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ISSUE 20
SUMMER 2020
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Failure to Lead

SURRENDER!

How Minneapolis voluntarily relinquished its streets to a mob of vandals, thieves and arsonists.

FALSE ALARM

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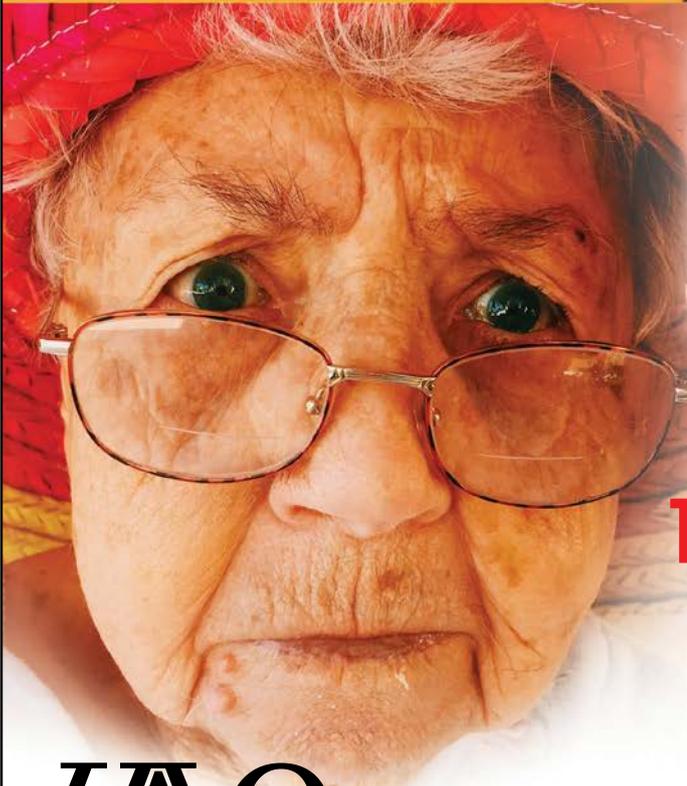


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NOTE FROM THE CHAIRMAN

TOTAL FAILURE

Recent months have given Minnesotans a front-row seat to the shortcomings of liberal governance.

On Friday, May 29th, Minnesota Governor Tim Walz had the opportunity to tell nervous Twin Citians how his state law enforcement team would end the out-of-control mob violence that had reduced parts of Minneapolis to battle-weary embers.

But that wasn't his initial focus. Before allowing members of his team to outline their plans, Walz breathlessly announced that a member of the state patrol had mistakenly arrested a CNN news crew during an on-air broadcast in Minneapolis. "A few minutes after hearing that I was on a call with CNN President Jeff Zucker, who demanded to know what happened," the Governor said. *Demand-ed.* Walz responded to the media honcho with regrets. "I take full responsibility. There is absolutely no reason something like this should happen. Calls were made immediately. This is a very public apology."

It took several days for the meaning of this to sink in. The 2:30 a.m. arrest was a mistake, although a YouTube video reveals that the troopers treated the crew with civility, and the reporter responded with unfailing courtesy. It was a misunderstanding, nothing more—the kind of thing that might happen in managing and covering a riot. What stands out to me is why Walz felt moved to interrupt



Ron Eibensteiner

his briefing with such a lickspittle act of public contrition, especially when he hasn't offered any other apologies to far more deserving people.

Let's put this into perspective.

Walz had spent the evening before watching the befuddled mayor of Minneapolis make a hash of his responsibilities. In a singular act of

What stands out to me is why Walz felt moved to interrupt his briefing with such a lickspittle act of public contrition (to CNN), especially when he hasn't offered any other apologies to far more deserving people.

deliberate public cowardice, Mayor Jacob Frey surveyed the fiery destruction around his Third Precinct police headquarters and ordered officers to retreat, leaving control of the streets to thieves, vandals and arsonists.

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continued from page 3

Walz could have prevented all of this. He knew of Frey's ineptitude. Heck, *everybody* knew. He acknowledged that he was aware Frey might cut and run. Still, Walz allowed 500 well-equipped members of the National Guard to stand by while the Third Precinct burned. He didn't deploy them, he said later, because Frey did not provide specific-enough directions about what he wanted the Guard to do. *What?* Was his phone broken? Why not call and ask? And despite his confident predictions of calm for the night to come, the Walz-led protective force was also overwhelmed by the mob.

When it was over, rioters had vandalized and/or looted something like 1,500 buildings along a five-mile stretch of Lake Street in South Minneapolis and 3.5 miles along University Avenue in St. Paul's Midway neighborhood. The

In a singular act of deliberate public cowardice, Mayor Jacob Frey surveyed the fiery destruction around his Third Precinct police headquarters and ordered officers to retreat, leaving control of the streets to thieves, vandals and arsonists.

cost of rebuilding might exceed \$500 million, making the Twin Cities riots the second costliest in American history, behind only the 1992 L.A. riots.

Imbedded in those statistics are the names of thousands of people who deserve apologies from Walz. If he can apologize so readily to CNN, then how about the business and property owners who watched their futures

go up in smoke? Or how about the wage-earners who watched their jobs disappear? Or the people—especially in neighborhoods populated by low-income and immigrant populations—who lost access to stores? Or how about the people who sat in their homes in genuine fear for the safety of their families?

And while we're talking about the culpability of failed leadership, let's not forget the steep costs of Walz's ham-fisted response to COVID-19. By shuttering Minnesota's economy, Walz enabled his constituents to achieve the distinction of having both the highest number of COVID-related fatalities and the highest number of jobless claims in the upper Midwest.

What about an apology to the 800,000 people who have lost their livelihoods to cuts to the economy?

