

...many should not be made when the governor sig-
lines the state constitution on due process, diligence
and procedure to remove the limits of government, the
legislature and the right of the people.

This includes the right to keep and bear arms shall
not be infringed. His action under public safety does
not provide a modicum of safety and impacts
law-abiding hunters, collectors, skeet and target
enthusiasts, and parts makers in Rhode Island. This
action diverts attention from Rhode Island failures
such as the state deficit, Echo Village, Deloitte, the
Washington Bridge, ILO, lobbyist lunches, COVID
money audit, truck tolls, EV surcharge, DCYF deaths,
etc.

Politicians are supposed to represent the constitu-
ents and center-of-mass will of the people, not the
campaign contributors and fringe political elements. I
encourage all to call their legislators to stop this over-
reach by the executive.

Steve Sharkey, Wakefield

Not the will of the people

It is not Journal reporter Katie Mulvaney, but letter
writer Arthur Russo (“Trump answering the will of the
people,” Letters, Feb. 23) who misrepresents the ad-
ministration’s actions. Although Donald Trump re-
ceived less than 50% of the votes cast in the 2024 elec-
tion, he won the election and this minority of total vot-
ers did indeed establish the priorities it wished this ad-
ministration to pursue.

However, the voters of the 2024 election did not
“tell the world” that they wanted Donald Trump to is-
sue order after order which violate the Constitution of
the United States and cause incredible pain and harm
to so many of our citizens. As the federal District Court
said in issuing a TRO against the spending freeze, “the
broad categorical and sweeping freeze of federal funds
is likely unconstitutional and continues to cause irrepa-
rable harm to a vast portion of this country.” This is
not what voters wanted.

Frank Pannozzi, Providence

Alarmed by misuse of public funds

I am writing to express my deep concern regarding
the apparent mismanagement and misuse of taxpayer
funds. For over six decades, I have diligently fulfilled
my civic duty by paying taxes, understanding the fun-
damental principle that taxation is an unavoidable as-
pect of citizenship. However, recent revelations of ex-
orbitant and seemingly frivolous government spend-
ing have eroded my trust in the system.

While I acknowledge the historical context of tax
evasion and its consequences (as exemplified by fig-
ures like Al Capone), the current situation seems to
represent a far more systemic issue of waste, fraud
and potential corruption. The scale of this alleged mis-
use of public funds is alarming, and the proposed
\$5,000 one-time tax rebate feels inadequate and in-
sufficient to address the underlying problems. This re-
bate appears to be a reactive measure, rather than a
proactive solution to systemic issues of accountability
and transparency.

The lack of transparency and accountability is un-
acceptable. The suggestion that billions of dollars have
been misspent demands a thorough, independent in-
vestigation to determine the full extent of the misuse
and hold those responsible accountable. Furthermore,
a comprehensive review of government spending
practices is necessary to prevent similar occurrences
in the future. It is imperative that our elected officials
demonstrate a renewed commitment to fiscal respon-
sibility and transparency.

John Cervone, North Providence

Gender-affirming care is essential

We write as individual researchers, faculty, doctors,
staff and students invested in reproductive justice and

its values of bodily autonomy, informed choice, acces-
sibility, transparency and community-centeredness.
We are alarmed about the erosion of gender-affirming
care for minors and adults in Rhode Island.

Health care systems in Rhode Island and across
New England have for several years supported trans
people by providing gender-affirming care, including
pharmacotherapy. Indeed, when the president issued
his Jan. 25 executive order “Protecting Children from
Chemical and Surgical Mutilation,” Rhode Island’s at-
torney general issued a joint statement with other AGs
reiterating their support of gender-affirming care as
“essential, lifesaving medical treatment.”

However, we have been disappointed in the lack of
public support from local health care leadership. There
are serious legal questions regarding the president’s
authority to withdraw congressionally allocated fund-
ing from health care institutions. Yet we have seen an
alarming pattern of obeying in advance: The webpage
for Hasbro’s gender clinic was removed and a new,
harder-to-find, more vague page created; medical ser-
vices “paused” and reopened; and confusing, contra-
dictory messaging given to patients, families and cli-
nicians.

To be clear: full, medically appropriate services for
trans and nonbinary patients who need and want
them are essential to their health and should not be
sacrificed for political reasons. Contradictory, vague
messaging and the removal of information reinforce a
message of stigma and shame.

We ask that all Rhode Island’s health care leader-
ship affirm the importance of full-spectrum gender-
affirming care for minors and adults in Rhode Island.

Submitted by members and affiliates of the Repro-
ductive Justice Collaborative.

The real assault on US democracy

H. Philip West Jr. pontificates, while throwing ku-
dos to the Rhode Island Ethics Commission, where I
assume with a straight face he lauds Rhode Island as a
paragon of good government that foreign officials
could emulate (“Reject Musk’s assault on democracy,
America,” Commentary, Feb. 16).

Mr. West needs a new shtick! After reading his
words more than once to be sure, nowhere does he
mention the fraud and abuses that many have long
suspected on the part of the United States Agency for
International Development. Elon Musk has peeled
back the real fraud and abuse endemic to USAID for
any unbiased person to view.

The real assault on American democracy is being
done by those like Mr. West and the flailing, leaderless
Democratic Party. Granted, America has accomplished
a great deal, ending malnutrition, fighting AIDS and re-
building war-torn Europe after World War II. The irony
is neither Elon Musk nor the Trump administration is
proposing ending these types of programs.

That’s why I reject columns written by individuals
like Mr. West who fail to acknowledge the real purpose
of DOGE and resort to smearing people for where and
when they were born.

Peter Buonfiglio, North Providence

Getting the facts right about Ukraine

In his letter to the editor (“Support for a ‘corrupt’ re-
gime in Ukraine,” Feb. 22), David Floyd writes and I
quote, “Most Americans did not and do not approve of
endless billions of U.S. dollars being sent perpetually
to a government that claims democracy, but jails dis-
sidents, closes down churches and is not holding elec-
tions.”

Ukraine isn’t doing any of that. It’s Russia. Ukraine
isn’t having elections, because by law they can’t during
a time of war. You need to be better informed.

And by the way, Russia invaded Ukraine.

Suzanne Reilly, Providence