

# THE OPEN FORUM



The sun sets behind the rock walls as the Dolores River cuts through Slick Rock Canyon. LINDSAY PIERCE — DENVER POST FILE PHOTO

## **First, let's celebrate the bipartisan step in protecting Dolores River**

Thanks to the Denver Post editorial board for raising the profile of the Dolores River National Conservation Area and Special Management Area Act, introduced by Sens. Michael Bennet and John Hickenlooper and Rep. Lauren Boebert. It's important to note that Reps. Ken Buck and Doug Lamborn signed on as original co-sponsors.

Sen. Bennet deserves special praise for his patient work over the years to work out a consensus policy among the stakeholders in that area. He did that by listening to what the locals want, need, and fear.

Now, just as a robust bipartisan legislative solution is within grasp for this Western Slope problem, Denver is suggesting that President Joe Biden upend the apple cart by designating the area as a national monument subject to "more protection and regulation" — exactly what many of the local stakeholders fear.

This "intriguing conversation bubbling up like a spring" can wait until the hard, bridge-

building work by Bennet and dozens of local stakeholders has a chance to become law. President Biden has enough on his plate right now. Signing a locally-driven, bipartisan bill into law is a better use of his political capital than stirring up a hornets' nest over a new national monument.

I urge Colorado's Democratic House members to co-sponsor House Resolution 8601 as a statement of solidarity and interest in bridging the rural-urban divide. Kudos to our Senators and House Republicans for their bipartisan work.

— *Kathy Fackler, Durango*

### **The championing of hypocrisy**

As a transgender American who transitioned later in life, I appreciated Carl P. Leubsdorf's opinion piece. Thank you for publishing such a thoughtful piece on the hypocrisy of the politics of fear.

Too many states target a very small minority of Americans over false ideologies about those wanting to live their own life their way, to define themselves, to choose who they want to be and who to love. Yet when there are hundreds of victims of gun violence occurring in their own states, these red states do nothing about the thousands of bullets used to end lives.

If guns don't kill children, why will books? If liberal gun policies and hate rhetoric don't fuel violence, why do drag queens?

Leubsdorf notes how these champions of small government choose to weaponize their power to control the minds and bodies of others. Those who don't think or believe like the red-state politicians will be suppressed, marginalized, and demonized. Such hypocrisy is open, blatant, and championed by that minority.

If only those politicians had read their history books on the rise of fascism in the 1930s and '40s, they would have learned its lessons rather than repeating them. We must not ignore the politics of fear but rather confront such idiocy and prejudice so that every person in America is free to choose.

— *Jamie Buechler, Westminster*

### **Security should be priority for candidates**

Doug Friednash is right on the money when it comes to Shannon Hoffman, Shontel Lewis and Candi CdeBaca. When candidates like that get elected, we end up seeing a red wave in the next election.

As someone who rides the light rail, Lewis is the most frightening candidate for her determination to cut security offices from RTD. I live in Lakewood and went to see a music show one recent evening. The logical thing for me to do would be to park at the Sheridan light rail station, then take the W line to Union Station.

But I didn't do that. I drove to the 38th & Blake Park-n-Ride and took the A line to Union

Station. Why? Because I don't want to deal with the drug users that hang out at the Sheridan station. By taking the A line in, I know a security officer will be on board.

Before the pandemic, there were always security guards on board checking fares. That was the biggest worry with light rail. During and after the pandemic, the security staff was drastically cut, with horrific results: Trains and bus stops were trashed out and the drug abusers started using certain stations as places to abuse drugs.

I'm glad RTD is planning on tripling the number of security guards by the end of the year. RTD also needs to give the new guards authority to remove disruptive passengers and drug users from the trains.

— *Mike Filion, Lakewood*

### **Let workers into United States**

Thank you for publishing Morgan Smith's cogent description of the humanitarian crisis at our southern border and the practical proposals for expanding the guest worker program and the funding for both the border patrol and asylum judges.

