

OPINION



EDITORIALS

Damon Dunn makes our cut for mayor

A close mayoral race has us looking at who might best boost the LB economic climate.

With the June 3 general election just weeks away, the challenge Long Beach voters face is making the best and right pick for our community's future.

Voters started with a mayoral field of 10 candidates in last month's primary election but ultimately found two who were elevated above their peers. One of those candidates was the charismatic, Vice-Mayor Robert Garcia, who communicated a deep policy know how and provided a competent vision for a better Long Beach. Mr. Garcia received the greatest number of votes in the primary. However, only 1,236 votes separated him from runner-up Damon Dunn, who is a successful Long Beach real estate investor and civic leader.

To help determine our endorsement, Mr. Garcia and Mr. Dunn met Tuesday with our Editorial Board in a format that allowed the two candidates to respond to the same issues as well as to directly engage each other. Both candidates laid out the specifics of their platforms, but this time Mr. Dunn engendered our greater confidence. For this, he has earned our endorsement.

That is not to say that we think Mr. Garcia wouldn't be a fine mayor. His city council experience runs deep and he has cast some good policy votes in that role.

However, job and economic growth are the highest hurdles facing our city right now, and Mr. Dunn was more substantive on these issues. His website hosts an elaborate 30-plus point jobs plan that provides real solutions, including determining small business needs through surveys and along with training and other development services that will help businesses to grow.

Despite lack of city policy experience, Mr. Dunn, a Stanford graduate, is well studied and understands city budget and regulatory nuances.

Neither candidate seemed as concerned as we are about our looming pension crisis, but while Mr. Garcia walked back the tough stance he took in our primary interview, Mr. Dunn's position became more aggressive. He told us that should the city find itself in poor fiscal standing, "We're going to have make cuts and ask for concessions," in future labor contracts.

Intensity and focus, rather than stark policy differences, divided these two generally pragmatic and well-versed candidates. However, we found significant differences in each person's background and relationship with special interests.

Mr. Garcia's government experience means he likely has deeper relationships with existing stakeholders, but his candidacy is supported by more special-interest groups than his opponent's.

Alternatively, Mr. Dunn is a businessman, not a politician, so his mayoral learning curve will be a bit steeper. Long endorsed by the Long Beach Chamber, he enjoys the backing of the business community. However, to avoid even the perception of being beholden to any special interest groups, he has self-funded about 80 percent of his campaign.

We expect that Mr. Dunn's business experience will help him better identify and lessen regulatory burdens that inhibit a strong business climate so that Long Beach businesses, and jobs for residents, might thrive. We think our city, in its current economic position, will benefit more by electing Mr. Dunn.

While there's no evidence to imply that Mr. Garcia would ever be anything but objective in guiding city policy, it will be much easier for Mr. Dunn to make independent decisions that, coupled with his extensive economic and business acumen, makes Mr. Dunn the best choice to be our next mayor.

Distractions kill

Drive as if your life depends on it.

By **BONNIE LOWENTHAL**
CONTRIBUTING COLUMNIST

According to the California Office of Traffic Safety, 3,328 people were killed and an estimated additional 421,000 were injured in motor vehicles crashes involving a distracted driver in 2012.

A Centers for Disease Control study found that nine people are killed daily due to distracted driving in the United States. That is why lawmakers believe that we need common-sense laws to end this dangerous behavior. This is a problem that each one of us has the power to change and, as a result, make our roads safer.

In July 2008, California passed a law prohibiting hand-held cell phone use while driving and a ban on texting while driving in January 2009. However, mobile phones, especially smart phones, continue to distract drivers every day. According to the California DMV, talking on a cell phone or texting is the number one source of driver distractions and has been proven to dramatically increase your chances of being in, or worse, causing an accident.

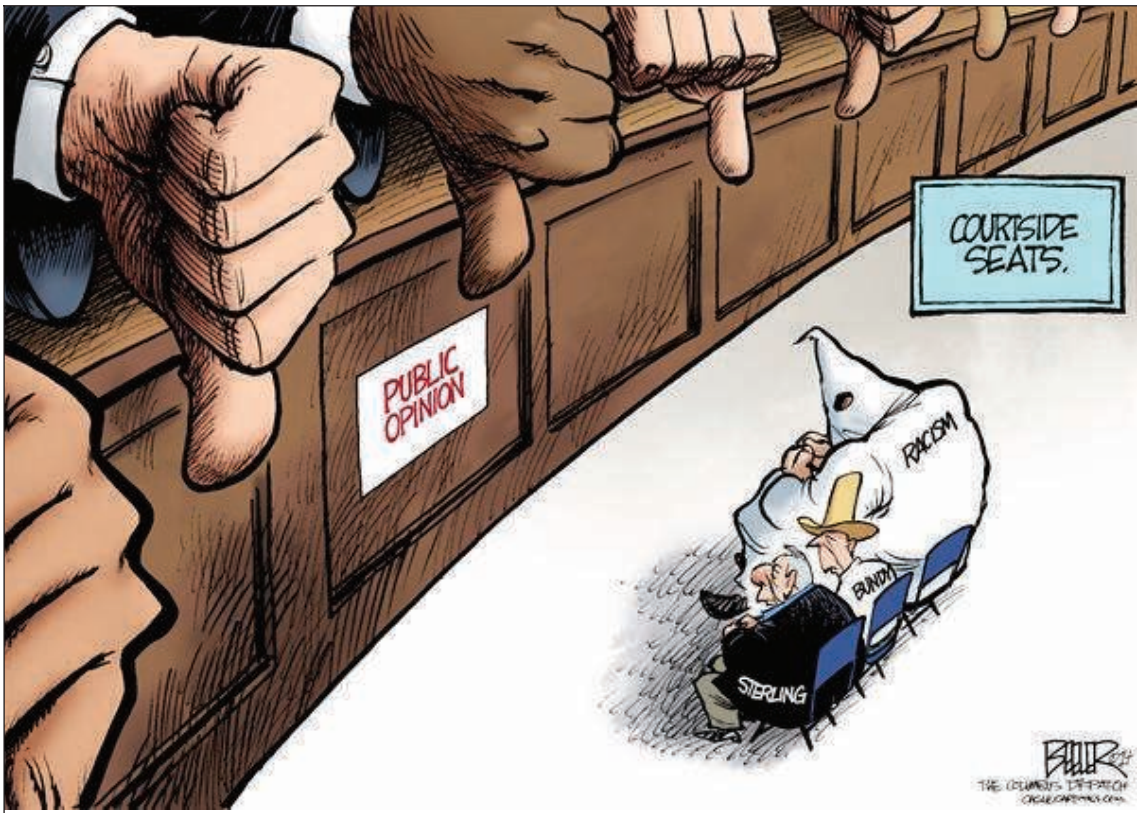
Turning off your device, or keeping it out of reach is a simple way to avoid temptation.

