OPINION

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THE REVIEW-JOURNAL'S VIEW

Washington's bipartisan agreement on big spending

If there's one thing politicians are expert at other than running for re-election, it's spending other people's money. And if you need any more evidence that this is a bipartisan problem, look no further than the semiconductor subsidy bill that the Senate approved this week.

The original concept was to dole out $76 billion in grants and tax breaks to Silicon Valley that supporters maintain is necessary to help the United States compete against China and to ensure this country isn't reliant on imports for chips and other vital components. Yet once the bill hit the Senate floor, Majority Leader Chuck Schumer — faster than you can say "national debt" — introduced an amendment to add another $175 billion for various federal agencies.

Even if you buy the national security excuse for tolerating corporate welfare and federal industrial policy — this will "help the U.S. compete against China," The Wall Street Journal noted wryly, "only if you believe that the key to success is a larger federal bureaucracy and more political allocation of capital" — the added spending extravaganza is indefensible.

The billions showered on federal agencies, the Journal reported, include $11 billion for the Commerce Department to create "regional technology hubs," $10 billion for the National Institute of Standards and Technology to "promote competitiveness," $20 billion to create a Directorate for Technology, Innovation and Partnerships and $81 billion over five years to the National Science Foundation, doubling its current budget.

Progressives love to howl about corporate welfare — and rightly so — yet they're willing to turn a blind eye to subsidies for profitable tech companies because the measure also injects billions more into the federal administrative state. Kudos to Sen. Bernie Sanders, the only Democrat to vote against the bill. Say what you want about the Vermont socialist, at least he walks the walk. The next time populist Sen. Elizabeth Warren rails to the cameras about evil capitalists, perhaps she'll also explain how she squares her fierce collectivist rhetoric with her warm embrace of welfare for tech titans.

On the Republican side, 17 senators supported the bill, most arguing they did so for national security purposes as protection against China. But they've also made it more difficult this election year for GOP candidates to present themselves as defenders of competitive markets and fiscal sanity. It's doubtful that "we'll spend a bit less than the other guys" is a winning campaign slogan for those waiting for Congress to deal seriously with the nation's looming financial crisis.

The chip bill only further clarifies that Washington has a spending problem, not a revenue problem.

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.

LETTERS

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Civic pride

The recent Review-Journal articles on the irrational disposition of thousands of traffic violations in Las Vegas and Clark County should reassure everyone that the culture of deceit and corruption that has been a bedrock of this community since its inception is very much alive and well. The only beneficiaries are the attorneys involved (what a surprise) and the perpetrators. The losers are the rest of us, of course.

For the defenders of the system to suggest it works because it reduces the system's workloads tells you how contaminated the thought processes of these defenders are. The way to reduce workloads is to address the sources and not eliminate the symptoms. Rewarding the perpetrators for their bad behavior is beyond irrational, as is making the victims and others pay for the consequences.

The historical culture of this community is steeped in irrational deceit and corruption, and it's discouraging to once again be reminded that it's so deeply embedded in the behavior and thought processes of our decision makers.

Rich Watson
Las Vegas

Water facts

Victor Joecks' July 24 commentary, "Las Vegas isn't running out of water," clearly presents the facts. It's too bad, however, that so few will see the column, so the public will continue to be bombarded with "the sky is falling" articles regarding water security in the Las Vegas Valley.

The Southern Nevada Water Authority's "third straw" — intake No. 3, which is well below the "dead pool" elevation of 895 feet in Lake Mead — has been in operation since September 2015. It, coupled with the water treatment and transmission facilities of the Southern Nevada water system, can deliver water throughout the Las Vegas Valley even though there would be no Colorado River water flowing below the Hoover Dam.

Maybe it's time for a current status report from the Southern Nevada Water Authority Board of Directors.

Pat Russell
Henderson



MICHAEL RAMIREZ
EDITORIAL CARTOONIST

"America faces the prospect of another Biden-Trump contest in 2024."

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



Biden aids the rehabilitation of a pariah

FORMER President Donald Trump dispensed with the usual handwringing usually on display when U.S. presidents



DEBRA J. SAUNDERS
COMMENTARY

have cozied up to Saudi Arabia. He purposefully began his first trip abroad in Riyadh.

The author of an executive order known as the Muslim ban even joined in during a ceremonial Saudi sword dance.

That was before the gruesome murder of Saudi journalist and Washington Post contributor Jamal Khashoggi under the watch of Saudi Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman, or MBS as he is known by his initials.

As a candidate, President Joe Biden pledged to make the kingdom a "pariah."

Biden also offered that he believed MBS ordered the hit on Khashoggi and pledged to make the kingdom "pay the price" for its human rights abuses.

Everyone knew that if he made it into the Oval Office, Biden would have to abandon that campaign rhetoric.

During his recent visit to Jeddah, Biden was left in the awkward position of having to sidle up to the "pariah" crown prince as he pressed the Saudis to pump more oil — a cheeky ask from the Democrat who shut down the Keystone XL pipeline and declared war on fossil fuels.

And it says something about the quality of Biden's staff that the president thought it would look better if he skipped a handshake when MBS greeted him in favor of a fist bump.

I very rarely agree with Rep. Adam Schiff, D-Calif. But Schiff was on the money when he tweeted, "If we ever needed a visual reminder of the continuing grip oil-rich autocrats have on U.S. foreign policy in the Middle East, we got it today. One fist bump is worth a thousand words."

Note to Schiff: More domestic oil production would

> I do fault Biden for pressing the Saudis to boost their oil production while discouraging oil production at home.

result in less dependence on oil-rich nations.

I don't fault Biden for making nice with the Saudis; the kingdom has been a check on Tehran's scary ambitions, as well as a vital source of oil to international markets.

Besides, if Biden can shake hands with Chinese President Xi Jinping despite China's human rights abuses against Uyghurs, he can shake hands with MBS.

I do fault Biden for pressing the Saudis to boost their oil production while discouraging oil production at home.

I do fault Biden for pushing a narrative that supports freezing out Saudi Arabia because of the murder of a journalist but overlooks Beijing's atrocities. (Of course, murdering a journalist is a human rights abuse, but it's not genocidal.)

I do fault Biden for declaring he'd make the kingdom a "pariah" when he had to know that if he won the White House, he'd walk back that pledge, and when he did, he would look even more craven and weak.

And so would the United States.

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ALL A-TWITTER

The Opinion page guide to tweets and responses

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@BillFOXLA
has déjà vu:
Culver City Unified School District announces it is reinstating an indoor mask mandate effective Aug. 1. ▶



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considers North Dakota:
It's like an advertisement to move out of state. ▶



Stephen L. Miller
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saw the ads:
Is this the freedom that Gavin Newsom has been talking about happening in California?