

inquirer.com/opinion

EDITORIAL
&
OPINION

The Inquirer offers news, which strives to present unbiased, factual reporting, and opinion, which showcases viewpoints. Here is what you'll find on these opinion pages.

EDITORIAL: An opinion about a matter of public interest or policy researched and written by our Editorial Board, a group of journalists separate from the newsroom who meet frequently to discuss and debate issues. Unlike news stories, which are fact-driven and written by reporters, editorials advocate, champion, argue, critique, and suggest ways to make the region better.

COLUMN: Unlike reporters, columnists are allowed to include their opinions and viewpoints when presenting their reporting. Some columnists, like Will Bunch and Trudy Rubin, appear on these pages. Others, like Jenice Armstrong, Maria Panaritis, and Helen Ubiñas, appear elsewhere.

OP-ED: An essay or other type of article, including cartoons, that presents the opinion or perspective of someone with insight on the news. Many are submitted to us, but we also solicit op-eds from writers on specific topics. For more information: inquirer.com/opinion-guidelines

LETTER TO THE EDITOR: A reader's written opinion submitted by mail or email in response to a story in The Inquirer or another issue.

FOR MORE ON HOW WE WORK:

The Editorial Board consists of the managing editor for opinion, the deputy opinion editor, opinion coverage editor, columnists, and writers. The board routinely discusses issues of the day to decide what to editorialize on and, during election campaigns, which candidates or ballot measures to endorse. News reporters and editors do not participate in these discussions. The board's opinions are not a consideration in news coverage.

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LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Send letters to letters@inquirer.com. Limit length to 150 words and include home address and day and evening phone number. Letters run in the Inquirer six days a week on the editorial pages. Letters are not published online.

Ending gun violence with redirection

We're grateful for Jenice Armstrong's column drawing attention to the horrific gun violence throughout our city. It's an unspeakable tragedy to see the lives of young people, filled with potential, cut short. Too many young people in our city are opting for destructive and dangerous choices rather than developing their many gifts and talents. This must change.

At Philadelphia Youth Basketball, we believe a key part of ending gun violence is creating programs designed around early intervention and redirecting at-risk youth with a deep immersion filled with exposures and consistency that will help kids positively shape their life trajectories. Recently we launched "I Am Because We Are" for young men with minor criminal offenses. Through basketball, reflective journaling, community building, goal setting, work-based apprenticeships, and intensive mentorship, vulnerable teenagers are finding voice, value, and visibility outside of

street life. This is one step in what must be a citywide response. Join us.

Kenny Holdsman, president and CEO, Philadelphia Youth Basketball, Philadelphia, kholdsman@phillyyouthbasketball.com

Offshore wind farm

Some on Ocean City Council still cling to the idea that windmills will be eyesores. Climate-related disasters are truly eyesores. An offshore wind farm may not be perfect, but we will need a full arsenal of renewable energy tools to divest from fossil fuels. And we have a reliable supply of wind and a relatively shallow seabed.

Research from reputable sources shows that birds typically migrate closer to the shore than most wind farms and higher than even the tallest turbines. The fish populations may increase thanks to the creation of reef-like conditions around the foundations of the turbines. If you care for the right whale, stop using single-use plastics because plastic pollution is one of their biggest threats, along with fishing bycatch and ships. If the

ocean temperatures continue to rise, the birds and fish will have much greater threats than windmills. Our city must make a commitment to a sustainable future. Making these changes is not based on saving money. What we are saving is our coastal community and our ability to thrive on this planet.

Karen Barlow, Ocean City, N.J., jaabarlow@gmail.com

Trial of Derek Chauvin

As the murder trial for the killer of George Floyd begins, we recognize the catastrophic damage that was inflicted on our country by one heartless individual and his henchmen, who did not recognize Mr. Floyd as a human being.

The wrenching testimony of witnesses indicates that in addition to the pain inflicted on Mr. Floyd and his family, those who saw the agonizing last few minutes of his life are forever scarred as well, placed in an untenable position and helpless as those we rely on to protect us willingly converted an arrest into a killing.

What could the witnesses do

other than plead with the officers to allow Mr. Floyd to breathe and live? Seeing that their pleas were falling on deaf ears, the crowd verbally challenged the police, including at least one individual who cursed the ringleader. I cannot blame them.

Our system of justice is on trial. May it finally shine.

