

OPINION

The Herald-Sun

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EDITORIAL

Embrace vs. rejection

The illustrations of the gap between Durham and the Triangle and our state's often mean-spirited leadership grow tiresomely ever more numerous.

This week brought another.

On Monday night, the Durham City Council joined Chapel Hill, Carrboro and Orange County and approved a resolution to support Faith ID cards as an accepted form of identification for undocumented immigrants.

It is a compassionate measure, one that acknowledges the presence of thousands of immigrants in our community who contribute to the economy and enrich our diverse culture.

Lest someone might think it is just a feel-good gesture by soft-hearted progressives, it is also backed by law enforcement officials who see it as an important asset in their work.

The Faith ID card, though, is just the sort of thing to annoy legislative leaders who no doubt see it as just another rebellious move by cities, which they seem to dislike in general.

So the day after the Durham council passed its resolution, a bill in the state Senate advanced a step toward punishing cities that accept Faith IDs. In the form it emerged from the Senate Judiciary Committee, the bill would retaliate against those local governments by denying state school and roads funding.

"I think everybody will agree that sometimes it's the threat of potential for penalty or loss of something that

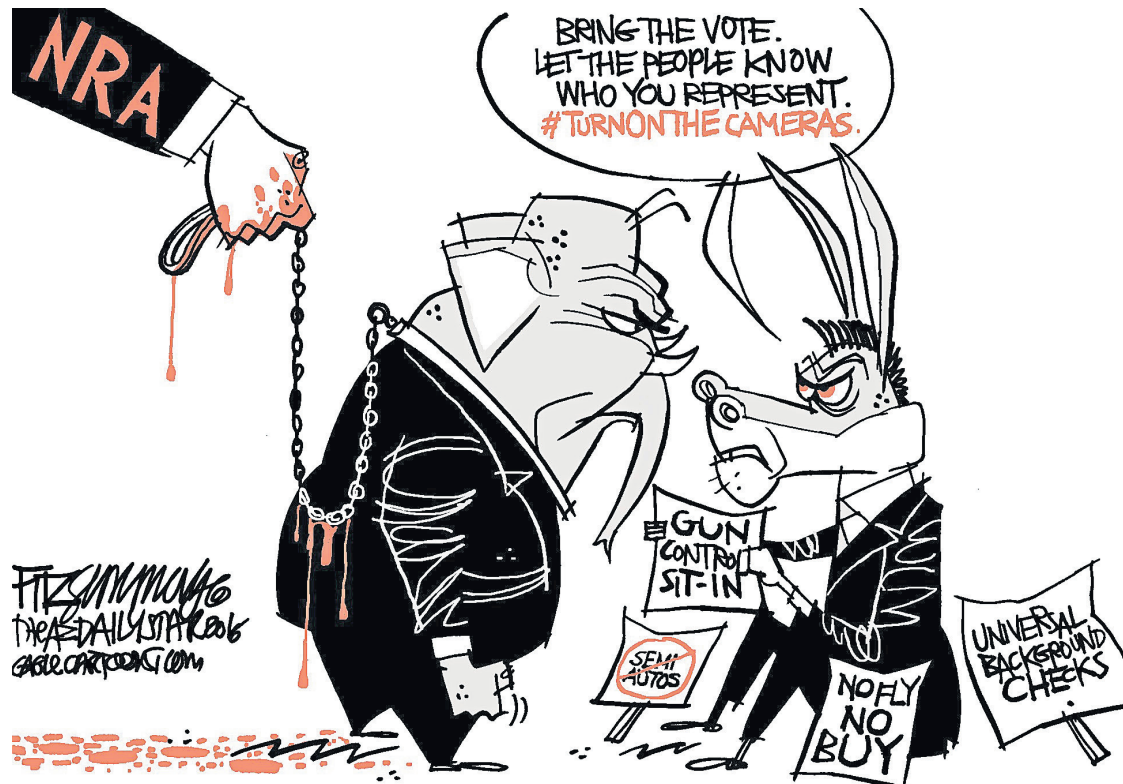
really gets people's attention," said Sen. Norman Sanderson, the Pamlico Republican who is pushing the measure.

