

THEIR VOICE

GOP can't decide how to fight to Twitter end

Washington makes it very hard to wake up conservative some mornings.

On Wednesday, the current administration was steering one course on Twitter railing against the bias of social media companies for adding notes to user content while on Fox News the GOP's youngest member of the U.S. Senate was suggesting social media companies should be held liable for publishing user content unfiltered.



CHECK MARC
MARCUS
FITZSIMMONS

Confused? Understandable. Let's review how just how Twitter put itself in the cross-hairs of the GOP for both policing and not policing user tweets.

According to President Donald Trump's tweets Tuesday and Wednesday, he believes Twitter is out of line and censoring him by adding the equivalent of an editor's note to some of his Tuesday tweets regarding mail-in ballots that said "Get the facts about mail-in ballots." The link Twitter added leads to a page that provides links to various news outlet stories on mail-in ballots.

Regardless of anyone's feelings or facts about mail-in ballots, Twitter's updated user policy seems to state that monitoring content is beyond their control and they cannot take responsibility for such controls: "All Content is the sole responsibility of the person who originated such Content. We may not monitor or control the Content posted via the Services and, we cannot take responsibility for such Content."

But yet Twitter did monitor and take the responsibility to post their own note to a user tweet in this instance. So Trump's assertion that he was treated unfairly has some legs. Going so far as to say "Twitter is completely stifling FREE SPEECH" is a great tweet-bite but kicks the legs out from under his own legitimate concern. The president's tweet was flagged with the addition of the link beneath the tweet but it wasn't removed.

Which is where this logic train went completely off the rails and took on something like the nearly unintelligible screeches of the coastal kumbaya covens that advocate multi-cultural neighborhoods from behind gated communities. Wednesday morning the president's tweet spot was more threatening of repercussions in an eye-for-an-eye fashion, with the basic message: If you censor me, I'll censor you right out of existence, with his tweet, "Republicans feel that Social Media Platforms totally silence conservatives voices. We will strongly regulate, or close them down, before we can ever allow this to happen."

So it reaches the point where the answer to perceived business censorship is for the government to censor the company out of business.

And that's where it gets actually strange. For when Sen. Josh Hawley (R-Ark.) appeared on Fox News, his quote on the matter was "Big tech gets a huge handout from the federal government. They get this special immunity, this special immunity from suits and from liability that's worth billions of dollars to them every year. Why are they getting subsidized by federal taxpayers to censor conservatives, to censor people critical of China."

Ignore the obvious issue of the statement that immunity protection somehow carries a fiscal price tag the government is paying. Focus instead on what he's saying about what Twitter should be doing. Social media companies enjoy liability protection as a platform distributing other people's content. The senator is arguing Twitter should instead be responsible for its content under publishing rules that apply to newspapers.

Twitter is an aggregate of user-generated content, not a news publication producing its own content. The good senator from Arkansas is arguing Twitter needs to step in and censor user content to fact-check it for fraud and libel before it allows tweets to publish, in effect, censoring tweets.

On one hand the president is threatening a social media company with censorship for censoring his tweets. On the other, Thursday's Executive Order threatens that same company for not censoring user tweets.

It leaves Twitter unable to determine the right thing to do while struggling to come to grips with the right thing to do.

MARCUS FITZSIMMONS is the copy desk chief for the APG-East Design Center at The Daily Times.

TODAY'S BIBLE VERSE

SUBMITTED BY JOHN MCDANIEL, FRIENDSVILLE

Therefore if any man be in Christ, he is a new creature: old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new.

2 Corinthians 5:17

YOUR VOICE

Letters to the Editor reflect the opinions of the writers and are not necessarily those of The Daily Times.