By enduring the surreally difficult times in the first half of 2020, Minnesotans received a front-row view of what liberal governance looks like. We believe the government's handling of the riots and the COVID-19 pandemic exposed disturbing inadequacies in the leadership capabilities of our elected officials, so much so that we've devoted the majority of this magazine to expose them to examination. In "Surrender: How Minneapolis voluntarily relinquished its streets to vandals, thieves and arsonists," writers John Phelan and Tom Steward present a chronology of mismanagement that you haven't read anywhere else. Scott W. Johnson and Kevin Roche have written a companion piece about COVID-19, "False Alarm: Using a preposterously flawed scientific model, Gov. Tim Walz waged a campaign of fear to shut down Minnesota's economy."

When we elect folks who don't have the courage to make a priority of public safety and economic growth, we get the government we deserve. ★

Oops! Let's pull *him* down.

Winkler offends again.

Has anyone else had a bellyful of Ryan Winkler? The Golden Valley DFL legislator (and majority leader in the Minnesota House) set off a Twitterstorm on the concluding Sunday of Riot Week

when he reported that a tanker truck driver had intentionally run into a mass of protesters who had gathered on the I-35 bridge. Quoting "protesters I know," he said the truck had "Confederate flags and white supremacist insignia."

We now know that the immigrant driver was innocent; he had been

caught on the bridge after the police had closed it. His truck contained no flags or insignia. Oops! Winkler pulled the Tweet down.

This is the same Ryan Winkler who—on camera—extended a middle finger to a Republican colleague during a press conference about making insulin more affordable. He explained later that he thought Sen. Scott Jensen was taking excessive credit for the bill.

This is also the same Ryan Winkler who once Tweeted a racial slur against Justice Clarence Thomas, the only black member of the United States Supreme Court. When Thomas voted with the majority to eliminate part of the Voting Rights Act, Winkler tweeted, "VRA majority is four accomplices to race discrimination and one Uncle Thomas." It sounds even worse now in this time of race awareness. He pulled it down. This time, the man who claims that Harvard granted him a B.A. in history, said he didn't know that "Uncle Tom" was a racial epithet.

In response to all this, American Experiment's President John Hinderaker announced that Winkler's reckless behavior should lead to his resignation. I couldn't agree more.



IRS Checks

One year ago, my baby sister Kim died at the age of 52. She was a high-functioning special needs person who I loved dearly.

Last week, I received an “economic impact check” for Kim in the sum of \$1,200. I have not put the check into Kim’s trust, and I don’t plan to. I also don’t plan to send it back to the federal government. They will just give it away in the most wasteful way imaginable, as usual.

I realize that this check was issued for expediency’s sake, but please, how many deceased persons received this check like my deceased sister, Kim did?

I am so sick of our broken government. I do not blame President Trump. I honestly believe he is trying to clean up this wasteful mess.

—Steve Anderson
Cook, Minnesota

EDITOR’S NOTE: The Government Accountability Office has reported that the Internal Revenue Service paid nearly \$1.4 billion in stimulus checks to dead people through April.

Sleight of Hand

Catrin Wigfall’s piece, “Real Numbers” (Spring 2020) spelled out everything that I wish the general public SHOULD know but does not.

As an educator for 15 years and a fiscally responsible individual, it pains me to see the sleight of hand trick played by the St. Paul teachers’ union. I have been teaching in Wisconsin for many years and while it was available, I took full advantage of the *profitable* “steps and lanes” system. I took countless online graduate courses that took the intelligence of a 5th grader to pass. Moving up the ladder was easy.

I knew none of what I was doing made me a better educator, but my pocketbook reaped the rewards. Fast forward to the Scott Walker debacle in 2011 and it was as if my fellow teachers had lost all purpose in life.

I can still remember the day in

2011 I received a call from a union leader that teachers would have a massive “call in sick day.” Due to the shortage of substitute teachers, the district was forced to cancel school for the day. Despite school being canceled I showed up to an empty classroom and began calling every parent to apologize that the union had made such a decision. I felt ashamed that my union dues helped feed the beast. That lonely day in my classroom I also wrote a letter to the union demanding that my membership with the organization be disavowed.

The liberal tendencies of education and educators at times has been almost enough to drive me away. I still live by the adage *you don’t go into teaching for the money*. That appears to be long forgotten by the St. Paul teachers’ union.

—Patrick Sahli
Wisconsin

Loaded Words

I have enjoyed the *Thinking Minnesota* publication for several years now, but I feel I must write and express a concern.

I retired in 2003 after serving the high school students of Minnesota for 34 years. During those years I was directly involved in the collective bargaining process several times. Each bargaining session started the same. The school board and the teachers would trade proposals at a regular school board meeting and set a schedule of meetings to begin the process. Without exception, the next day the newspaper would report the districts “offer” and the teachers “demands.” I found this inflammatory vocabulary degrading to the newspaper and soon questioned the accuracy of the news that they were presenting. I still feel this way today.

Catrin Wigfall in her article “Real Numbers,” Spring 2020, has joined the newspapers. She uses loaded words to slant the article. Her points are well made but she has lost credibility with me. A good writer does not have to use loaded words to make their point. They do so with facts and logic.

—Dale Owens
Elgin, Minnesota



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UP FRONT

False Prophets

‘DENSIFICATION’

Met Council policies will increase the risks of the next pandemic.

We are all doing what we can to spread out during the coronavirus pandemic. Staying healthy depends on minimizing unwanted contact with other people—standing 6 feet apart in grocery stores, wiping off elevator buttons and avoiding public transit, where we may find ourselves cheek-by-jowl with a wheezing stranger.

But if spreading out is a challenge in the Twin Cities today, just wait until the next pandemic hits.

The urban planners at the Metropolitan Council, who increasingly dictate how we live, have a vision for our future that is stampeding us in precisely the wrong direction.

