OPINION

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LETTERS

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GOP danger

In response to your Wednesday editorial: The Review-Journal thinks Democrats are going to love the filibuster. Want to guess how long it takes until the GOP gets rid of the filibuster? The GOP could not care less about what the norms are.

The Democrats had four years to get rid of the filibuster, and they didn't. Now the GOP can do what the Democrats didn't. The naïve Democrats underestimate how little ethics the GOP has. You would think they had learned. Donald Trump has already asked the Senate to drop its rules for nominating Cabinet positions. The corruption is just starting.
John Pauli
Las Vegas

Energy policy

Donald Trump aims to change climate policy by cutting EPA regulations and ending subsidies from the 2022 Inflation Reduction Act, which had no Republican support. On the other hand, he plans to support a range of energy sources, promoting oil, gas, nuclear, geothermal, hydro and solar energy … although he opposes wind energy.

Many Americans are worried about energy and the environment. Solar power is now cheaper than oil and gas, and battery prices are dropping. Nevada has plenty of sunshine, land, lithium resources, geothermal sites and a huge battery factory near Reno. This creates a big opportunity for clean energy development and growth.

To take advantage of this, we should use the free market to create clean, reliable and affordable energy. A good approach is a "carbon fee and dividend" policy, which suggests adding a small fee on fossil fuels at the point of extraction and gradually increasing it. This would raise fossil fuel prices over time. All the fees collected should be returned to households, helping them cope with higher energy costs or encouraging them to choose cleaner options.

"Disruption" means introducing new, constructive ideas, not just opposing current policies. The new administration can push for a market-based policy that reduces reliance on fossil fuels while boosting jobs and the energy economy in Nevada. This should be part of the discussions for the 2025 budget.
Wayne G. Willis
North Las Vegas

Call now

Nevadans such as myself, who worked on ballot Question 3, have struggled to get an open primary bill a hearing since the 2017 legislative session. The Democratic majority has always refused. If voters want an open primary without ranked-choice voting, please help us convince the Democratic legislative leadership to pass an open primary bill in the 2025 legislative session. Qualifying and passing a ballot question can take millions of dollars. So we need help passing a bill. Contact your legislators now.
Sondra Cosgrove
Las Vegas

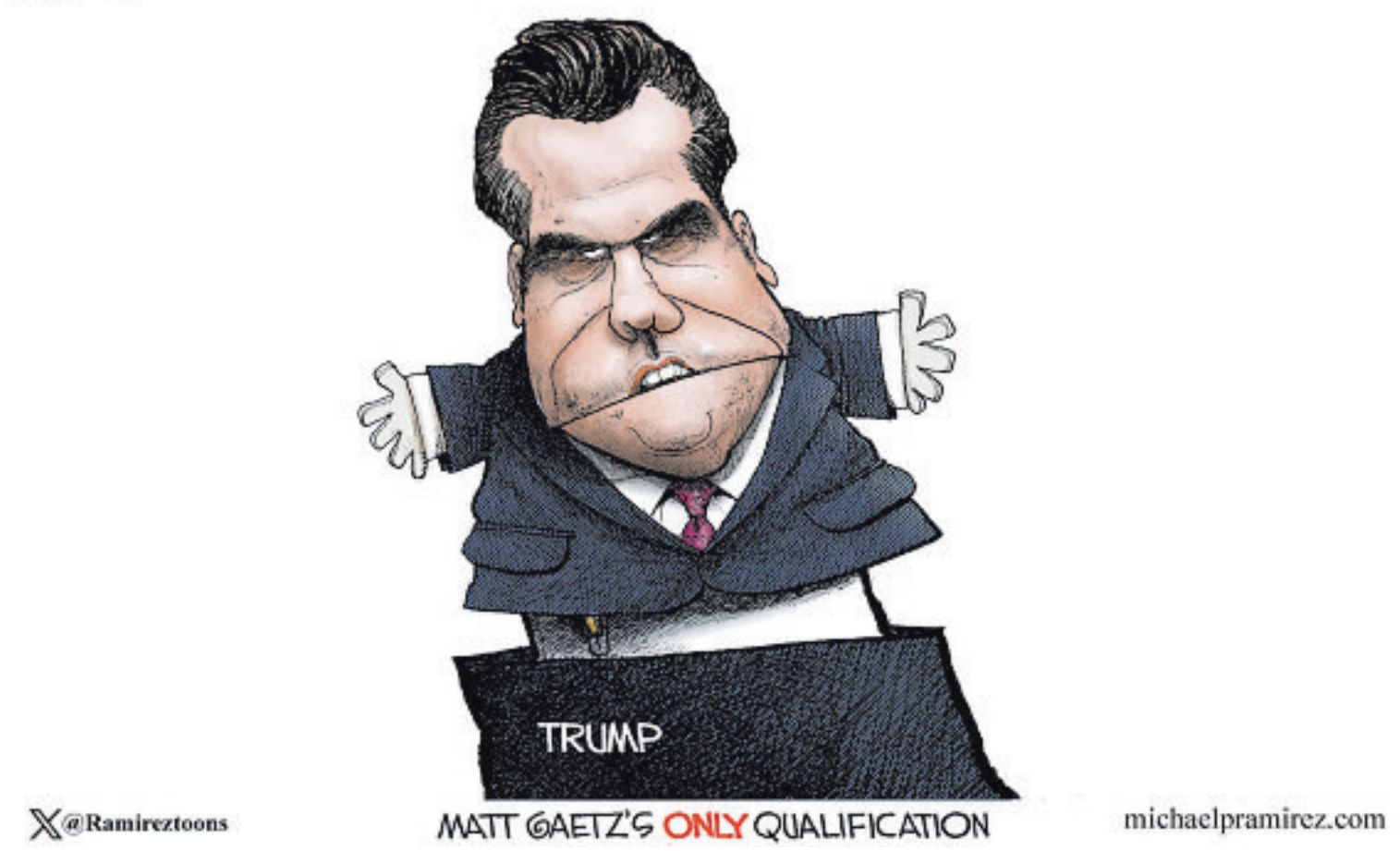
The writer is executive director of Vote Nevada.

