

Opinion



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COMMUNITY KUDOS

Valley students fare well at state migrant speech and debate competition, David Peña, new varsity football coach at CUHS, Harding Elementary School's 'Walking School Bus Field Trip,' IVC's new Hall of Fame members and Matt Phillips, new principal at SHS

Valley students fare well at state migrant speech and debate competition

A handful of Imperial Valley students fared well at the annual Migrant Education State Speech and Debate Competition held earlier this month in Bakersfield.

Jorge Mendoza, Abel Leon and Betsy Gomez, high school students at Holtville High School, won their respective division.

Other notable performances from local students include Kitzia Cruz, a sixth grade student from Brawley Union Elementary School, who won in the Prepared English competition.

From Brawley Union High School, senior Jocelyn Garza placed third in English Prepared speech and junior Maria Valenzuela placed third in prepared Spanish speech.

Southwest High School junior Jocelyn Valenzuela won first in English Prepared speech and second place in English Extemporaneous speech.

The Southwest junior has won first place in the Prepared Speech competition since her freshmen year.

Also representing Holtville High was freshmen Ricardo Mendez, who won first place in English Pre-

pared speech and second place in English Extemporaneous speech, and sophomore Nallely Velasco, who won third place in English Prepared Speech.

David Peña, new varsity football coach at CUHS

A little more than one month ago, David Peña accepted the head football coach position at Central Union High.

He takes over a program that is rich in history and has plenty of tradition.

Peña spent five seasons as the offensive line coach at Western State College in Gunnison, Colo.

And most recently completed his third season at Mayville State University, finishing as the quarterbacks coach and associate head coach.

Harding Elementary School's "Walking School Bus Field Trip"

As a way to promote a healthy lifestyle, students along with staff walked from the school to the Sixth Street Community Garden to pick vegetables. Organized by Harding's school garden manager, Vince Zazueta, he tied in the journey with the Safe Routes to School

initiative.

It's a great way to promote healthy living to a new generation.

Imperial Valley College's new Hall of Fame members

Shirley Jones, Steve Cato and Harrell Glenn Crowsen were recognized as alumni greats during the annual Hall of Fame Awards Dinner hosted by the IVC Foundation on Thursday night at the Stockman's Club in Brawley.

All three are deserving of being inducted into the Hall of Fame and are deserving of the recognition. Jones, Cato and Crowsen joined 27 other members in the college's hall of fame, which honors alumni who have done significant things in their lives.

Matt Phillips, new principal at Southwest High School

Matt Phillips will take the position June 1 as the new principal at the high school. It was obvious he was excited and eager to take on the position.

He is a Valley native, working in administration in other districts in the Valley before this new position. Congratulations and good luck with the new position.

MY VIEW

Dear Vice President Pence: It's time to take a stand



JONAH GOLDBERG

FROM THE RIGHT

Dear Vice President Pence, I hope you're holding up under the strain.

I hope you don't mind me writing to you like this, but as one of those conservatives who was somewhat reassured by Donald Trump's decision to put you on the ticket, I feel compelled to ask: What's the endgame here? Retired Gen. Michael Flynn, the president's first national security adviser, was reportedly fired for misleading you about his conversations with the Russians. But last week, you were apparently misled about the president's reasons for firing the FBI director. Four times you said James Comey was terminated on the recommendation of the deputy attorney general, who criticized how Comey handled the Hillary Clinton email investigation during last year's campaign. Then the president told NBC's Lester Holt that the recommendation had nothing to do with it. It was all about the Russia investigation.

Maybe you weren't misled. Maybe you were part of the deception. But I'd like to think that's not the case.

Either way, is this really what you had in mind when you took the job?

I wouldn't dare appeal to you as a man of devout Christian faith; that's not my job. (It's also particularly awkward for a guy named Goldberg.) Nor do I see much point in blathering on about patriotism. I know you're a patriot with an abiding love for your country. So let's talk about your ambition.

Ambition is not necessarily a dirty word. The founders thought that ambition more than almost anything else would preserve our system of checks and balances and safeguard our liberty. I have to assume you accepted your position at least partly for the same reason many of your predecessors did: to get you closer to the top job.

The best way for you to be elected president is for Trump to have a successful presidency while maintaining your own credibility as a successor. That's easier said than done. There's a reason only two VPs (Martin Van Buren and George H.W. Bush) have been elected straight to the Oval Office since the passage of the 12th Amendment in 1804. You need the 2024 election to be a referendum on the Trump presidency, with a majority of voters wanting to stay the course.

It's early yet, but may I ask: How's that going? I'm not privy to what's happening behind the scenes, but from where I'm sitting, it doesn't look like it's going too well.

The Comey fiasco doesn't help the president, and your apparent willingness to abet his misbehavior doesn't help you. The latest firestorm over allegations the president revealed classified information to the Russians is still raging and many questions remain, but the controversy certainly underscores concerns about the president's ad hoc approach to the job.