That vision is laid out in “Thrive MSP 2040,” the Met Council’s master plan for metro-wide development. Its “New Urbanist” ideology demands that, going forward, we increasingly will live on top of one another.

The holy grail for the Met Council’s urban planners, and their allies at the Minneapolis City Council, is “densification.” They seek to engineer a world in which we increasingly abandon our single-family homes for stack-and-pack, multifamily apartments, and our private automobiles for jam-packed mass transit.

The Met Council acknowledges this radical transformation will be an “enormous undertaking.” That’s because it runs directly counter to the way most

Twin Citians prefer to live.

Thrive MSP 2040’s densification crusade seeks, first and foremost, to reorganize our metro area around public mass transit. Its guiding principle is “transit-oriented development.” That’s “New Urbanist” lingo for cramming future metro-area development—hous-

with motor vehicle use dead-last.

But most Minnesotans will say no to lugging rock salt home on the bus, getting the kids to soccer practice on the light rail or pedaling to the dentist on their bikes. Such alternatives will remain a tiny minority of trips.

The Met Council and Minneapolis City Council assure us their densification crusade is merely about “expanding choice.” In fact, they are using unprecedented, top-down government controls to impose it. That often means penalties for those who make the “wrong” choices, and hefty taxpayer subsidies for those who make the “right” choices about where and how to live.

For example, the Met Council is requiring every sewered municipality—even at the seven-county metro area’s edges—to plan for and accommodate a precise, arbitrarily determined number of subsidized high-density housing units. Instead of increasing the range of housing types and sizes, or promoting new construction techniques that reduce the overall cost of housing, the council is lavishing subsidies on developers who build high-density housing and other development in tiny, dense enclaves around public transit stations.

The Minneapolis City Council has gone even further: It is preening itself on becoming the first major city in the nation to eliminate single-family zoning, so residents can no longer choose to live in a single-family neighborhood.

Meanwhile, the Met Council is pouring public funds into dizzyingly expensive light rail—expanding the Green and Blue lines with the Southwest and Bottineau lines and charging ahead with



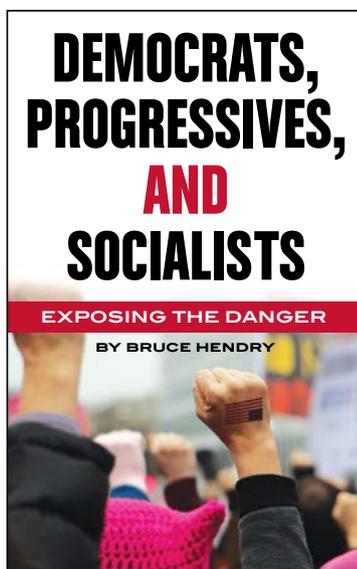
ing, jobs, retail, entertainment—into small, dense areas within “easy walking distance” (one-half mile) of major public transit stations in the core cities and inner-ring suburbs.

Transit-oriented development requires declaring war on the family car. The Thrive plan’s transportation system prioritizes walking, bicycling and transit,

THE DAVID HOROWITZ FREEDOM CENTER IS PROUD TO PUBLISH THIS ESSAY BY BRUCE HENDRY ON THE EXISTENTIAL CRISIS OUR NATION IS FACING.

“The crisis has been caused by a dramatic shift to the left by one of our two main political parties. Tragically, the leaders of the Democrat Party seem to have learned nothing from the social catastrophes created by socialist illusions in the past century.

Bruce Hendry’s analysis is an exceptionally valuable contribution to this discussion.” —**David Horowitz**



It is not just enjoyment. I am learning by it. —Alex

Bruce’s analysis is spot on, crystal clear and comprehensive. A must read that should be made mandatory in every school and college across the board. —Bach

We will see that the ideology of the Democrats is more like a religion than a political party and how human nature, jealousy, anger and group think psychology plays into their agenda. —Stephen

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the Riverview Corridor streetcar line. LRT riders’ fares are already hugely subsidized, and now the council is considering dropping fares altogether because so many freeloaders refuse to pay.

Meanwhile, to push us out of our cars, planners are making driving as expensive and inconvenient as possible. The Minneapolis Thrive plan, for example, is aggressively eliminating parking, converting four-lane roads to three lanes and intentionally increasing traffic congestion in many ways.

So, what will government planners’ obsession with densification mean when the next pandemic hits? One thing’s for sure: Many more of us will be living packed close together and compelled to rub shoulders with a constantly rotating group of strangers on public transit.

Before the coronavirus hit, health and safety problems were already escalating on light-rail transit. At a recent legislative hearing, a train operator described LRT as an “unsanitary, unsafe, and dirty mode of transit.” She said the ventilation system, which carries fumes generated by passengers’ drug use, can make drivers sick.

Metro Transit is moving ahead with replacing upholstery on Green Line and Blue Line trains because it is a petri dish for the growth of disease agents. Now we add coronavirus.

Some may assure us the current pandemic is a flash in the pan, so there’s no need to rethink our rush to densification. But in recent years, we’ve seen recurring waves of novel diseases, including SARS, MERS and swine flu, and the coronavirus may return. Globalization is likely to increase this threat.

For years, we’ve heard warnings about how government planners’ obsession with densification will reduce our quality of life, increase our cost of living, and restrict our mobility and independence. Now we know it threatens our health as well. ★

—*Katherine Kersten*

This piece originally appeared in the Star Tribune.

The Science?

The Thief of Time

Another MPCA maneuver; another Line 3 delay.

The Minnesota Pollution Control Agency (MPCA) has announced it will again delay the replacement of the aging Line 3 pipeline, this time by holding a contested case hearing that will delay construction in the vital infrastructure project until at least 2021. The holdup represents the latest among multiple moves taken by the Walz administration to delay the project that has spent five years in regulatory review. Unfortunately, every delay increases the risk of damage to the environment.

