

Opinion

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Address aging issues as societal opportunity

The soldiers returning from victory in World War II launched a new era of American optimism. The country was united and the economy was strong. With the help of the G.I. bill, these veterans got jobs, bought homes and started families in record numbers. The resulting baby boom is the largest generation in U.S. history.



JASON BAILEY

This year the youngest baby boomers turn 62, the earliest age they can begin collecting Social Security. The “silver tsunami” of boomer aging means one in five Kentuckians will be over age 65 by 2030. The percentage above 80 is expected to nearly double by 2040.

As a result, Kentucky deaths now exceed births for the first time in recorded history. A declining fertility rate also is contributing to this reversal. Cultural changes combined with stagnant wages and the rising costs of housing and childcare are bringing birth rates down.

These demographic realities are altering everything about our lives and economy. Nearly all recent job growth in Kentucky is in healthcare as demand rises from a swelling senior population. Workers with children of their own are struggling with “sandwich generation” stress. An aging population will mean a smaller labor force, dampening economic growth.

The state is unprepared for what is coming, and care in boomers’ final years may be the biggest concern. Without assets and support and facing skyrocketing medical bills and unaffordable housing costs, many seniors will be forced into Medicaid-funded nursing homes at a state cost of up to \$100,000 a year. That will further strain a Medicaid program already facing huge federal cuts from the One Big Beautiful Bill Act.

The issue is serious, but every crisis is an opportunity. In this case, we could address multiple problems at once and honor our seniors, create good jobs and help restore a hopeful spirit in a new generation.

Kentuckians have a strong sense of place and aging retirees overwhelmingly prefer to stay at home. That option is also much cheaper than nursing facilities. But while most other states are shifting the vast majority of their Medicaid long-term care dollars to home and community-based ser-

VICES, Kentucky maintains an emphasis on politically powerful nursing homes.

We could shift more dollars to home care and pair that with a commitment to quality. Care jobs are among the fastest growing in Kentucky but pay is very low. Home health and personal care aides start at just \$25,080 a year on average. Poor salaries and high turnover also affect the care the elderly receive.

An increased state investment in Medicaid home care paired with unionization and training would be a win-win of better jobs and better services. These programs also allow family members to devote more time to care and receive pay for doing so, thereby strengthening lifelong bonds and ensuring loving care.

And there’s a third essential piece of this strategy: Affordable homes and apartments for the elderly to live in. Kentucky has a severe housing shortage, and rising prices will push more fixed income seniors from their residences. Keeping them out of expensive nursing facilities is yet another economic reason for a massive public investment in affordable housing.

We should build more small and accessible units that are suited for seniors and thereby free up existing dwellings for families with kids. And as with home health, we can make those construction jobs high quality, in this case by re-applying prevailing wage laws to publicly funded projects.

The baby boomers were the product of a nation coming together. We can do that again in their final years. In the process, we would create good employment for workers in the care and construction industries. And as those boomers pass away, the large supply of housing they called home — including dwellings built under this initiative — become a legacy that future residents can afford.

This story began with the World War II vets we called the Greatest Generation. The best way to remember them is for the next wave of Kentuckians to have a chance at greatness too.

Jason Bailey is executive director of the Kentucky Center for Economic Policy, www.kypolicy.org.

TODAY'S HEADLINES



Nam Y. Huh/AP photo

A person holds a sign and attends a rally to support Stop AAPI (Asian Americans and Pacific Islanders) Hate at the Logan Square Monument in Chicago, March 20, 2021.

Stop AAPI Hate launches a nonprofit to mobilize voters before midterms

BY TERRY TANG
ASSOCIATED PRESS

Stop AAPI Hate, the organization that rose to national prominence for its meticulous reports on anti-Asian hate at the height of the pandemic, is channeling its resources into an initiative to rock the vote.

The new nonprofit, Stop AAPI Hate Action, will be a political and advocacy arm dedicated to getting more Asian Americans and Pacific Islanders registered to vote — and to mobilize current voters, ensuring they make it to the polls. The initiative was sparked in part by President Donald Trump’s pressure — and moves by Republican lawmakers — to redraw voting maps and strip parts of the Voting Rights Act.

The organization announced Thursday that this initiative will build on Stop AAPI Hate’s name recognition and reputation for elevating conversations about racism, discrimination and allyship. It’s a major step for the group, which has also done policy work and advocacy over the past six years, Manjusha Kulkarni, the organization’s co-founder, said.

