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"The newspaper should be more than a business enterprise. It should also be the champion and protector of the people's rights." — As written by the late Ben Huh, who is now establishing The Day Trust.

## GUEST EDITORIAL

## The ugliest part of the week

This appeared in *The Washington Post*.

If you haven't heard — and if you haven't, lucky you — Elon Musk declared this week that President Donald Trump was the Big Beautiful Bill is "pork-filled" and a "disgusting abomination." (Never mind that Trump presided over most of its passage during the 2024 presidential campaign — the one Musk spent a fortune to lose.) Musk responded on Thursday by muscling about terminating the tech billionaire's government contracts. Their back-and-forth devolved into a vicious social media spat.

The drama might be dismissed as another over-the-top episode in another exhausting news cycle. Except some of the president's other allies have been sounding critical notes about the budget bill. Top Reps, Marjorie Taylor Greene (Georgia) and Mike Flood (Nebraska) admitted — after they helped push it through the House by a single vote — that they had not realized it contains provisions they oppose. Such is the nature of massive "must-pass" bills: Congressional leaders tick in all sorts of policies with little notice or debate. The

one Flood dislikes — which would make it harder for judges to hold in contempt those who flout their orders, a shortighted move to ease Trump's aggressive applications of executive power that would one day backfire on Republicans — is particularly worthy of regret.

Yet, bigger news this week came from the House floor, where the Congressional Budget Office, which provided more evidence that the legislation perhaps does not live up to its title. The House passed version would increase federal deficits by \$2.4 trillion over 10 years, Congress' official scorekeepers found. This will not calm the investors the United States needs to finance its deficits; lately, U.S. interest rates have been rising while the dollar has been weakening, an unusual pattern that suggests people are worried about the country's fiscal direction. (Higher interest rates usually attract international investment in U.S. debt and, thus, boost demand for the dollar.) The CBO projections are also unlikely to allay concerns among some deficit-wary Republicans, such as Sen. Ron Johnson (Wisconsin). Johnson

said he has tested a debt chart to Trump that included CBO figures. "We have to have some base numbers we agree on," he said. Senate Majority Leader John Thune (R-South Dakota), who is trying to push the bill through his chamber, has argued it would boost growth and cut the federal deficit. A less-evil picture comes from the Penn Wharton Budget Model, which conducts a sophisticated type of "dynamic scoring," that accounts for legislation's economic effects — the sort of analysis that would show a surge in tax receipts from pro-growth policies. Penn's dynamic projection finds that the bill would add deficits by more than \$3 trillion over a decade, despite a modest boost to gross domestic product.

Thune is right that economic growth is critical. Robert growth has long distinguished the United States from other developed nations. All sorts of problems get easier to solve as America becomes wealthier. And so it would assume that the tax system as currently written is ideal. It isn't. But there are ways Republicans could act

on these insights without scaring the bond market. They could simplify the tax code to promote saving and investment and eliminate loopholes that deter investment and distort the economy. President Ronald Reagan worked with congressional Democrats to do this in 1981. They also would need to reduce Social Security and other big government programs in ways that preserve their function but save money. Such a course would ensure that federal spending and revenue are better matched. If the economy were to grow more than expected, the government would end up with a simpler tax base, a more efficient safety net, maybe even a surplus to pay down existing debt — no more stimulus.

Instead, the One Big Beautiful Bill is packed with expensive carrots and big government, a costly expansion of the federal write-off for people's state and local taxes — would undo one of the best reforms in the GOP's 2017 tax bill, the signature legislation of Trump's first term. One could use many words to describe this. "Beautiful" is not one of them.

## Clash on school library books shows Democrats' true intent

By CHRIS POWELL

What is both most laughable and scurriest about the Democratic Party in Connecticut is its hatred for democracy, which came up this week as the state House of Representatives debated the state budget written without the Democratic majority's caucus. To avoid debate on their bill to obstruct challenges to sexually themed, vulgar and graphic books in public school libraries, the Democrats had tried to hide it in their budget bill. Rep. Anne Dugan, a conservative Republican from Killingly, wasn't fooled. She rose to complain about such books and began ranting sexually vulgar dialogue from one, "Me and Earl and the Dying Girl," a book that became controversial in Gailford's school system two years ago.

Deputy House Speaker Juan Candelaria, D-New Haven, who was presiding, interrupted Dugan and asked her to make her point without words that shouldn't be used around halfhearted people and children such as those present in the hall of the House or watching on television. If Dugan had meant to bait Candelaria, he quickly fell for her trap, making her point for her by trying to shut her up. She replied by noting that the sexual vulgarity she had read aloud and to which Candelaria had objected was the same sexual vulgarity that school libraries in Connecticut were already providing to children of all ages. If this was objectionable in the House, how could it be less objectionable in school?

For years similarly ironic incidents have been happening around the country at school board meetings as parents have objected to sexually themed, vulgar and graphic books stocked in school libraries. It's a perfectly fair issue. Exactly what sexual content is appropriate for what ages, and who decides?

**Of course there is a big difference** between reading silently and reading aloud, as Dugan said. But that wasn't the objection Deputy Speaker Candelaria made. He declared the words objectionable in themselves for young audiences, though Dugan had had no other effective way of sharing them with the House and the public.

Even so, conservatives should acknowledge that sexual and even racist language may have a place in literature, especially "coming of age" literature for older children.