It is well established that the leading cause of pipeline spills from 2010 to 2018 was corrosion—and given that the current Line 3 is corroded, it needs to be replaced. Corrosion is also the reason Line 3 is operating at just half of its potential capacity. If the Walz administration truly values the environment and isn't simply using the pipeline as a political football, it should have never delayed the project in the first place, and certainly should not have effectively pushed the project back another year.

And if Governor Walz is relying on his push for electric vehicles to replace a reliance on oil, he will be sorely disappointed. Oil is the single-largest source of energy used in Minnesota, according to the U.S. Energy Information Administration. Thirty-three percent of all the energy used in the state came from oil in 2018, and the slow rate of electric ve-



**Unfortunately,
every delay increases
the risk of damage to
the environment.**

hicle adoption means we will rely on oil long after Walz is no longer governor.

A far more likely explanation for why Governor Walz delayed the pipeline project is that he hopes continued delays might tempt Enbridge, the company seeking to replace the pipeline, to give up and walk away. A delayed project

forces the company to spend millions more in court fees and other costs associated with red tape while losing the revenues it would reap by replacing the pipeline and transporting more oil. President Obama used a similar tactic when he unnecessarily delayed the Dakota Access Pipeline, a wrong President Trump has righted.

In the end, replacing the Line 3 pipeline represents a classic win-win situation.

The environment benefits because a newer, safer pipeline will replace an old, corroded pipeline—vastly reducing the potential for an oil spill.

The economy will also benefit because this \$2.6 billion construction project would create 6,500 local jobs in Minnesota. Considering that Governor Walz's COVID-19 shutdown has caused Minnesota to post the highest unemployment claims of any neighboring state (Iowa, North Dakota, South Dakota, or Wisconsin), one would think his administration would embrace such good economic news. Apparently not.

While Walz loves to imagine that his decisions are based on scientific evidence, his actions show otherwise. In reality, Walz's mantra of "following the science" is just a thinly veiled smoke-screen for doing whatever he wants to serve his own purposes. Line 3 is a perfect example. ★

—Isaac Orr

Politics and Science

Which ‘science’ should policymakers believe?

During the COVID-19 crisis, claims such as “listen to the science” or “this is about science, not politics” have two big problems.

Different scientists are saying different things

“Listen to the science” suggests that there is some “thing” that “science” tells us. But that is not the case with COVID-19. The coronavirus is a brand-new disease, and scientists are learning more about it all the time. What “science” tells you one day might not be what it tells you the next.

So, not only is “the science” changing from day to day, but different scientists are saying different things. As the *Star Tribune* once reported:

No one knows for sure how bad COVID-19 will get.

Data modeling by Minnesota experts predicted as many as 50,000 deaths in the state, while a University of Washington model estimated fewer than 2,000. ...

Modeling by the Minnesota Department of Health and the University of Minnesota persuaded Governor Tim Walz to announce his stay-at-home order. The modeling is conservative, perhaps pessimistic, about the course of the outbreak, said Stefan Gildemeister, state

health economist, but the Washington model may be optimistic and overlooking risk factors in the United States that could make the outbreak worse.

“Saying that the Washington approach is optimistic is not saying that we think we’re right,” he said. “Some of our assumptions might have turned out to be unusually conservative. In fact, we’ve been saying this from the beginning. We will continue to test our assumptions and change them.”

Which “science” are we supposed to listen to?

Science gives us options and consequences—politics chooses

Even if “science” spoke with one voice on COVID-19, it wouldn’t follow that politicians should blindly do as scientists tell them.

In the first instance, if that were so, we could save ourselves the expense and rigmarole of politicians and elections and simply be ruled by experts—a technocracy, in other words, instead of a democracy.

But that wouldn’t do because, in the second instance, science does not tell us what we should do. Based on its accrued knowledge, science offers us options, telling us the consequences of those options, often with a large degree of uncertainty.

Look, for example, at the SARS-CoV-2 (COVID-19) Model produced by the University of Minnesota School of Public Health and Department of Health, which originally drove state policy. Based on what “science” knows about things like the basic reproduction number (R_0 —how many people each infected person infects), this Minnesota Model predicted that peak ICU bed us-



What “science” tells you one day might not be what it tells you the next.

age would have come on June 8th with 3,700 beds and 22,000 deaths if Walz issued a “Long term SHO (stay-at-home order) for the most vulnerable” on April 9. If, instead, he “Extend[ed the] SHO for all (by 4 weeks),” peak ICU bed usage would come much later, on July 13th, with 3,700 beds and mortality of 22,000.

Now, “science” can provide these options, but which of them we choose is a political question, not a scientific one. Do we choose the earlier economic opening and ICU peak of Scenario 3 or the delayed opening and peak of Scenario 4? That depends on the weight we give to things like the health of the economy and the ability to ramp up ICU capacity. Such questions, ones of priorities, are debatable political ones.

You can't turn normative questions into positive ones

In economics, it is often said that there are positive and normative questions. Positive questions are framed as “What is,” so “What will be the impact on employment of hiking the minimum wage to \$15 an hour?” Normative questions are framed as “What should be,” such as “Should we raise the minimum wage to \$15 an hour?”

You can't turn a normative question into a positive one. The question “What will be the consequences of choosing Scenario 3?” is a positive one for “science” to answer. But the question “Should we choose Scenario 3 or Scenario 4?” is a normative one for elected politicians to mull. The attempt to pass off normative questions as positive ones is rather sinister. To me, it seems like an attempt to take a major policy decision and pretend that it isn't up for democratic debate, that “the science” has spoken and so we should all shut up and do as we're told or risk being accused of “denying science.” It is an attempt based on error and with very dodgy ramifications. It ought to be resisted. ★

—John Phelan



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Policing

Serve and Protect

Several factors affect the levels of police brutality.