Increasing the number of guest workers and addressing the backlog of asylum cases would not only reduce the number of people stuck in horrendous hardships but also help fill the 4 million unfilled jobs in this country.

While historically, immigrants have played a major role in boosting our economy; employers currently have been addressing the labor shortages by recruiting children, as indicated by the dramatic increase in child labor violations.

Recent efforts by several states to loosen child labor laws are even more alarming. Do we really want 14- and 15-year-old children serving alcohol in bars and restaurants, or working in freezers and meat coolers, even briefly?

In March, a law enacted in Arkansas even eliminated requirements to verify a child's age!

Relaxing child labor laws will significantly increase the possibilities for exploitation and abuse of children, our most precious resource, while continuing to ignore the hardships of a large pool of valuable workers from other countries.

Smith's proposals are reasonable and doable, helping our economy and the humanitarian problems at the border while eliminating the need to use children to solve our labor shortage.

Congress has the power to take action on these proposals — please urge members of your delegation to use that power in a constructive way!

— *Karen Timmons, Westminster*

### **Border crisis needs policy fix**

We do have an issue with our citizenship requirement. And all it involves changing is

birthright citizenship. If we do like almost every other nation, this would slow the influx.

We are no longer a melting pot. That time has come and gone. We are an established country and need to do better to take care of our citizens. This doesn't mean we lose the borders.

I believe we grant citizenship through the naturalized process to about 850,000 people a year. These people do it the correct way, waiting years for a visa to come here legally and then years to be granted citizenship.

Do I feel sorry for the people who walk here from other countries? I do, but they are trying to skirt the rules and that is not fair to the people doing it correctly.

So next time you think "those poor people," remember the people who are patiently waiting their turn to become immigrants and then legal citizens the right way.

—*Justin Bruno, California, Md.*

## **Two ways to fix U.S. Supreme Court**

Our judiciary system is integral to upholding the values that make America great: liberty, justice, and equality. To preserve these values, it is crucial that we consider two significant reforms: the expansion of the U.S. Supreme Court and the implementation of term limits for its justices.

Expanding the Supreme Court is not a new idea, nor is it unconstitutional. The size of the Court has changed multiple times in our history.

Expanding the Supreme Court would facilitate a wider range of perspectives, enhancing its capacity to interpret the Constitution in a manner reflective of the diverse views and experiences of our population.

Moreover, it would reduce the outsized influence of individual justices and protect against the Court being overly swayed by a single ideology.

Secondly, we must address the lifetime appointment of justices. The Constitution, while visionary, was crafted in a time when the average lifespan was much shorter. As it stands, justices serve for decades, extending their influence far beyond the term of the president who appointed them.

This raises concerns about democratic representation and accountability. By instituting term limits, we could ensure a more frequent and predictable opportunity for turnover, promoting a court that better mirrors society.

Understandably, these proposed reforms are not without controversy.

However, we must remember that our Constitution was designed to be a living document, capable of adapting to the ever-evolving needs of our citizens.

Both of these changes could enhance the Supreme Court's legitimacy, responsiveness, and alignment with our democratic ideals.

— *Tannen Helmers, Highlands Ranch*

### **Court delivers another blow**

Following massive fish kills and rivers catching on fire, Congress passed the Clean Water Act, which has been one of America's foundational environmental laws.

Unfortunately, the recent Supreme Court ruling on wetlands severely restricts the application of the Clean Water Act.

The article on the Court's ruling was titled “EPA’s power takes hit,” which is off the mark. It is the American public, the environment, and science that took a “hit.”

It is important to recognize that the Court’s ruling goes far beyond wetlands and impacts other “waters.”

There are limited options for restoring protection of these waters, one being Congressional action, which, given a very divided and partisan makeup, is most unlikely.

The other is for states/local governments/tribes to act, which requires both significant political will and resources.

Once again, a rogue Supreme Court has left the country in shambles on policies ranging from health care and women’s rights to protection of the environment.

— *Gene Reetz, Denver*