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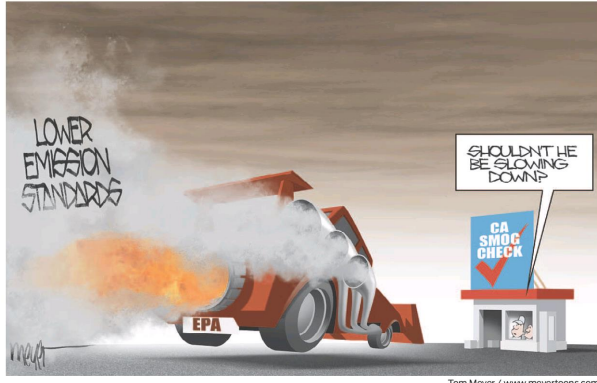
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LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Equalize bail burden

Regarding "D.A.: Bail ruling risks public safety" (March 30): San Francisco District Attorney George Gascón is appealing a lower court ruling prohibiting "holding criminal defendants in jail solely because they can't afford to pay bail."

We are long overdue for a justice system that releases all defendants on the basis of the same criteria: danger to society or individuals, flight risk, connection to the community and, if a financial aspect is called for, a percentage of the defendant's net worth (which would equalize the bail burden for all income levels).

Miriam Mueller, San Francisco

Equitable future

Like voter ID laws, gerrymandering, mass incarceration and the abolition of early voting, the addition of a citizenship question on the next census is part of a concerted effort to chip away the franchise of just enough black and brown people (who are more likely to vote for Democratic candidates) to ensure that Republicans can maintain power in the United States. Taken with this president's rhetoric regarding immigration, his attempt at a Muslim ban and his obsession with building a border wall, it is clearly part of an intimidation campaign.

The message to non-white people is "You don't belong here!" If we fail to stand up against this now, the intimidation will continue and expand. Yes, America has an incredibly troubling past, but we can, and must, work for a more equitable present and future.

Scott Godfrey, Oakland

Guns' impact

Regarding "Unanswered questions" (Letters, March 31): The letter writer classifies young people as mobs of youth demonstrating for stronger gun laws.

To peacefully march in no way connotes mobs of youth running around vandalizing people and stores. Secondly, to suggest that gun control and mental health may be intractable problems is another way of throwing in the towel. We can do more to keep guns out of the hands of the mentally ill

and those who are not mentally ill by having reliable background checks. Thirdly, when unarmed black Americans are dying at the hands of police in California, Minnesota, Louisiana and New York, it is not just a matter of saying the word "halt" by the police. Finally, the letter writer uses the words "if police shootings of unarmed people are such an outrage..." There should be no ifs in the statement. Unarmed people should never be killed by the police, and it is an outrage when they are.

Ellen Clark, Los Altos

Teachers' wages

Kudos to the hundreds of Kentucky teachers who called in sick to protest legislation that would deny them future fixed pension benefits. And many thanks to educators in both West Virginia and Oklahoma for channeling their anger over low salaries and inadequate state classroom funding into successful increases in both areas. Teachers have one of the nation's most important and challenging jobs — educating its children.

They should be adequately compensated and not have to spend their own limited resources to provide supplies for their students. Sadly, teachers now also have to worry about adequate school safety, due to more frequent school shootings. It's both bizarre and unseemly that our president wants to offer bonuses to teachers who train and carry concealed weapons. Instead, how about just offering them decent wages, stable benefits, more per-pupil spending, and better safety measures that don't require educators to become marksmen?

Julian Grant, Pacifica

Aimed at Obama

Regarding "Reverse shift on pollution" (Editorial, April 2): The Trump administration's decision to relax vehicle fuel-efficiency requirements has less to do with helping U.S. automakers and more to do with animus toward former President Barack Obama. From withdrawing from the Paris climate treaty to canceling "Dreamer" immigrant protections to ending trans-

gender military service and school bathroom policies, President Trump's mantra seems to be: "If Obama did it, I'll undo it." I wouldn't be surprised if our tweeter-in-chief's next harebrained move is to try eliminating the letter "O" from the English language alphabet.

Francine Waters-Olivera, Berkeley

Forest protections

Regarding "No one wins in war over ending clean car rules" (March 30): Since the Environmental Protection Agency has turned into the Environmental Pollution Agency under Scott Pruitt, the article on possible vehicle emission changes should be no surprise. But EPA aside, unpublicized is an ongoing threat to our intact forests. Trees have been our invaluable silent partners in opposing climate change, with their unique need to absorb tons of carbon dioxide keeping that greenhouse gas out of our atmosphere, and serving as guardians of our state water supplies.

When 20-acre tracts of mature healthy trees are stripped by Sierra Pacific Industries and others simply to start their tree farm saplings for future profits, that process is called "clear-cutting," but really, it is domestic deforestation. Corporations may need tree farms, but what we need are pure air and clear water, the priceless products of undisturbed forests.

Bob Moncrieff, Monte Sereno

Overly generous

Regarding "Initiative to entice older folks to relocate" (Business, April 1): Great assessment by Kathleen Pender on the proposed property tax laws encouraging seniors to move out of their large houses or to more-affordable parts of the state. While I agree with the universal transferability of one's tax basis, the part where you get a reduced assessment for the new house, if it's less than what you sold your old house for, seems overly generous. Proposition 13 was intended to allow people to afford the taxes on their existing homes, not act as an asset/windfall to be able to cash in on when moving.

Marc Schoenfeld, Oakland

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