The aftermath of George Floyd's tragic death while in police custody is filled with stories and videos of other people dying at the hands of the police.

Some of these deaths may be justified. But compared with the low fatalities in other countries, the high numbers point to

(See the recent *Thinking Minnesota Poll* on page 30 of this magazine.) Observers increasingly agree that the system encourages the use of force or does not discourage officers from using excessive violence. They point to contributing factors such as the following.



In Germany, police officers receive three years of training for which they earn a bachelor's degree.

a big problem in the system.

Between 2000 and May 2020, Minnesotans experienced 195 police encounters that turned fatal. In the United States, the total number of people killed by the police between 2015 and 2020 is about 5,400. This year alone (January to June), 473 people have been killed by the police.

For other countries, these numbers are much lower, even after accounting for differences in population. In 2015, the German police fired just four fatal shots, while in the U.S. that number was more than 900. As of 2019, the rate of civilians killed by police in the U.S. was 33.5 per 10 million. Canada, Germany, and England and Wales had rates of 9.8, 1.3 and 0.5 per 10 million, respectively.

Generally, a majority of people agree that the police system needs to change.

Training

Inadequate training and an emphasis on “warrior-style training” likely contribute to police brutality. In Germany, police officers receive three years of training for which they earn a bachelor's degree. In contrast, U.S. training lasts on average 19 weeks, and in some cases emphasizes defense mechanisms—warrior-style training—that underscores that every interaction is seen as a threat to an officer's safety.

Militarization of the police

Many people have grown accustomed to seeing police officers geared up like they're going to war. This is because Congress created a federal program that enabled the Pentagon to donate surplus gear—armored vehicles, grenade launch-

ers, M16s, helicopters, and weaponized vehicles—to help local departments fight the war on drugs. With this equipment, even small towns created SWAT teams. And they use them.

Use-of-force policies

Use-of-force policies spell out what kind of force can be used in specific circumstances. Usually, strict use-of-force policies reduce incidents of excessive force by police. Research by Campaign Zero illustrates how the largest police departments differ significantly in how they restrict officers from using force against civilians. Departments with more restrictions on police killed significantly fewer civilians. And contrary to opinion, officers in departments with more restrictive policies were actually less likely to be killed in the line of duty, less likely to be assaulted, and have a similar likelihood of sustaining an injury during an assault.

The police are tasked with doing too much

In 2019, 142 of the 752 people shot and killed by the police suffered from a mental illness.

The police generally have little training in crisis intervention, yet their responsibilities require them to deal with drug overdose patients, homeless issues and mental illness issues. It is not a surprise that some of these interactions turn violent when they do not need to be.

People's perception of the level of crime

When people believe crime is down, they are less likely to support policies that are tough on crime; when people believe crime is high or rising, they support policies that come down tough on crime. People in the United States believe crime is rising, even though the data say violent and nonviolent crimes have been decreasing since 1994. ★

—Martha Njolomole

Public Employees

Making the Punishment Stick

A legislative proposal would keep friendly arbitrators from reversing public employee reprimands.

The recent death of George Floyd has highlighted the issue of police discipline and how “bad apple” public employees must be held accountable for their bad acts. What’s less well known is that even when they are disciplined, there is a good chance their punishments will be overturned. This isn’t limited to police officers—it spans across all professions.

New legislation introduced by State Rep. Patrick Garofalo (R-Farmington) during the Legislature’s special session in June would eliminate the state law that mandates binding arbitration for terminated public employees and would replace it with a process that puts an administrative law judge in charge of adjudicating appeals.

“This reform would be a step in the right direction as policymakers determine ways to increase transparency and accountability for public employees who serve our communities,” Rep. Garofalo said in a press release. “The current arbitration process... is why some bad apples have not been fired.”

The majority of public employees and professionals who serve our communities do so with honor and dignity. But there are those who are problem-prone who unfortunately discredit their professions. Terminating these employees is difficult under the current arbitration process embedded in state law, and too often a public employee fired for serious misconduct is

later reinstated. When a bad cop, teacher, or state worker gets his or her job back, we all lose.

The Wall Street Journal recently reviewed data from the past 15 years that showed half of Minnesota law enforcement officers who were fired for misconduct but appealed their terminations were reinstated. Seven out of nine officers terminated for violating use-of-force policies were reinstated, including two from the Minneapolis police department. And half of Minneapolis police officers who faced criminal charges are still working for the department today.

Former Minneapolis Police Chief Janee Harteau recently told *Kare 11* news that she has seen this problem firsthand numerous times throughout her career.

“When I terminated Blayne Lehner [for using excessive force pushing a woman to the ground in 2016] he was reinstated with 40 hours of time off without pay and he came back to the department,” Harteau said.

An arbitrator disagreed with the city of Minneapolis firing him and ordered the city to rehire him. But he never went back to work, remaining on paid administrative leave until he got fired again in 2019 for a separate use-of-force case that happened six years earlier.

Garofalo says arbitrators often feel pressure to please both sides involved in the process and maintain an unbiased track record, which can allow bias to influence decisions over facts. A judge, on the other hand, would be free to make an independent ruling.

