

Memo to FCPS board: You finally did something right. Keep doing that.

BY LINDA BLACKFORD
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When I was a child and did something particularly witless, my mother would lovingly say: “Sometimes you don’t have the brains God gave an animal cracker.”

Where did this saying come from, you ask? What’s an animal cracker?*

But I thought of it when I saw the news the Fayette County school board had decided not to vote on a new, increased payroll tax. They did have more brains than an animal cracker, at least this time around. So thanks

for making the right decision after far too many missteps.

Let’s hope it’s not too late to regain the public confidence this board has squandered away.

The nonsense has been slapped down by Attorney General Russell Coleman and most recently, spurred Auditor Allison Ball to do a special examination of the Fayette County schools. It’s a process that may or may not reveal a lot of issues, but will be akin to a “death from a thousand cuts,” taking away time and resources from educating our children.

If Fayette school officials had been more open

to explaining their budget, say, last year, when this newspaper and many, many residents asked for it amid arts class cuts, they might not be in this mess.

Then we might understand exactly how we got to a \$16 million shortfall, which is what led district officials to think it would be a swell idea to sneak in a provision to raise taxes without proper public notice. They said they were under a time crunch to submit a balanced budget, but that time crunch seems to have disappeared.

So, here are some possible ideas for moving forward:

- The board announced it convene a task force to determine how to solve the shortfall. Why not start with the budget committee you already have, then add parents, students and employees from every corner of the district? Look for folks who are engaged but without axes to grind. Then explain each and every step of how we got here. Explain it like we’re witless little animal crackers.
- Stop being defensive. School board Chairman Tyler Murphy needs to stop whining on about misinformation, given how much he’s put out there recently. One Face-

book group does not an insurrection make, but it is enough to stir up a lot of consternation. Listen to people’s real concerns instead. If an open records request reveals the board paid \$38,000 for ice cream, but it was paid for by a foundation, then explain that. Stop with the ridiculous travel expenses while you’re starting down a \$16 million hole. You can’t keep getting more money every year without explaining better why you need it. I have a feeling Ball’s audit will reveal some new and better practices moving forward.

- Just do better. Think about optics. Grow thick-

er skins. Quit picking fights with your critics and the media. Most all of us want the same thing: Great public schools for our kids. These shenanigans play into the hands of people who are invested in public schools failing.

*Animal crackers are delicious, yet strangely flavorless cookies in the shape of circus animals that were sold in small boxes that looked like a Barnum & Bailey train car. The packaging plus the cookies were used to placate squalling children of the 1970s and 80s before there were iPhones. Unlike iPhones, the cookies don’t have brains, hence my mother’s saying. I have no idea where she got it from, and I can no longer ask her.

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G-7 summit gives US, Canada a unique chance

BY DIANA FURCHTGOTT-ROTH AND DANIEL DUFORT
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With the upcoming G-7 summit set in Alberta – Canada’s energy heartland – President Donald Trump and Canadian Prime Minister Mark Carney are uniquely positioned to champion a bold vision: reasserting and securing North American energy dominance.

Doing so wouldn’t represent just a win for the U.S. and Canada. It would create a strategic advantage for their European and Asian allies as well.

The G-7 should embrace energy abundance by cooperating and committing to a rapid expansion of energy infrastructure. Members should commit to streamlined permitting, including a one-stop shop for permitting and environmental review, to unleash the capital investment necessary to make energy abundance a reality.

North America’s energy success story is built on deep continental integration and a relentless entrepreneurial drive. Together, these forces have made the region one of the most prosperous and energy-secure in the world.

From the earliest days of oil’s rise as a dominant energy source, the United States has led the way – not only in exploration and discovery but also in building the world’s most advanced and expansive refining infrastructure.

Today, global refining capacity stands at over 103 million barrels per day. Remarkably, nearly one-fifth of that – 18 million barrels – is processed in the United States alone.

These refineries are economic engines, directly employing nearly 65,000 Americans in high-paying jobs. With median earnings around \$95,000 and many workers earning six-figure salaries, the industry supports a thriving middle class. An additional 1.4 million Americans work in supply chains and corporate operations that keep these refineries running.

To maintain this momentum, the U.S. relies heavily on its own oil production – averaging 13.2 million barrels per day last year, primarily light crude. Here’s the catch: American refineries are optimized for heavy crude, which is more cost-effective and essential for maximizing output and profitability.

