The Dallas Morning News

Established October 1, 1885

Publishers

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Acknowledge the right of the people to get from the newspaper both sides of every important question.
G. B. Dealey

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LETTERS

Free speech often stifled

Re: "Texas abandons definition of university — When topics are forbidden or avoided for fear of reprisal, critical thinking is lost," by Jacob Beck, Sunday Opinion.

The point of this essay is that some educational institutions in Texas have restricted certain topics such as praising fascism or discussing transgenderism and such. Beck doesn't discuss the fact that this has happened in many, many universities across the nation already.

There have been a significant number of instances where left-wing students or professors had not allowed conservative groups or religious organizations from presenting material supporting their agenda because these students and professors want to shut down free speech. Or at least, speech they don't agree with.

This likewise is abandoning the concept of university. But maybe Beck thinks that's OK.

Bob Jenkins, Plano

What college is for

I could not agree more with Beck's opinion piece. "A university education should be an education in critical thinking" is spot on.

When he was old enough, my father dropped out of high school to join the war effort in 1945. Approximately 16 million other Americans did the same to preserve our freedoms, including freedom of speech.

After an honorable discharge, he went to Austin and earned his undergraduate, master's and doctoral degrees at the University of Texas. A true academic in every sense of the word, he felt that college was a place to gain an education and to share ideas and concepts with interesting people.

Were he alive today, he would be appalled to see dogmatic politicians deciding what topics can and cannot be discussed on college campuses.

Jaime Vela, Denton

We will keep going

Re: "A Toast to Those Deserving Thanks — So many help make our lives richer in North Texas," Thursday editorial.

Thank you for this editorial. I read it with pleasure Thanksgiving morning and, as I'm sure many other readers did, thought of an additional long list of more people, places and things for which I am thankful.

In these divisive and uncertain times for so many, it's helpful to stop and think about everything good. Big and small, it all adds up to helping us remember why we keep going. And we will keep going!

Sara Miskimins, Dallas/Lake Highlands

Willow Bend great for Stars

I am writing to express my support for the idea of relocating the Dallas Stars to the Shops at Willow Bend area in Plano. I believe this proposal has significant merit and should be discussed more thoroughly with the public and relevant stakeholders.

The Willow Bend area is a safe and strategically accessible location, positioned near both the North Dallas Tollway and the Bush Turnpike. Its proximity to the Stars' practice facility in Frisco and its corporate offices makes it an especially practical choice. The surrounding community offers numerous dining options within walking distance, as well as convenient access to public transportation through local bus routes.

A new facility at Willow Bend could also serve as a multipurpose venue that benefits more than just hockey fans. It would offer North Texas Performing Arts a continued space for their programs and create a versatile environment for concerts, community events and other performances. This type of venue would strengthen community engagement and provide residents with a wider range of activities and cultural opportunities.

Moreover, the development of such a facility would generate additional revenue for the city of Plano through increased tourism, event attendance and local business activity.

In comparison, American Airlines Center requires substantial investments to address ongoing maintenance and modernization needs. A new, state-of-the-art facility in Plano would offer updated amenities and long-term value for both the team and the community.

For these reasons, I believe the relocation of the Dallas Stars to the Willow Bend area is a forward-thinking proposal that warrants serious consideration and broader public discussion.

Tyler Miller, Plano

Don't look the other way

Re: "How can we allow ICE's actions?" by John R. Dorgan, Nov. 18 Letters; and "Violent confrontations," by Ken Ashby, Thursday Letters.

I was emotionally moved by this letter from Dorgan describing his experiences with ICE in Chicago. From their unlawful searches and seizures to the removal of some of our basic rights as American citizens, I consider this to be one of the darkest times in our history.

I didn't see how anyone could defend their actions. Boy, was I wrong! Another missive printed in this space asked why people can't apply lawfully and described a violent act committed by an "unvetted" immigrant, whatever that is.

While this event was tragic, it is merely anecdotal. One could find such isolated events to paint any minority group with a broad brush. But the fact is that statistically, both documented and undocumented immigrants commit crimes at a much lesser rate than the general populace.

That author may not be aware that those who have applied lawfully and followed the rules now face the same fate as those here illegally. Many innocent people, including American citizens, are getting caught in ICE's dragnet.

Three-quarters of those taken by ICE have no criminal record. I, for one, appreciate Dorgan shining a light on an issue that can't be solved by looking the other way.

Ted Felinski, Lewisville

LETTERS POLICY

We value reader submissions. We receive far more than we can print and publish a representative sample. Letters should not exceed 200 words. **Please include the source of your information.** Letters are edited for length and clarity. Include your name, address with ZIP code and daytime phone number. Submissions become property of *The Dallas Morning News*.

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EDITORIALS

Fair Park Can Fix These Now

While broader planning is happening, here are a couple of things that can be tackled in the meantime

It's always feast or famine at Fair Park.