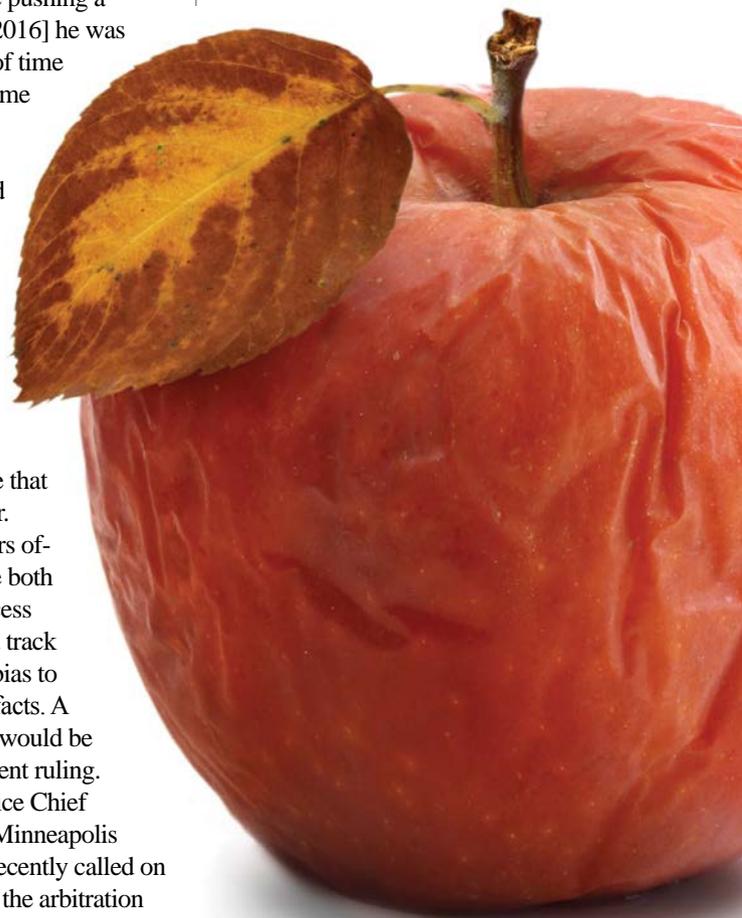
Both Minneapolis Police Chief Medaria Arradondo and Minneapolis Mayor Jacob Frey have recently called on the Legislature to change the arbitration

process for police officers, according to the *Journal*. “If the legislature is serious about deep, structural police reforms, this is the most impactful change they could make,” Frey said in a recent statement.

Will Mayor Frey’s DFL-allies heed his advice? ★

—Catrin Wigfall

What’s less well known is that even when “bad apple” public employees are disciplined, there is a good chance their punishments will be overturned.





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UPFRONT

Education

COVID Legacy

Emergency Education Savings Accounts would help families and school districts.

In order to address the unexpected expenses related to the COVID-19 shutdown, policymakers should provide families with K-12 emergency education savings accounts (ESAs). These would not only assist families and students with at-home learning during extended school closures but also help parents address any unsatisfactory instruction and access alternative educational options for their child.

As Minnesota's once-forecasted budget surplus has turned into a multi-billion-dollar deficit, schools will face budget challenges in a post-COVID economy, especially given many were already in the red before the pandemic hit. And private schools face an even higher risk of closing altogether.

ESAs would help school districts save thousands of dollars without asking for spending increases that the state can't afford. For one, ESAs are usually funded significantly below per-pupil spending at district schools because the funds are typically a percentage of what the state would have spent to educate the student in a public school.

Eligible families receive these funds—often in the form of a debit card—to help

pay for education-related products and services. The government already sets aside tax dollars for every child's education, but in an ESA, the money is able to follow the child. Given the numerous COVID-19 related concerns facing education, ESAs could be a solution to address a variety of these concerns, ensure students can continue learning safely, and help with learning losses that could carry over into the next school year.

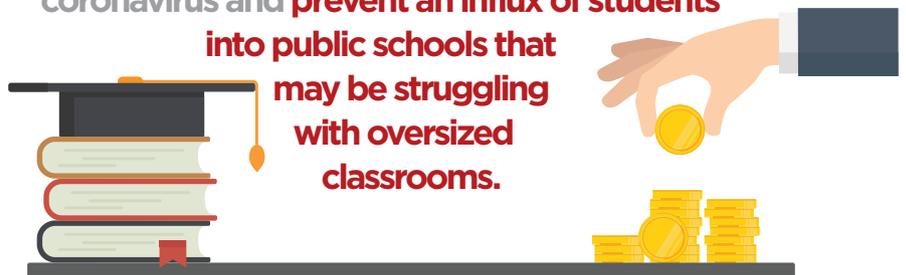
ESAs could also help private schools survive the coronavirus and prevent an influx of students into public schools that may already be struggling with oversized classrooms. Giving parents the opportunity to choose their preferred education setting for their child would help enable smaller classes and reduce transmission of the virus. If 20 percent of private school students have to be reabsorbed into the public system, that will cost the public system roughly \$15 billion nationwide, according to The Foundation for Excellence.

Minnesota could fund ESAs by using some of the education allocations from the CARES Act, of which the state qualifies for around \$91 million.

The coronavirus pandemic has confirmed there are glaringly obvious gaps and inequities in different forms in our education system. In response, policymakers have the opportunity to address these disparities and shake up the status quo instead of simply rushing to restore it. ★

—Catrin Wigfall

ESAs could help private schools survive the coronavirus and **prevent an influx of students into public schools that may be struggling with oversized classrooms.**



Programming

Chattering Classes

American Experiment finds substantial audience for original online policy discussions.

As COVID-19 shut down American Experiment’s typical menu of live events this spring, the Center launched a series of “Master Class” online events featuring presentations from its policy experts and other special guests. So far, 4,489 people either watched the live events or

watched recorded versions of the events available on AmericanExperiment.org.

The Master Class concept was originally intended as a five-week series of lunch-hour Zoom webinars, moderated by John Hinderaker, president of American Experiment. ★

Past Seminars:

April 1: John Phelan on *What can state governments do to influence the economy?*

April 8: Catrin Wigfall on *How good are Minnesota’s public schools, really?*

April 15: Isaac Orr on *Everything wrong with the Green New Deal.*

April 23: Martha Njolomole on *How regulation affects your everyday life.*

April 29: Jeff Johnson on *Why is housing so expensive in the Twin Cities?*



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Shades of Green

Minnesota is slow to quit coal, despite surging prices for electricity.