The legislature last year banned the identification cards but allowed a narrow exemption for law enforcement. Oddly for legislators who profess support for law enforcement, the move to end that exemption rebuffs objections from the North Carolina Sheriff's Association.

And the Durham Police Department has worked with El Centro Hispano of Durham to introduce the cards — pioneered by Greensboro's FaithAction International House — to this city. Police want to be able to use the Faith ID in the absence of other documents, such as a driver's license, that undocumented residents would lack.

"The Durham Police Department fully supports the Faith ID of Durham program and understands the importance of strengthening relationships between the immigrant community and law enforcement," former interim Police Chief Larry Smith said in a statement. "We applaud El Centro for collaborating with the Faith community to issue cards to law-abiding individuals who may have limited access to government issued forms of identification, and will help police officers and other community partners better serve and protect all residents."

We wish those wise words from West Chapel Hill Street would find an audience on Raleigh's Jones Street where the legislature meets.



WORKING TOGETHER TO PROTECT GUNS FROM THE AMERICAN PEOPLE.

Irresponsible leadership with disdain for law enforcement

BY ANDY MILLER
GUEST COLUMNIST

Here we go again, with more controversy in Durham.

Many in leadership roles wonder why Durham has an image problem. Well, let's start with a City Council member who states on social media that cops and soldiers are more dangerous than criminals.

Who would Jillian Johnson call if she gets robbed, beaten or raped in the very streets protected by those she truly has nothing but disdain for? What if Jillian Johnson is involved in a serious car wreck or gets run over in the street. Who will she call?

The truth of the matter is that it's easy to throw rocks at

people who sacrifice to serve. I will be the first to admit that cops or soldiers are not perfect, but neither is anyone else. The last perfect person died on a cross for the non-perfect ones. The rest of us are just trying to make this world a better place.

And then there are those who are so needy for public admiration that they will say or post anything no matter how irresponsible it is. Durham has been very lucky in the public servants that have served her. Howard Clement, Bill Bell, Nick Tennyson, John Best, Floyd McKissick, Diane Catotti, Thomas Stith, Eugene Brown and many others. All of them dealt with

controversy but none has been as derelict in their words towards the very people that serve selflessly as Jillian Johnson. Just remember, Jillian, that the men and women that you so despise are the reason you can live your life expressing hatred for the very values that protect you. They don't agree with your views but they defend your right to express them every day.

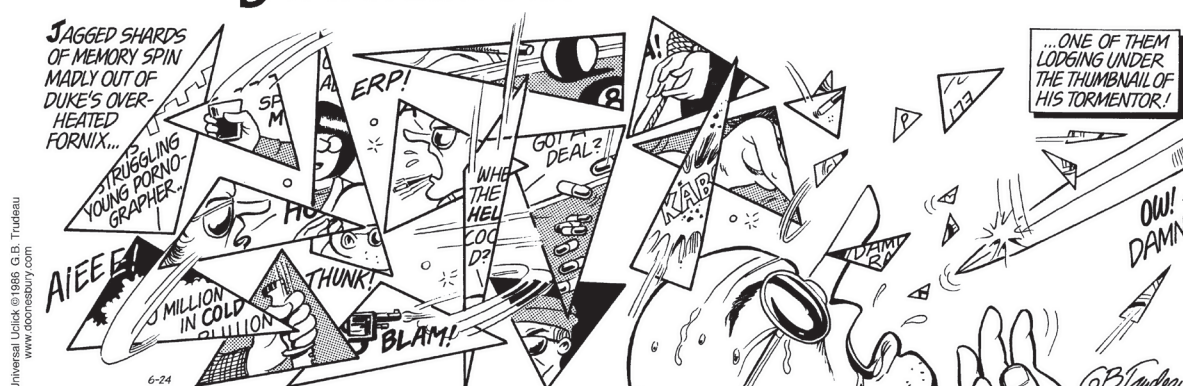
With the attitude like this from an elected City Council member it is clear with her public comments she is sitting with a conflict of interest. Her support of terrorism and violent crime is a clear example why violent crime in Durham is so hard

to eradicate. All the hard-working citizens of Durham should be insulted and outraged at her contempt for law enforcement officers, the American soldier and the security of the United States of America.