“Those pieces — alongside what we’re seeing from our community in terms of data — really motivated and inspired us to make this move,” Kulkarni said. “Because we see how our communities are being harmed and exactly what needs to be done to address the harm, and prevent it in the future.”

Stop AAPI Hate Action will be established as a social welfare organization that can get involved in political campaigns.

A majority of Asian Americans, Native Hawaiians and Pacific Islanders believe President Donald Trump has done more harm than good on immigration and border security in his second term, according to an AAPI Data/AP-NORC poll.

Stop AAPI Hate’s annual report — released in May, AAPI Heritage Month — found roughly half of AAPI

adults said they or someone they personally know were negatively impacted by immigration policies or anti-immigrant attitudes in 2025. Last year, Trump signed an order restricting H-1B visa holders — thousands of whom come from Asian countries — and added a \$100,000 annual fee for highly skilled foreign workers.

Plus, Chinese nationals face a plethora of anti-China laws in various states.

Navia Gutta, 28, was rattled by an encounter last summer at a Chipotle restaurant in Atlanta, where a woman approached her and a friend, calling the two — who are Indian American — “murderers” and “rapists.” It escalated and she threatened to call U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement to deport them “back” to India, which the woman called a “dirty country.” Both of them were born in the U.S.

“Our hands were shaking and we full-on cried in the car,” Gutta said. “It made me realize that I grew up still very privileged, and I felt like I lived in a bubble up until then, because nothing like that had ever happened to me.”

She later shared the experience with Stop AAPI Hate, and after talking at great length with a staff member was emboldened to volunteer with the group.

“It made me realize I would love to be a part of this solution,” Gutta said. “I would love to educate people. I would look at these issues and continue educating myself further because I think politics can be really scary.”

Stop AAPI Hate Action is ready to dive head first into the November midterms. That does not mean blindly advocating for all Democratic candidates, Kulkarni said. The group’s main goal is to support candidates who share core values on immigration policies and civil rights.

“It is really, at its core, about harnessing the pain felt at an individual level and turning it into a collective power,”

Kulkarni said. “This really has been an existential threat to our community.”

The nonprofit is also not trying to compete or duplicate other AAPI-focused civic engagement organizations. The group is looking beyond blue states and swing states. A primary goal is to flip red districts with a significant presence of Asian American voters and turn them blue. There are areas in Republican-run states “that deserve to be reached out to,” said Andy Wong, Stop AAPI Hate Action managing director of advocacy.

“The ones in Iowa and Nebraska and Alaska and other places where there are competitive purple districts — many of them with GOP incumbents,” Wong said. “We are going to reach voters in those places,” by enlisting phone bank volunteers who speak Korean, Vietnamese, Cantonese and Mandarin.

That effort starts in July, and they plan to focus on reaching people who only turn out to vote in big general elections. To help build rapport, they also plan to match volunteers with voters of the same ethnicity.

This new political entity is not a one-and-done operation, Stop AAPI Hate staffers say. The Asian American and Pacific Islander community is one of the fastest growing populations in the U.S., which means with each election year, there’s potential for new voters.

But the political parties have overlooked this fact, and failed to invest in voter outreach and other civic engagement, Kulkarni said. “We’ve really been an afterthought. We’re 24 million people.”

Stop AAPI Hate sees the next few years not just as an opportunity to win over voters but also to increase AAPI power as an entire voting bloc. Kulkarni says some data indicates Latino, Black and Asian Americans who moved somewhat to the right during the 2024 election are edging back to the left.

BRIEFS

From wire reports

ISRAEL TIGHTENS GRIP ON HAMAS

Dozens of Palestinians in Gaza City gathered for funeral prayers for 10 people killed in Israeli strikes. The strikes, which took place on the first day of Eid al-Adha, injured more than 20 people, according to Shifa Hospital.

Video shows flames pouring from a building as bystanders rush to help the wounded. The Israeli military says it targeted two Hamas militants. Among those killed was Hamas fighter Imad Islem. Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu says Israel is expanding its control in Gaza.

“Right now we are tightening the grip on Hamas,” Netanyahu said Thursday at a conference in Jordan. “We are now in 60% of the territory of the Gaza Strip. You know that? We were at 50%, we moved to 60%.”

HAWAII POLICE SEARCHING FOR ALLEGED KILLER

Police in Hawaii are searching for a 36-year-old man who they say is wanted in connection with three killings this week. Authorities describe Jacob Baker as “armed and extremely dangerous.”