Oren Spiegler, Peters Township

Every defense attorney has to present a case. Are we to interpret that a person with a healthy heart, no arrhythmia or preexisting conditions like hypertension, and not under the influence of drugs or alcohol should reasonably be expected to live beyond nine minutes with a police officer's posturing knee on their neck? Like George Floyd, I'm also 46, though I don't take any medications or have any preexisting conditions. I can't hold my breath long enough to lap my pool. Praying the jury has a modicum of common sense because I fear and can't fathom another riot.

Michael Mayes, Philadelphia

OP-ED

Philadelphia is poised and ready for Biden's Civilian Climate Corps

By Nathan Boon

In his new \$2 trillion infrastructure and jobs plan, President Joe Biden proposed \$10 billion to create a Civilian Climate Corps, a nationwide effort that would create accessible training opportunities and jobs for the next generation of workers focused on climate and conservation. The proposed "CCC" is an answer to compounding crises that Americans are facing by creating living-wage jobs for underemployed and marginalized members of society while also addressing pressing climate and conservation needs.

The proposed CCC is reminiscent of the Civilian Conservation Corps of the 1930s. At that time, the corps addressed the immediate needs of people facing extreme levels of poverty in the aftermath of the Dust Bowl, a climate catastrophe. Today, with Americans reeling from a global pandemic, high unemployment, and a rapidly worsening climate crisis — compounded by a national reckoning with centuries of racial injustice — President Biden's proposal is timely but requires partners, funding, and well-established networks to implement.

The William Penn Foundation has invested in conservation work across Philadelphia and the surrounding Delaware River watershed for many years. Our experience in doing so gives us a unique view of the capacity and opportunity that exists here to meet the demands of the president's CCC. We believe that Philadelphia — and the surrounding Delaware River watershed region — is primed and ready for this investment and should be considered the model city to pilot the effort.

Part of what makes Philadelphia and its surrounding region an ideal pilot city is its diverse landscapes. The region's mix of



John Heinz National Wildlife Refuge at Tinicum. The Phila. region is well-positioned to catalyze "green job" creation. John Heinz National Wildlife

wild, rural, and urban land offers many opportunities to implement CCC projects aligned with the executive order's priorities, which range from conserving and restoring public lands to planting trees for reforestation to increasing soil health on farms.

Examples include some of the most heavily visited parks in the nation, like the Delaware Water Gap National Recreation Area and John Heinz National Wildlife Refuge; our region's rich agricultural landscape, the current home of the Rodale Institute, an originator of modern organic farming and a national leader in the practice of regenerative agriculture; and millions of forested acres that are the source of clean drinking water for 15 million people, including the metropolitan areas of Philadelphia, Trenton, Wilmington, and New York City.

Importantly, Philadelphia and the region are well-positioned to catalyze "green job" creation. With public and private support, this region is already hard at work implementing workforce

programs that train and put people to work on environmentally focused jobs. These efforts could be built upon and expanded by the CCC. Programs like PowerCorps, the nationally recognized Corps Network member in Philadelphia and Camden, provide a model of jobs training that emphasizes opportunities for people of all races and recognizes the vital role of nature in both urban and rural communities. Other examples include the city of Wilmington's Green Jobs program and New Jersey Youth Corps in Phillipsburg. Part of these programs' success stems from their dedication to working with the region's most highly motivated yet often overlooked individuals, whether they're youth driven to protect the planet for their future or returning citizens whose personal transformation also transforms communities.

In addition to the concentration of important natural landscapes and innovative workforce programs, our region is distinct for its substantial, mature networks

of government and nongovernmental organizations collaboratively at work toward shared climate and conservation goals. These networks provide an existing infrastructure where CCC members could be put to work quickly.

Public-private partnerships include networks such as the Delaware River Watershed Initiative, which protects and restores 10,000 acres annually across Pennsylvania, New Jersey, Delaware, and New York, or the Circuit Trails Coalition, which builds and maintains a network of 800 miles of trails across the five-county metro region. Regional collaboratives like the Delaware River Restoration Program under the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service are already mobilizing millions in federal and nonfederal funding to enhance our natural resilience in ways that center community benefits and could support hundreds of family-sustaining jobs.

With dedicated resources from the federal government, these programs and networks could readily expand to incorporate additional trades and skill sets and build stronger and more equitable pathways into long-term careers.

There is an immediate opportunity for the Biden administration to leverage our regional network of workforce programs and natural resources. The Philadelphia region is uniquely equipped to respond to the administration's call for a 21st-century CCC to mobilize the nation in service of our shared vision of a vibrant, just, and climate-resilient future.

Nathan Boon is a senior program officer at the William Penn Foundation, managing a multimillion-dollar portfolio of grants focused on a healthy and sustainable Delaware River watershed.