

LETTERS FROM OUR READERS

Terrible time to increase minimum wage

The editorial you published Sept. 7 ("Increase wages for essential workers") argues in favor of Amendment 2, which would increase the Florida minimum wage.

The editorial also points out that the July unemployment rate in Florida was 11.3%, "recession level." The economy is suffering from the horrid economic effects of COVID-19, and will continue to suffer for some time.

With high unemployment and a disastrous economy, why on earth would you advocate a policy that will only lead to more unemployment?

If the government mandates a wage above the market level, the effect on workers will be harmful in many ways – unemployment, reduced hours, reduced training and more. We must keep in mind that the true minimum wage is always zero.

Paul H. Rubin, Sarasota, professor of economics emeritus, Emory University

Column about socialism misleading

The guest column Sept. 6 from Kay C. James, president of the Heritage Foundation, was factually incorrect and incredibly misleading.

First of all, democratic socialism and communism are not the same. Much of what she described were examples of communism, including women working in coal mines; and "... true socialism depends on the dictatorship of a military leader or political party."

I'm not sure what "true socialism" is, but democratic socialism as practiced widely throughout Europe, Japan, South Korea, Australia and New Zealand does not involve dictatorships.

Regarding results from the Danish market economy, the following is from Forbes magazine, December 2018:

"This thoroughly modern market economy features advanced industry with world-leading firms in pharmaceuticals, maritime shipping, and renewable energy, and a high-tech agricultural sector. Danes enjoy a high standard of living, and the Danish economy is characterized by extensive government welfare measures and an equitable distribution of income."

The column intends only to confuse voters and to reinforce Republican talking points for the upcoming election. It's an opinion piece filled with false and inaccurate statements – nothing more, nothing less.

Derry Beck, Sarasota

Government, developers invading rural areas

The bigger the government, the smaller the citizen. This is happening in Sarasota County, as citizens are finding it harder to make their voices heard over

the roar of developers, county planners and commissioners who see urbanization of our rural areas as a moneymaker.

I attended the Planning Commission hearing on CPA-2019-C on Aug. 20, but was unable to speak ("Sarasota County planning board rejects citizen rural preservation effort").

Large landowners and developers insisted that we were depriving them of the right to sell their land for densely developed subdivisions, which would bring upward of 2,400 houses to the area at the east end of Fruitville Road.

We settled here on five- and 10-acre lots because we have livestock and enjoy the peace and quiet of rural life. What about small ranchers who need the land to raise their beef cattle, goats, chickens and sheep?

The Miakka Community Club followed all the rules in proposing CPA-2019-C, a request to change the county's roadmap for growth. Now we are being told the 20-signature rule should be done away with or increased dramatically.

At the next hearing, Sept. 23, we plan to once again make our case to be allowed to live the way we have out here for 150 years. Please join us.

Paige Farr, Sarasota

Trump unfit to serve as commander in chief

As an Army Vietnam veteran, I am appalled and outraged that President Donald Trump views veterans and active duty military as "suckers," and those who sacrificed their lives for our country as "losers."

While his supporters may buy that this is "fake news," all major news sources, including his beloved Fox News, have confirmed that he indeed used these disparaging remarks against troops, veterans and those killed or missing in action. This is not surprising since he has been recorded voicing similar sentiments in public going back many years.

What is surprising is the failure of elected GOP officials – including my local congressman, Vern Buchanan – to condemn such statements.

Given that Buchanan represents a large number of veterans and active duty military of all services, I would expect him to have reacted quickly to condemn Trump's comments, yet like his Republican colleagues, he remains silent.

In my view, any public official, including Buchanan, who does not openly condemn Trump's comments is not fit to serve our country. Many of the service members whom Trump derides endured extreme personal sacrifice, or died, to protect the lives and liberties of those very same officials.

Harry G. Kamberis, Holmes Beach