Data from the U.S. Energy Information Administration (EIA) goes a long way to debunk the myth that Minnesota is a “green” state. The EIA shows that from 2001 to 2018, the state has reduced its coal consumption slower than the nation as a whole and by a smaller margin, but its electricity prices have increased far faster than the national average.

In essence, Minnesota’s energy policy has been a massively-expensive failure, and proposals to shut down the remainder of the state’s coal plants and replace them with wind, solar, and natural gas will cause electricity prices to skyrocket even more.

The nearby graph from the EIA shows that Minnesota has reduced its coal consumption by 25 percent since 2001—nine percent slower than the nation as a whole.

Minnesota’s electricity prices have **increased much faster than the national average.**

Despite this, Minnesota’s electricity prices have increased much faster than the national average. EIA data show massive increases in electricity prices in Minnesota since 2007, when then-Governor Tim Pawlenty signed the Next Generation Energy Act (NGEA) into law, which mandated that renewable energy sources generate 25 percent of Minnesota’s electricity by 2025.

Before the NGEA, Minnesota lawmakers required Xcel Energy to build wind turbines as part of a 2005 deal to continue operating the electric services company’s fleet of nuclear power plants. Since that time, our electricity prices have increased almost twice as much as the national average.

This means Minnesota families and businesses have seen their electricity prices increase much faster than the national average for results that have been significantly worse, to date.

Other states have reduced their coal consumption by developing low-cost natural gas. For example, thanks to hydraulic fracturing, Pennsylvania became the second-largest natural gas producing state in the country. Its coal consumption reduced by 50 percent—double the rate of the coal reduction we’ve seen in Minnesota.

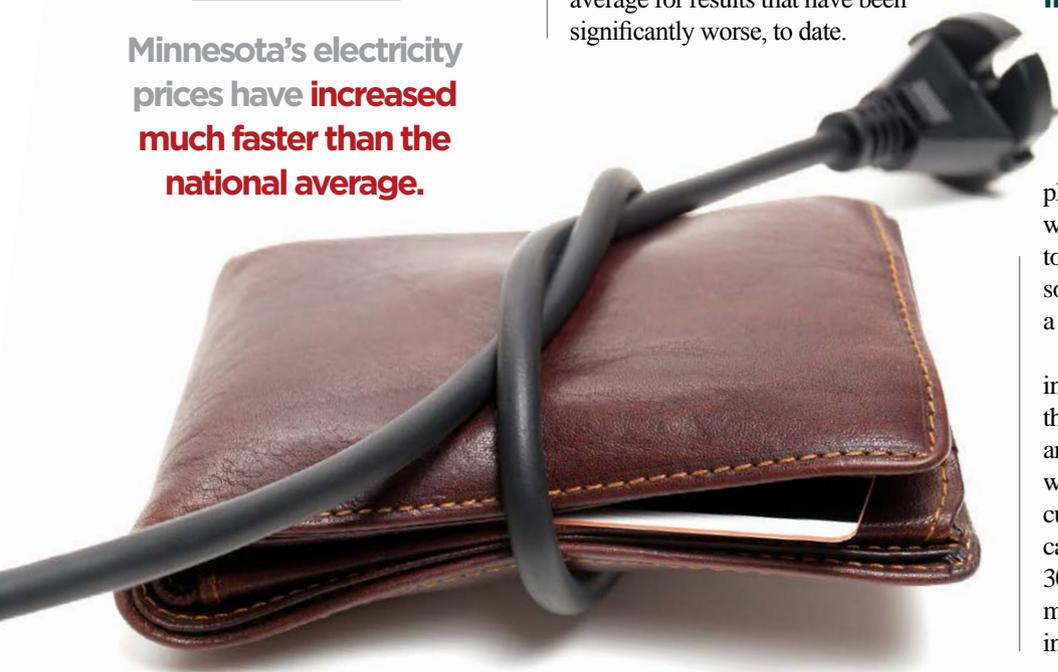
Not only has Pennsylvania doubled Minnesota’s reduction in coal consumption, the Keystone State has done so at a fraction of the cost. Since 2005, Pennsylvania has seen its electricity prices increase by only 18.5 percent, which is 41.4 percent less than the price hikes we’ve seen in Minnesota.

Minnesotans have watched their electricity prices surge because politicians and utility companies want to replace reliable, affordable coal-fired power plants with weather-dependent resources like wind and solar, which will require billions of dollars of expensive transmission lines to accommodate, as well as large quantities of natural gas fired electricity.

What’s to come in the future?

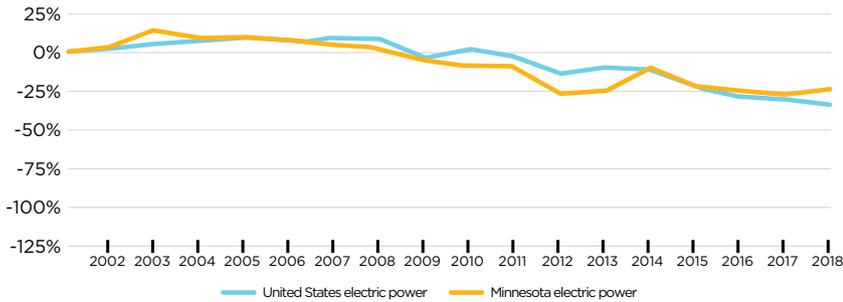
Renewable energy advocates will argue that Minnesota’s future coal reductions will be above average when Xcel Energy enacts its plan to prematurely retire its coal-fired power plants over the next decade. This claim will likely be true if Xcel is allowed to shut down these affordable, reliable sources of electricity, but it will come at a great cost.