A week after the 2025 State Fair of Texas closed, on a sunny Saturday afternoon, Fair Park was empty and quiet. A few workers zipped around in utility vehicles, but no visitors wandered the Esplanade.

Three weeks after that, some drivers were stuck in traffic for 45 minutes trying to reach parking for a large charity event and concert at the Cotton Bowl. It wasn't nearly as big a production as the annual Texas-Oklahoma football game, but parking was still a problem.

With Fair Park's former private management team now out of the picture, it is up to City Hall to bring this place back to life, even as it wrestles with questions about future governance. The Dallas Park and Recreation Department assumed management of the fairgrounds in September after terminating its contract with the nonprofit Fair Park First and its for-profit subcontractor, OVG, in a sour split.

Park and Recreation leaders have developed a preliminary plan for managing the unique but complicated municipal asset. They briefed a City Council committee about their "hybrid plan" on Monday. It keeps the department in charge of maintenance, overall contract management and community programming but outsources event booking and promotion, food and beverage service, parking, security and major venue management. It also suggests creating a stand-alone foundation to support the Cotton Bowl.

Because they were not included on the agenda, officials did not discuss the role of Fair Park First and its key project, development of a long-sought community park.

The emphasis on pursuing economic development within Fair Park makes sense. The buildings and grounds require significant, expensive, ongoing maintenance. With a good management structure, we believe the park can generate dependable income, but the city still hasn't settled on a long-term plan, and economic development efforts take time.

At any rate, City Hall must reckon with the fact that it must invest more money into Fair Park to turn it around. As we wrote in our series The Future of Fair Park, the city's philanthropic community won't step up unless City Hall boosts its own contributions to Dallas' historic jewel.

There are steps the city can take right away. The park department should address simple measures that would improve Fair Park's accessibility and attractions now. It needs better signage, both on surrounding streets and within the park itself.

Poor signage has been a complaint for decades.

It needs to better manage traffic trying to enter and exit the park. The recent charity event showed that traffic flow hasn't improved much since a 2021 Rolling Stones concert at the Cotton Bowl left some fans stuck in their cars for two hours. The city's transportation and public works department will need to help with this task.

Dallas can't afford to wait to fix these obvious problems while it develops its more ambitious plans for Fair Park.

An Unpardonable Pardon

Trump's absolution of convicted former Honduran president undermines our justice system

The UNRAVELING of LATIN AMERICA

Part of our series The Unraveling of Latin America. This editorial focuses on the Trump administration's decision to pardon a former Honduran president sentenced for drug trafficking amid a close election in the Central American country.

For a president who made going after drug cartels one of his political priorities, it is a brazen contradiction for Donald Trump to pardon former Honduran President Juan Orlando Hernández, who was convicted and sentenced for drug trafficking in 2024.

As a massive U.S. naval force assembled in the Caribbean and Pacific has struck alleged drug boats and killed dozens of suspected traffickers without any due process, Trump just freed a man who was granted a fair trial and found guilty.

Pardons are a president's prerogative, but why, if targeting drug traffickers is the goal, would this man be set free?

Trump has said that Hernández is a victim of political persecution without providing evidence. Instead, once again, the U.S. government's best work was undermined by our own president.

Hernández was extradited to the U.S. in 2022 after a lengthy investigation and put on trial two years later. The Drug Enforcement Administration's Special Operations Division spearheaded the investigation. The Justice Department's Office of International Affairs assisted in securing Hernández's arrest and extradition. He was sentenced to 45 years for drug trafficking and weapons charges.

The evidence and testimony at the federal trial in New York showed that Hernández was no small player in the drug trafficking world, with court documents tracing Hernández's illegal activities to at least 2004. He was at the center of a conspiracy that helped drug cartels establish Honduras as a key transit point for cocaine shipments while protecting drug traffickers. In the process, a $1 million bribe from Joaquín "El Chapo" Guzmán was used to run Hernández's presidential campaign in 2013, according to prosecutors.

Hernández served two terms as president between 2014 and 2022. In that period, the Central American nation experienced rising violence and economic decay, fostering conditions for the massive migration of hundreds of thousands of Hondurans to the United States. In our series, The Unraveling of Latin America, we established a connection between government corruption and immigration.

The timing of Trump's announcement was also unusual and inconvenient, amid a very close presidential election in Honduras.

As of this writing, Trump-endorsed candidate Nasry Asfura, a conservative, and Salvador Nasralla, a centrist, were in a virtual tie. This is already a difficult scenario to handle for any democracy, even more so for a fragile one like Honduras. It is quite concerning that the U.S. president is already claiming fraud without evidence.

Honduras is not the only Latin American nation where drug traffickers have made their way into politics. This is a regional threat, and bringing suspected drug lords to justice in the U.S. has been a tool to abate this menace. Much has been said of Venezuela's President Nicolás Maduro and his ties to drug cartels. The only difference between Maduro and Hernández is their political ideology.