Enter Canada and Mexico. Canada supplies 2.8 million barrels of heavy crude daily to U.S. Midwest refineries, while Mexico contributes another 780,000 barrels to Gulf Coast facilities. This steady flow of heavy crude is vital – it keeps energy costs low.

Consider this: The \$99 billion in crude oil imported from Alberta alone is transformed by U.S. refineries into \$361 billion worth of energy products – much of which is exported. Every day, the U.S. sends 780,000 barrels of refined products back to Canada and over 1 million barrels to Mexico. This seamless energy integration benefits all three nations.

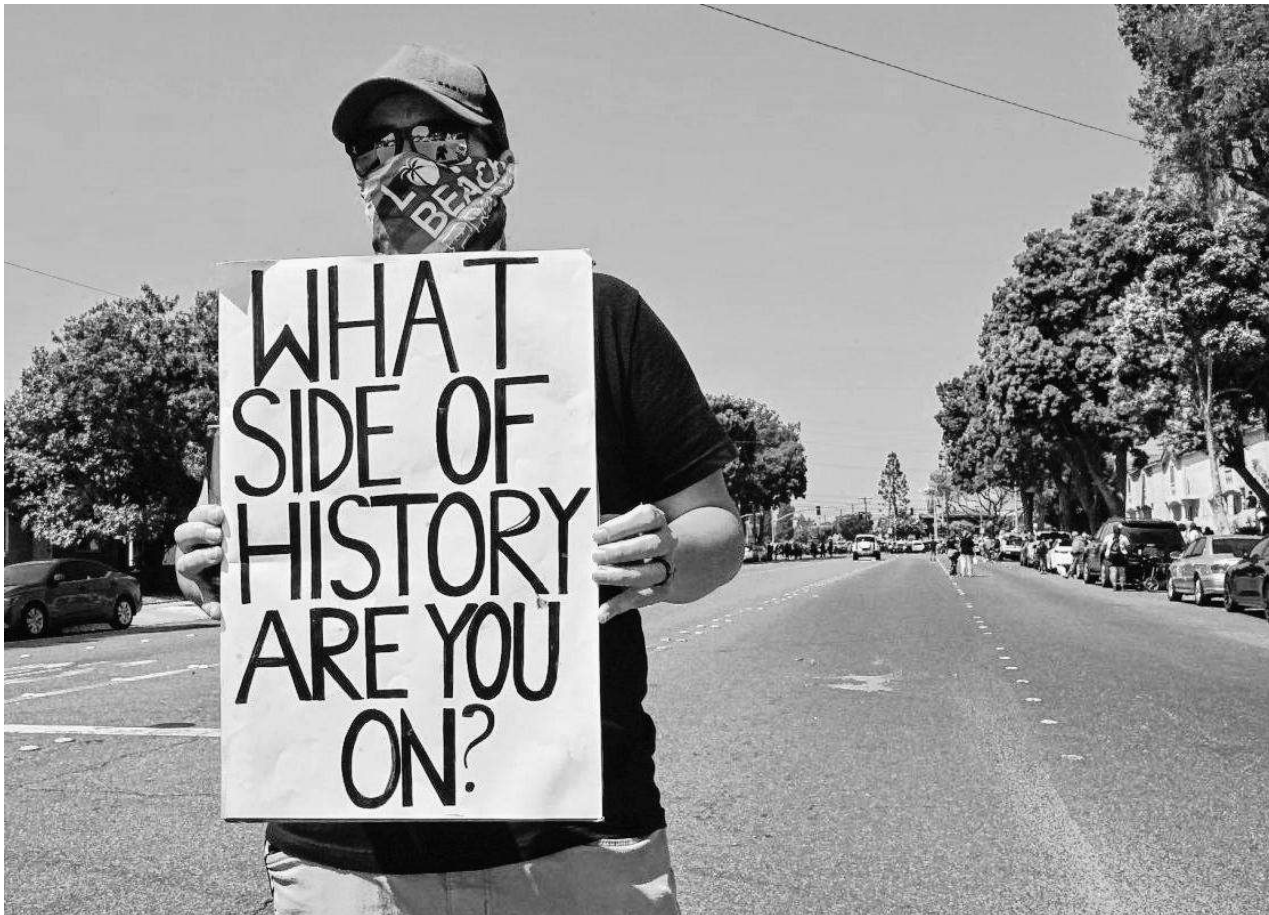
The same synergy powers the natural gas sector. A vast, interconnected pipeline network spans the continent, bolstering U.S. energy security with stable, predictable supplies from Canada and Mexico.