With her conflict and disdain for law enforcement she should step down from her current position. She is clearly what is wrong with our country. It is for this reason the North Carolina Sheriff Police Alliance is calling for the resignation of Jillian Johnson, as she is not fit to fulfill the duties for which she is sworn to fulfill.

Andy Miller is president of the North Carolina Sheriff Police Alliance.

CLASSIC DOONESBURY (1986) BY GARRY TRUDEAU



National HIV Testing Day: Get tested, get involved

BY BARBARA JOHNSTON
GUEST COLUMNIST

My family man in his 40s, and doctors immediately thought cancer when a bulging knot appeared on the left side of his neck, and then another in his armpit. A biopsy showed tuberculosis.

Only then, as he began treatment at Durham County Health Department, did he have an HIV test. It was positive. "Can I share your story?" I asked. "If you think it could help to get people tested earlier, before they get sick, sure," he said.

As clinical chief of the Early Intervention Clinic, an HIV treatment program of Lincoln Community Health Center in Durham, I had many patients telling the same stories, with late diagnosis leading to their suffering through illness that could have been prevented.

Though anyone who has had sex or ever used a contaminated needle could

be at risk, the hardest hit are young gay men. Up to one in 11 overall, one in two African-American men who have sex with men may be diagnosed with HIV in their lifetime, according to a Center for Disease Control analysis. One of our patients, a boyishly handsome fellow in his early 20s, netted syphilis from his second sexual relationship. He was referred to our primary care clinic for PrEP—the new pre-exposure prophylaxis pill that can prevent HIV in 90 percent of cases — but it was too late. The HIV negative test from the month before was now positive. For a time he felt his young life was over, but taking two pills a day, and with counseling from our health care team, he is doing fine.

HIV untreated still leads to AIDS — and death. But in 2016 it should never be that way. Treatment — the earlier the better — leads to preservation of the all-important immune

system and blocks transmission to partners. Undiagnosed persons account for a third of new HIV cases.

The CDC and US Preventive Services Task force recommend universal opt-out HIV testing for persons 15-65. (In opt-out the test is offered, but patient can say no: in practice, almost all my patients say yes). However, we are not doing a good enough job. Doctors need to order this routine, highly evidenced-based test that saves lives. Individuals need to make it their business to know their own HIV status, to protect not only their own lives, but also those of their loved ones and to fight the epidemic in our community.

The South is now home to some of the worst HIV statistics. According to the CDC, "Overall an American has a 1 in 99 chance of being diagnosed with HIV. But that lifetime risk is greater for people living in the South" (It is

1/51 for neighboring Georgia, 1/93 in North Carolina). The South had the highest death rates among people living with HIV from 2008-2012, according to Southern HIV/AIDS Strategy Initiative, a Duke University-based research group. A major reason is late diagnosis with AIDS. Durham County is number 3 in the state in rate of newly diagnosed HIV cases.

In Durham, the HIV STI Committee of Partnership for a Healthy Durham built a campaign called "Durham Knows." Durham Knows kicked off in September 2015 with a grant from the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation Culture of Health. A dedicated group of citizens, health providers, public health officials and organizations created brochures and a short video, talked and tabled at events. Duke and Lincoln doctors lobbied for HIV testing to be included in routine care.

Through an ongoing grant,

the campaign will continue, spread primarily through public activism and social media.

Monday is National HIV Testing day, and a chance for all to commit to an AIDS-free generation. Everyone should get tested at least once. For those at higher risk, there is a way to better protect yourself: pre-exposure Prophylaxis, or PrEP—one pill daily can prevent 90 percent of infections.

For those with HIV, days of fear and stigma should be over, with the medications more effective than for virtually any other chronic disease. Early treatment is the key. Free HIV and hepatitis C testing is available daily at Durham County Health Department.

Barbara Johnston is clinical chief of the early intervention clinic at Lincoln Community Health Center in Durham. For more information, www.healthydurham.org/