



Viewpoints



Excerpts from weekly Badger Institute columns

by Institute President Mike Nichols and Policy Director Patrick McIlheran

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Parents didn't start the fire

By Patrick McIlheran | March 31

Adrienne Melby and her husband homeschooled, but when their oldest reached eighth grade, he wanted to be in school with friends from sports. The Melbys enrolled him in Burlington public schools.

It went well, Melby said, but “one of the things that really struck me was the lack of homework.” Writing assignments were short. Grammar didn't matter.

When the COVID lockdown hit, the virtual experience of public school frustrated their two sons. Melby and her “old-style Democrat” sister-in-law began organizing with a group of Burlingtonians to urge leaders to rethink hardline isolation.

Dairyland explores zero-carbon nuclear, but greens are not cheering

By Patrick McIlheran | March 18

It is encouraging to see Dairyland Power Cooperative thinking long-term. The co-op is the first Wisconsin-based utility to look at nuclear since the Legislature and the Walker administration in 2016 repealed the state moratorium on new nuclear plants. The moratorium was a relic of the late-1970s panic after an accident at a Pennsylvania nuclear plant that killed exactly no one.

In the 33 years it was in force, environmentalists' attention turned to global warming. The plausible scenarios in the United Nations' latest report on climate project that such warming will add about one degree to the global mean surface temperature by the year 2100, but the committed climate alarmists claim we have only 10 years to “save the planet.” So, you'd think they'd cheer if a utility explored a technology that displaces coal in a way that wind cannot and that emits exactly zero carbon dioxide.

Nope.



Government can't prevent death; don't expect to read this in your local paper

By Mike Nichols | March 10

Of all the wasteful impulses many politicians have, one of the worst is giving big tax breaks to dying industries.

Yet they just can't seem to resist.

Of all the people you'd expect to criticize special interests for trying to wheedle favors out of politicians, you'd think journalists in the so-called Fourth Estate would be screaming the loudest.

Yet they're the ones doing some of the most shameless wheedling.

Thankfully, they haven't been successful. Yet.

The new academic racism

By Patrick McIlheran | February 17

Gov. Evers declared that the bill he vetoed would keep schools “from teaching honest, complete facts about important historical topics.”

Which facts, exactly?

The measure did not ban anyone from teaching children that Americans once were taught that some people were



an inferior race. It banned only teaching that this thinking was right.

History is full of flawed peoples.

What parents object to . . . is children being taught that because of their race they carry with them a particular hereditary evil. We all should object to a new dose of that old poison.

Unless kids are killed or maimed, MPS gun battles are just police blotter items

By Mike Nichols | February 10

You wonder how many parents of kids at Bradley Tech High School or some other schools in Milwaukee really know what's going on there.

In the interest of transparency — and trying to understand why the Milwaukee School Board won't reverse course and get cops back in and around schools as soon as humanly possible — I want to share what I learned from 130 pages of police reports about just one incident on Dec. 6.

This is the kind of incident that once would have been front-page news. Nowadays, gunshots fired at a school might get a brief mention on TV news — unless somebody dies or a whole bunch of kids get shot and bleed.

Undeterred crime deters business

By Mike Nichols | January 27

There were way more than double the number of car thefts in Milwaukee last year than the year before. That's at least 10,479 people who are probably wondering right now how to get out of Milwaukee, some of them wanting to take their businesses with them.

The compass parents owe kids

By Patrick McIlheran | January 20

When a certain past-his-prime candidate for governor in Virginia last fall gaffed, "I don't think parents should be tell-

ing schools what they should teach," the shocker was how many progressives chose to be his backup chorus.

Terry McAuliffe choked. His many defenders revealed their souls.

Nikole Hannah-Jones, author of *The New York Times'* "The 1619 Project" fairy tale, professed she was baffled why parents "should decide what's being taught." The woman whose history curriculum was denounced as hogwash by eminent historians went on to declare, "School is not about simply confirming our worldview."

All of this scoffing starts with a caricature of parents bringing chaos to schools, each ignoramus demanding a flat earth here and white supremacy there, desperately trying to replicate in every particularity the values and superstitions from which progressives want to liberate their offspring.

Which is not how parental control actually works, at least not in the segment of schooling where parents have immense control — private schools that parents choose.



The other epidemic: overspending

By Mike Nichols | January 13

Real fraud is impossible to quantify, but there's little doubt residents of other states are more criminally ambitious. Last June in New York, a guy by the name of Muge Ma, better known as "Hummer Mars," pleaded guilty to singlehandedly — and fraudulently — trying to land more than \$20 million in pandemic loans.

The bigger problems are waste and bureaucrats spending emergency money on things that have little to do with the emergency. Smart legislators in Wisconsin have just introduced bills that would give the Assembly and Senate more oversight over how federal spending is distributed and more transparency regarding where it goes.

That's a good thing. This federal overspending and ever-growing debt are going to sink us, or more likely our kids. In the meantime, we need more accountability and metrics to make sure the cash is being spent the right way, and all these other states need the same.

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