"Friends in high places."



MICHAEL RAMIREZ
EDITORIAL CARTOONIST

Review-Journal editorial cartoonist Michael Ramirez is a two-time winner of the Pulitzer Prize and a four-time winner of the Sigma Delta Chi Award. Contact him at mramirez@reviewjournal.com.



THE REVIEW-JOURNAL'S VIEW

Settlement highlights bureaucratic hubris

Stealing something worth $100,000 can get you sent to prison in Nevada for up to 20 years. But those responsible for costing Las Vegas taxpayers at least $250 million are unlikely to face any consequences at all.

This month, the Las Vegas City Council delayed a vote on spending between $250 million and $286 million to resolve the Badlands dispute. Both sides believe a settlement is coming soon.

It's a high price to pay for the years the city spent thwarting the development of the now-shuttered golf course proposed by Yohan Lowie and his company, EHB Cos. City officials did so at the behest of wealthy residents in the nearby Queensridge neighborhood who opposed the new construction. That was an expensive mistake, because the city had previously zoned the golf course for residential development.

The city's obstruction deprived Mr. Lowie of his property rights. He took the municipality to court and won repeatedly. City Attorney Jeff Dorocak estimated the city could be on the hook for up to $650 million. Mr. Lowie has said he has the evidence to bring a "multibillion-dollar" lawsuit against the city.

This was the obvious outcome that city officials willfully ignored. In 2015, we wrote, "Golf course views not guaranteed" after Badlands had been sold. Five years later we noted that, "What should concern local taxpayers is the possibility that the city has opened itself up to a takings claim under the Fifth Amendment. … And a 2019 Supreme Court ruling on property rights makes it much easier for landowners such as Mr. Lowie to gain relief."

While some council members — most notably former members Bob Beers and Victoria Seaman — warned of the disastrous financial consequences of the city's intransigence, the council as a body repeatedly ignored calls for a settlement. Instead, they spent well more than $5 million on outside counsel fighting Mr. Lowie in court. They apparently forgot to hire attorneys who were familiar with the Constitution and the Takings Clause.

But it's even worse. Most elected and city officials didn't care that they were risking hundreds of millions of taxpayer dollars. Helping their donors or pursuing petty personal vendettas were more important than being a wise financial steward. In situations such as this, elected officials often figure they'll have moved on before the bill comes due. Unlike in the private sector, public employees rarely lose their jobs for egregious errors.

Even if the Badlands fiasco is settled before newly elected Mayor Shelley Berkley takes office, she should insist on accountability for those who pushed the city down this disastrous path. While the settlement is necessary and long overdue, it's a crushing blow for Las Vegas taxpayers and a glaring example of bureaucratic insulation and hubris.

The views expressed above are those of the Las Vegas Review-Journal. All other opinions expressed on the Opinion and Commentary pages are those of the individual artist or author indicated.



Las Vegas Review-Journal file

An aerial view of the shuttered Badlands golf course and the Queensridge towers.

ALL X-CITED

The Opinion page guide to tweets and responses

@reviewjournal

Variety
@Variety
talks to a comedian:
Tony Hinchcliffe says, "I apologize to absolutely nobody" for that Puerto Rico joke. ▶

The Carnivore CPA
@hedgeguy78
isn't woke:
Good, never cede an inch to the soy latte pitchfork mob. ▶



Rupa Subramanya
@rupasubramanya
has a theory:
If more of us refused to be cowed down like Tony Hinchcliffe by the self-righteous mob, then that would knock away the very premise of cancel culture.