It is up to us to end racism

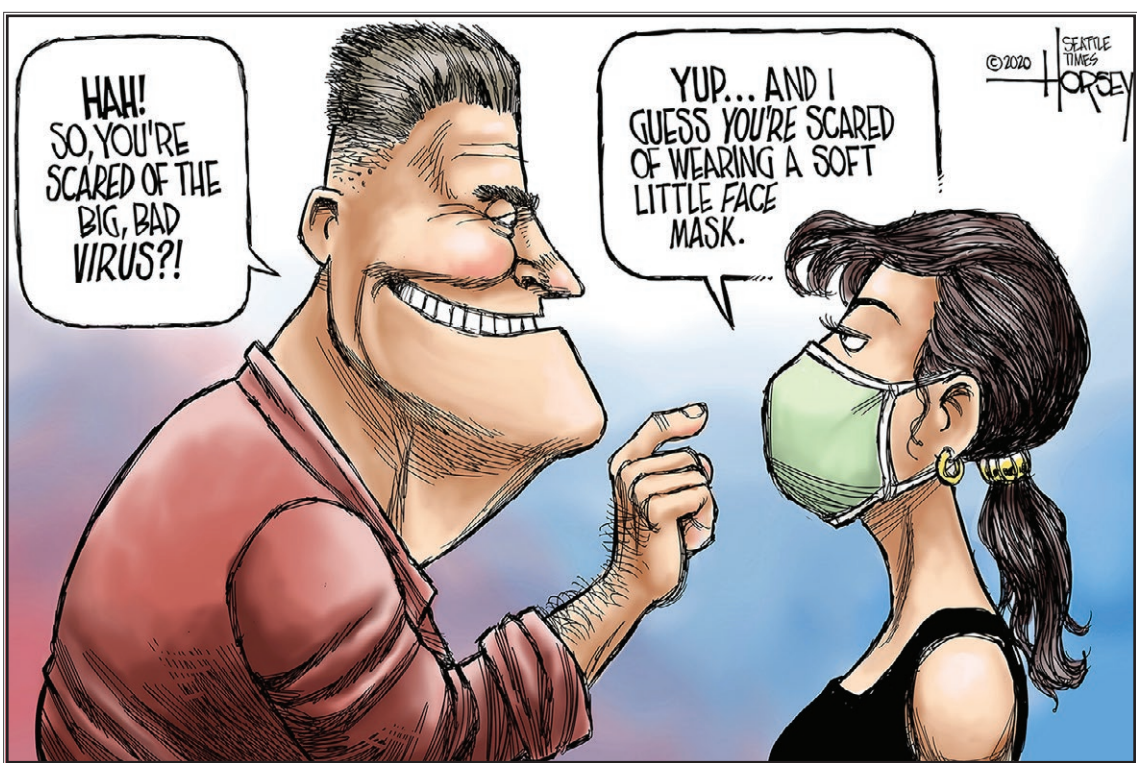
Dear Editor:
The political cartoon of two white men in a pickup truck sporting a Rebel flag in hot pursuit of Obama brings to light the cracks in the ideal Norman Rockwell portrait of America. These cracks reveal the deep injustice in America, especially in light of the recent murder of a young black man who, while jogging, was pursued by two men, a father and son, who harassed and murdered him in broad daylight and would have gone unpunished were it not for a video exposing their heinous crime in real time.

This cartoon forces us to see the elephant in the room. This elephant is a monster that perpetuates racism and threatens the moral fiber of this nation. Not all Americans are racists, but there are many who are and stoke the fires of hatred. They must be stopped and brought to justice. Our apathy emboldens them. Therefore, it is up to us to destroy their legacy of hatred and cruelty.

petuates racism and threatens the moral fiber of this nation. Not all Americans are racists, but there are many who are and stoke the fires of hatred. They must be stopped and brought to justice. Our apathy emboldens them. Therefore, it is up to us to destroy their legacy of hatred and cruelty.

It is said, "fish smells from the head down." We must hold our legislators accountable for policies that institutionalize and perpetuate inequality and injustice. We must use our vote to right wrongs and strive to make America a truly great country with liberty and justice for all.

