangerous, but statistical analyses show that violence rose far higher than it would have in the absence of troops. My own research in Ciudad Juárez, on the border of Texas, found evidence that the Mexi-

can Army and the Federal Police even committed torture, sexual harassment and other abuses while stationed there.

Looking at Latin American countries that militarized their response to crime, researchers Gustavo Flores and Jessica Zarkin attribute the resulting escalation of violence to a combination of causes. Soldiers and national police forces have higher-grade weapons and little personal contact with the local population. Additionally, they are trained not in de-escalation but in combat, and often have an engage-and-destroy mentality.

And when local authorities are bypassed or overridden by having federal agents sent there – as occurred in Washington, D.C., Portland and Seattle – it generates political conflicts.

That undermines the mission and further increases the potential for violence. In Ciudad Juárez, for example, the overlapping jurisdictions of local police and federal officers gravely hindered their ability to fight drug cartels, as a leaked 2009 cable from the U.S. consulate there acknowledged.

Trust in soldiers

With all these documented challenges, why send federal agents into cities at all?

Federal agencies can provide resources, intelligence and networks that local police lack. And when local, state and federal authorities work together to coordinate their missions, these deployments may be successful.

For brief periods over the past decade, both Tijuana,

Mexico and Rio de Janeiro, Brazil saw short-lived but substantial safety improvements when local, state and federal authorities worked together to battle organized crime. Eventually, though, violence rose again as coordination and discipline unraveled.

In both places, long-term, non-militarized strategies to address the root causes of violence remain weak.

In many countries, too, the military is far more popular than the police. So in times of trouble and polarization, national leaders can find it politically expedient to call on the credibility of the armed forces.

In the United States, 80% of people surveyed in 2018 believed the military "will act in the best interests of the public," according to the Pew Research Center. Meanwhile, the country is sharply divided on the police. Just 33% of Black Americans think police use the "right amount of force," compared to 75% of white Americans.

And a meager 38% of all Americans say they have confidence in elected officials, Pew finds. Similar trust gaps between the military and other government institutions are seen in Western Europe and Latin America.

When federal troops are sent in to volatile situations, though, they can actually escalate conflict. Such deployments can end up undermining citizen confidence in the military, while leaving the underlying causes of protests or crime unresolved.

Census 2020: Accurate count essential

BY TOM PURCELL
Guest column

I hope we get it right. Data collection for the 2020 U.S. Census ends soon. This census, the 22nd in U.S. history, has faced its share of challenges and controversies.

The goal of the census has remained the same throughout its 230-year history: to count every person living in the United States.

The Constitution requires the federal government to do so every 10 years. The population count determines the number of U.S. House seats each state will have – which can become highly political.

When a state gains or loses seats, the party in power sometimes redraws congressional districts in hopes of making it impossible for the other party to win. That's why census results are so important to politicians.

The census also determines how much federal funding your neighborhood will receive. The more people counted in a region, the more

money that region will receive for roads, bridges and other government programs.

From the start, this census has faced no small number of controversies and challenges.

"From cybersecurity issues to administrative problems to a legal drama over a possible citizenship question, there are plenty of reasons to worry about the decennial head count," noted The Atlantic in July 2018.

Cybersecurity certainly is a concern. This is the very first census that allows answering questions online – which may put respondents and their data at risk of cyberattack, particularly amid COVID-19, which has brought thousands of scammers out of the woodwork.

Wired reported in 2019 that "experts fear the (census) bureau is opening itself up to a range of new risks, from basic functionality and connectivity failures to cybersecurity threats and disinformation campaigns."

Disinformation in the era of

social media? I'm shocked.

To stay secure, remember that the Census Bureau will never ask for your full Social Security number, or your bank account or credit card numbers, or for money or donations – but scammers pretending to be from the bureau will.

Ten questions ask about respondents' name, sex, age, race, telephone number and whether they own or rent. There are no questions about religion, whether one is a legal resident or whether one has a Social Security number.

When the Trump administration proposed adding a citizenship question, opponents cried foul. They said the question would intimidate non-citizens into not responding, which would result in undercounts in districts with many noncitizens. The administration eventually dropped that idea.

Here's the latest battle, according to Roll Call: "Under pressure from the Trump administration to end the

count early, the (Census) agency will conclude all enumeration efforts on Sept. 30, and then comb through data before wrapping up the whole process by Dec. 31 – half the time the agency originally anticipated after delaying its initial schedule because of the pandemic."

Trump opponents say this could cause undercounting in minority communities. The administration says modern technologies and efficiencies enable an accurate count and meeting its statutory deadline of Dec. 31, 2020.

In an era when everything is hopelessly political and political opponents loathe and distrust each other, one thing really matters.

It's essential that we get our census data right.

Tom Purcell, author of "Misadventures of a 1970's Childhood," a humorous memoir available at amazon.com, is a Pittsburgh Tribune-Review humor columnist. Send comments to Tom at Tom@TomPurcell.com.

The Times Record
Local. Legitimate. Journalist.

JOHN SWINONECK
EXECUTIVE EDITOR

First Amendment of the Bill of Rights to the United States Constitution

Congress shall make no law respecting an establishment of religion, or prohibiting the free exercise thereof; or abridging the freedom of speech, or of the press; or the right of the people peaceably to assemble, and to petition the government for a redress of grievances.

The Bill of Rights to the U.S. Constitution was ratified on Dec. 15, 1791.