Smart phones are not the only distracting temptation behind the wheel. How about if you are on the road and eating a burrito or a doughnut? Is that distracted driving? Yes. Research from driver safety technology expert Lytx shows that drivers with a food or drink-related distraction have 3.64 times greater odds to be involved in a collision than a driver without such a distraction. In just 5 seconds, you can travel the length of a football field at 55 mph. So wait to unwrap that sandwich until you've arrived at your destination; it's not worth the risk.

We need to do our part to stay focused behind the wheel and just drive. It is not worth it to apply makeup, check your e-mail, pet your dog, or catch up on the morning newspaper. You can do all of those things when you have safely parked your car.

Bonnie Lowenthal is the chair of the Assembly committee on transportation. She represents California's 70th Assembly District.

CARTOON



NATE BEELER / CAGLE

SCHOOLS

Education doesn't add up

Math emphasis supplants other equally important subjects.

By **WILLIAM JEYNES**
CONTRIBUTING COLUMNIST

The Long Beach School Board recently voted to increase the amount of math needed for graduation. In and of itself, this sounds fine and good. However, the unspoken reality is that the increased emphasis on math in California public schools over the last decade has caused a reduction in the emphasis on other subjects that are equally important, which should be of great concern to parents and Californians. Three deficiencies are most notable:

• **History and reading:** According to the National Assessment of Educational Progress, the nation's chief test of student achievement, American students score lower in history than any other subject and the test scores have been declining. On the history test for 4th graders, only 9 percent of students could identify a picture of Abraham Lincoln. The majority also did not know why he was an important figure.

Concurrently, most high school students did not realize China's role in the Cold War and most had little overall knowledge of the Cold War. These facts are especially disturbing because many historians are asserting that the

Ukrainian crisis has led us into Cold War II.

Meanwhile, the most recent data indicate that SAT verbal scores have reached an all-time low. As an educational historian and researcher on academic outcomes, I can tell you that the deep concern that these results have caused among parents and educators is totally justified.

• **Character education:** Educators from the time of Plato through the time of the founding of the U.S. public schools under Horace Mann and all the way up to 1963 believed that character education was even more important than intellectual schooling.

In the aftermath of the removal of character education from the public schools in 1963, virtually all measures of adolescent violence skyrocketed. In Chicago alone, the city regularly contends with about 150-300 school shootings and dozens of deaths that accompany them each year. Los Angeles also has high levels of adolescent violence. One can argue that the recent recession resulted largely from the greed and lack of character among bank lenders, government leaders and countless thousands of borrowers.

The nation's future leaders and citizens must be people of character, if we are to expect a strong economy in the future.

• **Creativity, arts and music:**

The traditional school curriculum developed by Plato and used by most American schools until recently, included the four central subjects of reading, math, social studies, and science, and also included an emphasis on creativity in arts and music.

American creativity has enabled us to dominate the world's list of Nobel Prize winners. The American edge in Nobel Prizes is so great that the University of Chicago alone has produced more Nobel Prize winners than all but three countries (the United States, Great Britain and Germany). The traditional American emphasis on creativity, arts and music establishes a value for personal imagination and investigation of the highest order.

Raising math standards is fine, but for too long increased standards have led to a decline in the three areas just mentioned. It is time for our politicians and leaders to value education in the broader sense that was understood and practiced for so many years before the decline in SAT scores that started in 1963. Our society needs to offer our youth a more complete education.

William Jaynes is professor of education at CSULB.

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Toyota won't be the last to leave the state

Democrats have become experts at running businesses out of California through imposing strict regulations and high taxes. We have seen the drain for years. Toyota just announced that it is moving its

auto facility from Torrance to Texas. Thousands of jobs will be lost because of this. And now two state senators, Mark DeSaulnier, D-Walnut Creek, and Loni Hancock, D-Oakland, want to pass a bill that will punish any company that pays its CEO 100-times more than the average employee. How many more companies will leave this state if that passes?

More is less. The more companies that leave, the less taxes

are collected. The irony is that Democrats love taxes.

As outrageous as some CEO pay may seem, we live in a free enterprise system. What right does a politician have to tell a company how much it can pay its employees? There are people in this state who make a lot more than CEOs (movie stars, singers and professional athletes). Will they be next?

Leo Mitchell
Long Beach



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LONG BEACH REGISTER HEADQUARTERS:
2883 E. Spring St., Suite 250, Long Beach, CA 90806.
Telephone: 1-562-685-4527.

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