I understand that the vice presidency is an awkward position under the best of circumstances. It's a bit like the Newark Airport of constitutional offices, mostly famous for the bad things people say about it. John Nance Garner, Franklin D. Roosevelt's first vice president, said it wasn't "worth a warm bucket of," well, historians debate which bodily byproduct he mentioned. Harry S. Truman, FDR's third vice president, said the office was "about as useful as a cow's fifth teat." If that was once true, it isn't any longer. As you like to say, Trump threw away the old playbook. You have a role to play beyond acting like a campaign flunky, praising the president at every turn as a man of action displaying his "broad-shouldered leadership."

There's room to do more on your own shoulders. Much of the president's power is derived from what Teddy Roosevelt called the "bully pulpit," or what legendary political scientist Richard Neustadt called the "power to persuade." In today's media landscape, you have an especially potent bully pulpit, because you're the one person the president cannot fire. I don't think you should resign in response to the president hanging you out to dry in the Comey affair, but threatening to do so if he plays you for a patsy again might — just might — help the president get his act together, which would be good for you, the party and the country. You are also the tiebreaker in the Senate, which means something given the GOP's precariously thin majority.

The president claims to value loyalty, but we know he respects strength. For your sake and the country, maybe it's time to show some. Jonah Goldberg is a fellow at the American Enterprise Institute and a senior editor of National Review. You can write to him in care of this newspaper or by email at goldbergcolum@gmail.com, or via Twitter @JonahNRO

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ANOTHER VIEW



MY VIEW

Closing the Digital Divide in the Imperial Valley

April 26 was an unusual day in California. The Internet For All Now Act, a bipartisan bill that will close the Digital Divide in California, sailed through its first committee hearing with a 12-0 vote — thanks to Assemblymember Eduardo Garcia of the Imperial Valley.

Bill support from 22 Republicans and Democrats is fairly rare in the Capitol. The reason is that the Internet For All Now Act (AB 1665) makes economic sense. It extends an already working program that has funded 58 high-speed (broadband) Internet infrastructure projects connecting over 100,000 households to the digital economy.

You might ask: Why do we need this bill?

The reason is the Digital Divide in California is too large. The California Emerging Technology Fund reported in its August 2016 Field Poll that 30 percent of Californians do not have high-speed Internet and a computing device at home and that 57 percent of low-income Californians are "under-connected" — either dependent only on a smartphone or completely offline. In addition, the California Public Utilities Commission issued a report in April 2017 documenting that 43 percent of rural households can't get reliable broadband.

What this all means is that almost 12 million Californians are shut out from the digital economy. They cannot adequately apply for jobs, do homework, and get health and public services online. The

National Association for College Admission Counseling recently reported that colleges and universities now receive 94 percent of their applications online, up from 49 percent in 2005. And the Pew Internet Research Center has shown that lower income and rural Americans continue to lag behind in technology adoption; the result is that a technology gap between rich and poor and urban and rural is widening US inequality.

This is of particular concern in the Imperial Valley, where some cities and towns have inadequate or non-existent broadband infrastructure and where lower income families struggle to keep up with the digital technology revolution.

This was the main reason Assemblymember Eduardo Garcia authored AB 1665. In his district — which comprises Blythe, Brawley, Bermuda Dunes, Calexico, Calipatria, Cathedral City, Coachella, Desert Hot Springs, El Centro, Holtville, Imperial, Indio, Mecca, Oasis, North Shore, Salton Sea, Thermal, Thousand Palms, Westmorland, Seeley, Heber, Ocotillo, Heber and Winterhaven — 8 percent of the households can't get high-speed Internet and 23 percent are low income. Assemblymember Garcia, who is from Coachella, knows firsthand that individuals and businesses which don't have high-speed Internet are socioeconomically disadvantaged and those who have fast connections can compete in the 21st century.



TIMOTHY E. KELLEY

A READER WRITES

The Internet For All Act is a \$330 million, five-year bill that extends the California Advanced Services Fund, which is the only source of support for broadband unless the Legislature enacts a new fee or tax or does a General Fund budget allocation. My organization, the Imperial Valley Economic Development Corporation — along with more than 80 other governmental and nongovernmental organizations — support this bill because we understand the CASF will soon be out of funds, yet 360,000 households still need to get connected to reliable broadband. We also understand that Internet service providers will not put broadband in sparsely populated areas with low return on investment. This bill incentivizes those companies to serve 98 percent of the households in the state.

So thank you Assemblymember Eduardo Garcia for authoring and advocating for the Internet For All Now Act. Closing the Digital Divide will strengthen the economic fabric of our home, the Imperial Valley.

Timothy E. Kelley is president and CEO of the Imperial Valley Economic Development Corporation.