Indeed, what may be the most moving passage in American literature, from Mark Twain's "Huckleberry Finn" (involves the "H" word) even as the character utters it repudiates racism. Yet some people who consider themselves politically liberal want "Huckleberry Finn" removed from school libraries as much as some conservatives want "Me and Earl and the Dying Girl" removed.

The stocking of libraries is a matter of judgment. The issue lately before the General Assembly has been something else: Whether the public should have a right to influence such judgments, either directly or through elected school boards, or whether school libraries should be formally declared unchallengeable agencies, answering to no one, as Democrats wanted to arrange with their legislation.

The Democratic bill signified the party's hatred of democracy. Drunk with arrogance in their one-party state, the Democrats want to stifle political incoherence everywhere just as Deputy Speaker Candelaria did with Representative Dugan.

**If democracy is to be sustained** in a big federal republic like the United States, some school libraries will stock not just "Me and Earl and the Dying Girl" but also homosexuality manuals and poems to transgenderism, and some won't. Meanwhile, in another irony missed by Democratic legislators, the biggest centers of "book banning" aren't people who complain about particular books but librarians themselves.

For librarians have limited space on their shelves while the number of books is practically infinite. So librarians have to choose, and a librarian's choosing which books to exclude is no different from a parent's objecting to a sexually explicit vulgar and graphic book that might get into the hands of a 6-year-old. School and public libraries should answer for their choices.

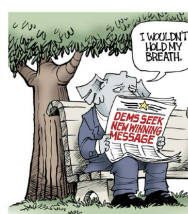
Librarians may have degrees in library science and may be members of the American Library Association, but, in the end, as George Bernard Shaw said, all professions are conspiracies against the laity — that is, against democracy.

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### HOW TO WRITE LETTERS TO THE DAY

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By LEE HOCKSTADER  
The Washington Post

Haiti's four-year spiral into chaos is not only the chronicle of a disaster foretold. It is also one of the most preventable tragedies.

Describing Haiti as a "failed state" is an almost comically antisepic description of the horrific meltdown underway there. In Port-au-Prince, the nation's capital, murderous gangs now control all but a single besieged redoubt, where an impostor-governor's council is holed up, its members fearing for their lives.

The former prevailed in Washington and the wider world, which paid lip service to Haiti's agency while turning their backs on the only plausible thing to prevent it: an international force with sufficient personnel and means to restore order. The latter provided cover for a snake-eater's specious talk about the perils of neocolonialism and the virtues of homegrown Haitian solutions.

It's clear that past interventions in Haiti, including the most recent one under U.N. auspices, went wrong as they've gone wrong before. But it was equally obvious that without the deployment of armed international peacekeepers after the assassination four years ago of Haiti's President, Jean-Bertrand Aristide, the result would be violent anarchy. In the event, the pandemonium that has beset Haiti has exceeded even the grimpest predictions.

Immediately after Moïse was killed, The Post's Editorial Board, of which I was then a member, urged "swift and resolute" intervention is needed. "Without it, his death is likely to trigger a power vacuum that would only accelerate the spiral of mayhem in the absence of almost any current elected

According to the New York Times, those drones are likely deployed by a shadowy task force operated by American contractors who include Blackwater's Erik Prince, a Trump ally, hired by what remains of the Haitian government to combat the gangs in a desperate tactic likely only to add fuel to the fire.

It all has been enabled by the world's complacency, an incalculable moral failure. Critics, who dismissed Haiti as unsalvageable or not worth the bother, are as guilty as starry-eyed idealists who insisted that elites themselves could make do without outside intervention.

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officials leaders with a claim to political legitimacy." Instead of urgent action, wealthy U.S. senators, who were dragging, quarter-measures and tergiversations.

Equity in Haiti is nothing new. It was the upshot of a brutal rapist who, like Joe Biden, then a U.S. senator, gave voice in 1994. It wouldn't much matter to U.S. interests, said Biden, if a U.S. senator, gave voice in 1994. It wouldn't much matter to U.S. interests, said Biden, if a U.S. senator, gave voice in 1994. It wouldn't much matter to U.S. interests, said Biden, if a U.S. senator, gave voice in 1994.

Not to be outflanked in heartlessness, then-candidates Donald Trump and Joe Biden last year slandered Haiti with a contemptible lie: that Haitian migrants were eating domestic pets in Springfield, Ohio. On Wednesday, Trump included Haiti on a list of 12 countries whose citizens are banned from entering the United States. That mission has a U.N. approval meant to offer some prescriptive relief — a beacon of light that might attract Haitians from its dark tunnel. Alas, the time for that seems past.

In 2022, as the country slid further into mayhem, its government issued a formal appeal to accept a resolution for a stabilization force. A key reason for the U.N. Security Council's refusal to send only 1,000 officers finally began arriving a year ago — drastically undermanned, underequipped, outgunned, poorly funded and, unsurprisingly, doomed to fail. That mission has a U.N. approval but limited backing. When Washington tried to transform it into a full-fledged U.N. force, it fell — an effort that might have added additional funding and personnel. The U.S. blocked it in the Security Council.

Tough-minded decisions could have averted Haiti's collapse. Instead, feeble international triggers a power vacuum that would only accelerate the spiral of mayhem in the absence of almost any current elected

LEONARD  
Cartoonist: Mike