

## LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

### Reduce gun violence: Support ban on assault weapons

To the editor:

So, here we are again, another massacre of innocent Americans by a killer using an assault weapon with a large-capacity magazine. These weapons are very slightly modified, military-grade weapons, designed to kill lots of people as quickly as possible. Why are these legal for civilian purchase? In 1994 the United States passed a bill banning the manufacture and sale of certain assault-style weapons and the large-capacity magazines that they use. The bill was supported by former Presidents Gerald Ford, Jimmy Carter and Ronald Reagan, and signed into law by President Bill Clinton. Due to heavy opposition from the gun lobby and the National Rifle Association, the bill included a 10-year sunset provision. In other words, it needed to be renewed after 10 years or it would expire. During the time this assault weapon ban was in effect, the incidence of these types of massacres decreased. Not exactly a surprise to any logical person.

When the ban came up for renewal in 2004, Congress took no action to renew it. Once again, not surprisingly, the incidence of mass killings with assault weapons has increased since the ban was allowed to expire. The killer of children and teachers in an elementary school in Sandy Hook New Jersey, would not have had access to the assault weapon he used to commit mass murder had that ban been renewed in 2004. The mass murderer at the Orlando night club in 2016 would not have been able to buy the assault weapon he used to kill had the ban still been in effect. The same goes for the Las Vegas killer, and our latest, the Texas church killer.

This week, as you see the flags at half-staff, and the news coverage continuing for our latest massacre, do something that will make a difference. Call our U.S. senators, both Tammy Baldwin and Ron Johnson. Call your congressional representative. Tell them that you support a renewal of the assault weapons ban that was allowed to expire in 2004.

**Scott Trindl**  
Waukesha

### Using local cops to enforce immigration will harm community

To the editor:

Waukesha is home to thousands of hard-working, law-abiding Latino and immigrant people. They work in factories, the service sector, hospitals, schools, universities and in professional jobs. They are not harming the economy, they are driving it. They deserve our respect, not our distrust.

The 287(g) agreement that Waukesha County has applied for with Immigration and Customs Enforcement drives a wedge between law enforcement and the people they protect. There are dozens of ways for people to be in this country legally and for varying lengths of time. Even to simply have no documentation is neither a felony nor a misdemeanor. But if your name is Dominguez or Hernandez or Gonzalez, 287(g) says you need to be further investigated. It sends a message that the police are not here to help you, they are out to get you. This is the message that is received, even if every officer in the department is well-intentioned and diligent. It makes a major sector of our community reluctant to call the police at all. Real crimes will go unreported. Real criminals will go free. We all are not made safer by this status, we all are threatened by it.

Law enforcement at its best is local. It understands its

community's problems and it understands its community's people. 287(g) agreements federalize local law enforcement and saddle people here in Waukesha County with all the mess that is in Washington. We do not need this. Police here already have the tools they need to enforce actual crime. We do not need to make a bureaucratized, convoluted and broken immigration system yet another problem for local officials to try to solve for the policy wonks in Washington. Washington should solve its own problems. Leave our community alone.

Whatever faith tradition we come from, we are called to welcome the stranger, to treat our neighbors as we would have our neighbors treat us. We are called to be one people, not divided by nationality or skin color; not divided by government, but one people, united in our humanity, united here in these United States. Do not let the wedge of a bad immigration law drive us apart. Let us work together, safe, secure, and free to pursue our dreams.

**Rev. David Kraemer**  
Waukesha

### Of tax rates, defense spending and debt

To the editor:

Much is being made of U.S. corporations moving their headquarters to low-tax countries in order to save tax dollars. A recent example is Johnson Controls moving their headquarters to Ireland, whose corporate income tax rate is 12.5 percent, from Milwaukee, where the maximum federal + state income tax rate is 42.9 percent (35 percent federal + 7.9 percent state). Even more dramatic was Stanley Works' plan to move their headquarters to Bermuda, with no corporate income tax (that plan was abandoned after a huge outcry).

So if the United States is to compete with these other countries' much lower tax rates, what must we give up? I think we have to look at what we are getting for our money from our tax rates vs. what these other countries are getting from theirs, to get a true "apples to apples" comparison.

The United States spends over \$600 billion (3.3 percent of GDP) annually on its military, while Ireland spends around \$1 billion (0.5 percent of GDP) and Bermuda spends around \$6 million (0.1 percent of GDP). For the U.S. to be tax competitive, should we also reduce our military expenditures to the same percentage of GDP as the countries with whom we wish to compete (to around \$90 billion to compete with Ireland, or \$18 billion to compete with Bermuda)? I doubt that the Republican Congress and president will really be willing to cut our military spending in line with that of those countries with whom we wish to compete on tax rates, but will just cut high end tax rates and make up the lost revenue by adding to the national debt, as was done under Presidents Reagan and Bush.

What do we really want?

**Gerald K. Flakas**  
Delafield

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