Annamaria Gundlach
River Ford Road
Maryville



THEIR VOICE

Trump, Sessions feud gets heated

Jeff Sessions is in a surreal place. He spent 20 years as a senator from Alabama followed by 21 months as U.S. attorney general, and now, he is in a tightly competitive race to win back his old Senate seat. He was the first important national figure in government to endorse candidate Donald Trump back in early 2016. That endorsement was an important boost for Trump, whom some important Republicans dismissed at the time. The newly elected Trump picked Sessions for attorney general.

At the Justice Department, Sessions worked hard to implement the president's agenda on issues such as immigration and crime. But as far as relations with Trump were concerned, it all went to hell in early March 2017, when Sessions, who had been on the job all of 21 days, recused himself from supervising the Trump-Russia investigation.

Driven by Democrats and their allies in the press, the Russia issue picked up steam in Trump's early months as president. But it truly exploded on May 9, 2017, when Trump fired FBI Director James Comey. The resulting firestorm led to the appointment of special counsel Robert Mueller — an appointment made by Sessions's second-in-command, Deputy Attorney General Rod Rosenstein, who was in charge of the Russia matter after Sessions recused himself.

Trump blamed it all, or nearly all, on Sessions, and he never forgave him. Sessions remained in the job until November 2018, but Trump clearly could not stand the man he chose to head the Justice Department.

Fast forward to today. Deep-red Alabama has a Democratic senator, Doug Jones — that's another equally odd story — who is now up for reelection. There was a primary to pick the Republican candidate who will almost certainly defeat Jones in November. Sessions finished a close second to former Auburn University football coach Tommy Tuberville, who won by a little less than 2 percentage points. A runoff is scheduled for July 14.

Trump not only supports Tuberville, but he has been bashing Sessions left and right.

Sessions also released an "Open Letter to the People of Alabama" in which he explained in detail why he believed then, and believes now, that his recusal was required by law and was the only course he could take.

That didn't assuage Trump one bit. A few days ago, the president tweeted, "3 years ago, after Jeff Sessions recused himself, the Fraudulent Mueller Scam began. Alabama, do not trust Jeff Sessions. He let our country down. That's why I

endorsed Coach Tommy Tuberville."

That was finally it for Sessions, who responded with obvious irritation. "Look, I know your anger," he tweeted to the president, "but recusal was required by law. I did my duty & you're damn fortunate I did. It protected the rule of law & resulted in your exoneration. Your personal feelings don't dictate who Alabama picks as their senator, the people of Alabama do."

The political world's collective response was: Whoa! Now, this is getting interesting.

Then, Trump upped the ante again. "Jeff, you had your chance & you blew it," he tweeted. "Recused yourself ON DAY ONE (you never told me of a problem), and ran for the hills. You had no courage, & ruined many lives."

"Mr. President, Alabama can and does trust me, as do conservatives across the country," Sessions responded. "Perhaps you've forgotten."

Who knows where it could go next? On Monday, I asked Sessions if he was surprised by the degree to which Trump seems to hold the entire Russia investigation against him. "Yes, I am surprised about that," he said. "But his frustration is not all unjustified. It's becoming more and more clear that there were problems with this investigation. There may have been political bias. Barr is exactly right that we need to know whether commencing an investigation of a campaign had sufficient predicate."

I mentioned to Sessions that Trump's last interventions in an Alabama Senate race, when he first backed losing Republican primary candidate Luther Strange and then losing Republican general election candidate Roy Moore, resulted in the election of the current Democratic Sen. Doug Jones.

"He did make two recommendations, both of which the voters did not follow," Sessions said.

Sessions finds himself in an unprecedented situation only partially of his own making. But he is convinced he was correct in recusing himself from the Russia investigation, even if it means losing.

"My conscience is clear," Sessions said.

EMAIL BYRON York at byork@washingtonexaminer.com.



BYRON
YORK

PRICKLY CITY



MALLARD FILMORE