Officials say they are using significant resources and personnel to find him. The men who died include two 69-year-olds and one 79-year-old. They were found dead Monday and Tuesday in the Puna area on the island of Hawaii.

“These are a tragic series of events and our thoughts are with those who are grieving at this time,” said Police Chief Reed Mahuna.

Authorities have not identified a motive but say they are confident Baker is involved. They’re urging the public to report any information about Baker, but not to approach him.

ARTISTS DROP OUT OF GREAT AMERICAN STATE FAIR

Milli Vanilli and Morris Day have announced they will not perform at “The Great American State Fair” in Washington’s National Mall. This comes a day after the White House-affiliated Freedom 250 announced the lineup for June and July.

“My sister and I were shocked to see our name, ‘Milli Vanilli,’ as one of the performers,” Jodie Rocco wrote in an email.

Young MC also said he won’t perform, citing concerns about the politics of the event. Freedom 250 has not responded to requests for comment.

Other scheduled performers include the Commodores, Flo Rida, and Martina McBride. President Trump launched Freedom 250 last year to celebrate the nation’s 250th birthday. The organization describes itself as non-partisan.

RARE BLUE MOON OCCURS SUNDAY

Get set for a rare blue micromoon this weekend. It’s when a blue moon that’s also the most distant and smallest-looking full moon of the year rises.

The brilliant star Antares will photobomb Sunday’s spectacle for a celestial three-for-one. A blue moon occurs every two to three years when a second full moon squeezes into a single month. May 1 saw this month’s first full moon.

The upcoming full moon will be farther from Earth than usual at a distance of 252,360 miles. That will make the moon seem a bit smaller and dimmer.

It’s the opposite of a supermoon when a full moon comes closer to us than normal. The most recent supermoon, for instance, was just 225,130 miles away.

Despite the name, this blue moon won’t appear turquoise, sapphire or any other shade. The term simply refers to the uncommon occurrence of two full moons in one month.

Man stabs 3 at Swiss train station in 'act of terror'

ASSOCIATED PRESS

A man stabbed and wounded three people in what authorities described as an “act of terror” at the train station in the Swiss city of Winterthur on Thursday before being arrested.

The attack took place shortly before 8:30 a.m. The suspect, who was arrested five minutes after emergency services were alerted, is a 31-year-old Swiss-Turkish dual national who lives in Winterthur, regional police chief Marius Weyermann said.

He had come to authorities’

attention in 2015 for distributing propaganda of the Islamic State group, Weyermann added. In recent days, he was taken to a psychiatric facility after calling the police emergency number and making “confused comments,” but he left on Wednesday after a doctor determined that he wasn’t dangerous.

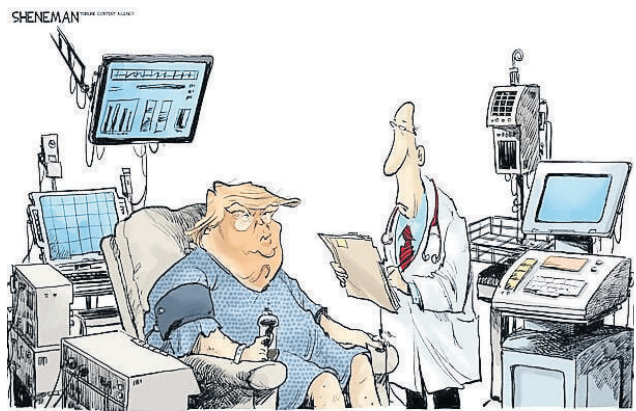
Three Swiss men, ages 28, 43 and 52, were wounded in Thursday’s attack. The first two were discharged or were about to be released from hospitals by mid-afternoon, Weyermann said. The 52-year-

old was still hospitalized after an operation on a thigh injury.

Weyermann said investigators believe the man acted alone.

Mario Fehr, the Zurich region’s top security official, described the attack as “an evil act of terror.” He said the suspect was born in Switzerland and gained Swiss citizenship in 2009, and apparently had spent much of the last two years in Turkey.

Winterthur has about 123,000 residents and is located in northeastern Switzerland, near the country’s biggest city, Zurich.



“YOU’RE AS HEALTHY AS A HORSE, IF THAT HORSE HAD MYSTERIOUS BRUISING, SWOLLEN ANKLES AND LATE ONSET GERIATRIC NARCOLEPSY.”

TODAY'S QUOTE

“Perseverance is failing 19 times and succeeding the 20th.”
— Julie Andrew, British actress