

If Knodl promotes transparency, he should vote for bill on records retention

To the editor:

In his recent op-ed, Rep. Dan Knodl wrote that he would like to see more transparency in “all levels of government.” (“Governor Evers Shuts Out Parents, Dec. 16). This is inconsistent with what happened in 2015, the year Knodl was assistant majority leader. Republicans passed a “broad legislator disclosure privilege” that exempted only the Legislature — not any other state office or agency — from Wisconsin’s public records laws. Wisconsin legislators are the only state officials who are free to delete their emails, files and anything else they do not want you to see at the end of each business day.

I invite my colleagues concerned about transparency at all levels of government to join me in co-sponsoring SB 289, a bill that would remove the Legislature’s record retention exemption and mandate they be “preserved for permanent use” as indicated in section 16.61(1) of Wisconsin Statutes.

After all, as public officials we should be setting an example of transparency ourselves before we mandate it of others.

Rep. Deb Andraca
23rd Assembly District
Whitefish Bay

Parents already have what they need to monitor children’s education

To the editor:

Rep. Dan Knodl writes (Dec. 16) that Governor Evers shuts out parents by not providing an easy-to-use portal for parents to look at teaching materials. What have parents been doing up until this point?

I think it would be just as easy and arguably time better spent if parents looked through their kids’ textbooks and engaged in conversations at the dinner table or helped them with homework. Go to the parent-teacher conferences. Put down their cell phones.

I was the youngest of five and by the time I was of high school age, my parents kind of disengaged in my schooling. I think it would have been helpful if they participated. I came very close

to not graduating. In an effort to help myself, I attended the parent-teacher conferences representing my parents. It was with the help of concerned teachers that I was able to eke through.

Parents have all the tools they need already. The only question that should be asked is are they going to choose to use them?

Gina M. Micheli
Cedarburg

Koster has served Cedarburg schools well

To the editor:

For the first time in 23 years, the Cedarburg School District will not have its buildings and grounds watched over by John Koster.

When John took over the Cedarburg School District buildings and grounds department, the facilities did not look the way they do today. John has been an innovative leader, upgrading the Cedarburg facilities while showing a return on investment for many projects including upgrading all lighting in the district. John has been a steward of taxpayer dollars for years with a budget that is less than half of schools similar or larger in the area. When John lost staff due to attrition, he would replace staff with skilled trade employees that could perform work at a savings to the district over contractors. Bathroom remodels and boiler installations have benefitted from this strategy. John has also worked to make the schools safe while providing a great learning environment. The list goes on and on.

Please look around the at the Cedarburg School District facilities that John has cared for over the last 23 years. You will not find any better facilities and you will not find a better director of Buildings and Grounds than John Koster.

Chris Reimer
Cedarburg

‘Truth and consequences’ and other factors

To the editor:

Scott Sidney’s “Truth and consequences” opinion article (Dec. 9) fails to link consequences with truth, the consequence here being the horrendous and tragic event at the Waukesha Christmas Parade. It is not clear whether Mr. Sidney is making the claim that certain “ideas” led to the consequence of low bail for Mr. Brooks (which was later discovered to

be a tragic mistake) or certain “ideas” actually led to the violence. Either way, the truth that led to this “consequence,” according to Mr. Sidney, are linked to liberal/progressive “ideas” such as: treating racism under the guise of equity or social justice, jettisoning equality for equity, etc. The connection between these liberal “ideas” and the tragic consequence/event at the Christmas parade are tenuous at best.

What influences some people to resort to extremely violent and deadly actions? They are complex and many: extreme poverty and hunger, family breakdown, childhood exposure to trauma, lack of mental and physical health care, moral development, underfunded schools, lack of adequate infrastructure, sexual abuse, drug use, gun violence, crime, etc. Sidney mentions none of these.

Other recent violent and deadly events demonstrate strong links to alienation, resentment, estrangement, anger, xenophobia and hatred. Social media can also be a contributing factor. Instead of bringing us together, social media can and has severely polarized our nation. Some media platforms have created algorithms that foster outright lies and conspiracy theories rather than truth. Conspiracy theories and lies attract far more interest than the truth — and thus more sales. Dylan Roof (the white supremacist person behind the Charleston church massacre), Robert Bowers (Tree of Life Synagogue massacre), and Omar Mateen (Orlando nightclub massacre) were indoctrinated to such hate on social media. Eric Harris and Dylan Klebold (Columbine High School massacre) were psychopathic killers filled with hate. It appears that Darrell Brooks Jr. was filled with hate.

Mr. Sidney mentions none of these connections, either.

Michael Weber
Saukville

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