The United States, with its robust pipeline networks reaching both coasts, is well-positioned to meet Europe’s energy demands – advancing President Trump’s agenda while boosting exports and revenues.

Meanwhile, Canada’s expanding infrastructure to its western ports opens the door to supplying key Asian allies like Japan, South Korea and Taiwan.

The upcoming G-7 summit is more than a diplomatic gathering – it’s a moment to reaffirm North America’s leadership in the global energy arena. Let’s not waste it.

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Protesters face off with Los Angeles County Sheriff deputies during a protest against ICE and immigration raids in Paramount, Calif., earlier this week.

Trump-Newsom dispute is a sign of dreadful state of US politics

BY HARLAN ULLMAN
Voices, UPI

For good or ill reasons, few Americans are aware of the Latin phrase *posse comitatus* and what it means.

President Donald Trump’s federalizing the California National Guard and ordering a battalion from the 7th Marine Regiment at Twentynine Palms to Los Angeles against the explicit refusal of Gov. Gavin Newsom to accept assistance brings the term into focus.

It means organizing a group to confront lawlessness.

In 1878, responding to the abuses of the Union Army in law enforcement after the Civil War and Reconstruction, the Posse Comitatus Act was signed by President Rutherford Hayes.

In part, that law read: “From and after the passage of this act it shall not be lawful to employ any part of the Army of the United States, as a *posse comitatus*, or otherwise, for the purpose of executing the laws, except in such cases and under such circumstances as such employment of said force need the expressly authorized by the Constitution

or by act of Congress.”

The law was amended in the Patriot Act to expand the use of the military but not regarding law-enforcement roles. That requires the president to invoke the Insurrection Act of 1807 that, in part, grants the president the authority to deploy the U.S. military and federalize the National Guard to suppress insurrections, rebellions or civil disorder within the United States.

The last time the Insurrection Act was used to authorize the use of federal troops was in 1992 when President George H. W. Bush responded to the riots in Los Angeles after the Rodney King verdict was delivered acquitting the four LA police officers of murder.

The recent LA riots broke out over Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) officials arresting and detaining people accused of illegally entering the United States. A great majority of Americans – 80% to 90% – agree on deporting undocumented migrants with criminal records and who are dangers to the community. An equal number of Americans oppose deporting those people here illegally who

are now part of the community and – rather than being threats – contribute to society.

But the politics of immigration and the profound disagreements between the two political parties, not the riots, is the issue. In that regard, both Trump and Newsom are responding accordingly to their bases.

However, make no mistake: The Trump-Newsom dispute, including a lawsuit filed against the government for federalizing the National Guard, is a symptom and sign of the dreadful state of American politics.

Trump may have been very clever playing to his base that favors “peace through strength” abroad and at home. Both the Guard and Marines have been assigned to protect federal buildings, installations and employees not, repeat not, to conduct law-enforcement tasks. Yet, that has not been widely advertised to allow most Americans to believe that the military will have a wider use. And Trump has not authorized the Insurrection Act to that end.

Newsom and Trump are using this crisis to make opposite points when the reality is different. Had this

been a Republican-controlled state, whether Trump would have reacted or not is debatable. However, it is entirely reasonable that any president would be committed to protecting federal assets.

Had Trump made this argument clear from the beginning, Newsom’s response might have been different. But that would have defused the crisis, ironically, in neither of their interests.

Tragically, politics demand exploiting these riots for clearly political and not security or public safety reasons. Trump was arguing that the law was on his side in deporting undesirable undocumented migrants. Newsom was asserting that the governor should be consulted first; that federal forces were not needed; and the president was using this to advance his agenda.

The future is self-evident. This dilemma will only worsen as will virtually all political issues on which the nation is divided. In these incendiary conditions, if the Insurrection Act were wrongly invoked, the effect will likely provoke the rebellion it is meant to prevent.

So beware America.

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