American Experiment’s Mitch Rolling recently wrote an article explaining that Xcel’s plan to shutter its coal plants and replace them with a combination of wind, solar, and natural gas will cost its customers \$46 billion through 2050 and cause electricity prices to rise by about 30 percent relative to today’s prices. This means the average Xcel Energy customer in Minnesota will pay nearly \$1,200 in



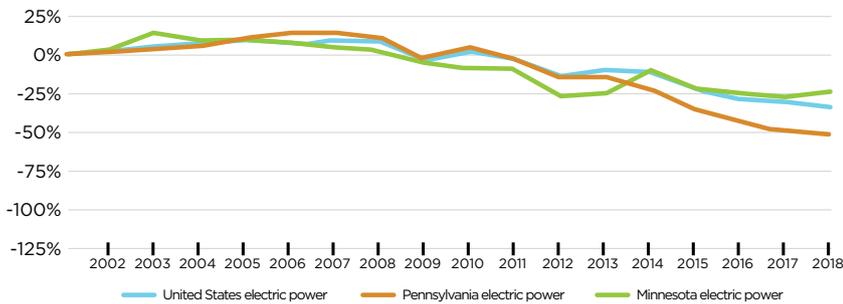
Coal Consumption, Annual

Indexed to 2001 as percent



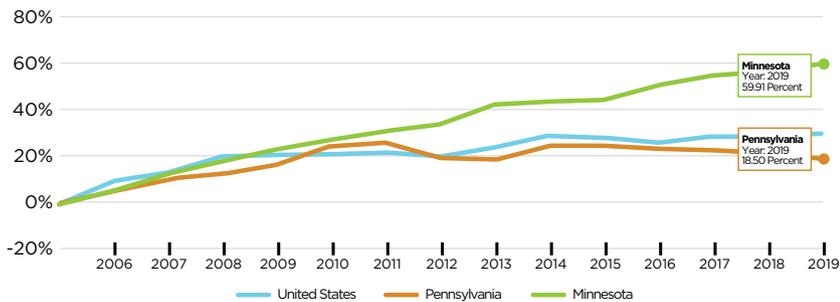
Coal Consumption, Annual

Indexed to 2001 as percent



Average Retail Price of Electricity, All Sectors, Annual

Indexed to 2005 as percent



additional costs per year, every year through 2050. And the enormous costs associated with Xcel's plan would avert just 0.0003 degrees Celsius of future global warming by 2100—an amount far too small to measure.

Minnesota's rush to renewables has resulted in skyrocketing electricity prices for lackluster results. Repeating this mistake will continue to harm Minnesota families and businesses by making it more expensive to keep the

lights on.

Instead of closing down our coal-fired power plants before the end of their useful lifetimes, Minnesota utilities should continue to use these affordable, reliable plants until it no longer makes economic sense to keep repairing them. Then, transitioning to reliable, low carbon sources of electricity such as nuclear and hydro power will yield the greatest reduction in carbon dioxide for the lowest cost. ★

—Isaac Orr

SPECIAL REPORT

A FAILURE TO LEAD

SURPRISE

How Minneapolis
voluntarily
relinquished its
streets to a mob of
**vandals,
thieves
and
arsonists.**

END ERIE



By **John Phelan
& Tom Steward**

The video of George Floyd's death in Minneapolis on Memorial Day is sickening. There is no way that arresting a man for an alleged minor infraction should involve a police officer putting his knee on that man's neck for nearly eight minutes while he cries out, "I can't breathe" and then goes silent. The police are there to maintain law and order and protect the public. Those laws apply to the police, and George Floyd was a member of that public.

George Floyd's death was bound to provoke a strong reaction, especially as relations between police and African Americans have been particularly fraught in recent years.

The peaceful protests that followed saw people exercising their rights under the First Amendment to the Constitution of the United States. Authorities should protect that constitutional right as doggedly as any other. It is an

indispensable part of a free country.

But these protests were shoved off the front pages by four nights of violence in the Twin Cities that spread across the country and even across the planet. Time and again, city and state government failed in their central task of protecting life and property. They failed people across the cities, disproportionately those in lower-income neighborhoods with large immigrant communities, who saw their homes and livelihoods destroyed by mobs. And they failed George Floyd by allowing the peaceful protests in his name to be hijacked and overwhelmed by looting and rioting.

Why did the authorities—particularly Jacob Frey, the 38-year-old rookie Minneapolis Mayor, and Minnesota Governor Tim Walz—fail so spectacularly? Is it because they *couldn't* do anything to prevent the cities sliding into chaos, a

The government had collapsed in Minneapolis once again, this time under the leadership of Governor Tim Walz.

worrying enough possibility in itself? Or is it because, out of sympathy with even the more extreme elements responsible for this mayhem, they *wouldn't* act as needed?

An examination of the events of those four days in May reveals the total failure of city and state officials.

TUESDAY, MAY 26

Shortly after Floyd's death at 9:25 p.m. on Monday, May 25, a video of his arrest began circulating on social media and quickly went viral.

Frey called a 6:45 a.m. news conference with Minneapolis Police Chief Medaria Arradondo. "What we saw was horrible," said Frey, who appeared on the verge of losing control of his emotions. "Completely and utterly messed up." He

added, "Being black in America should not be a death sentence." Walz followed suit, issuing a statement at 9:46 a.m. "The lack of humanity in this disturbing video is sickening," he said. "We will get answers and seek justice."

The FBI had joined the Minneapolis Police Department investigation at 3:11 that morning, and at 11 a.m., the Hennepin County Attorney's Office launched an investigation into possible criminal charges.

During the afternoon, hundreds of protesters blocked traffic at the intersection of 38th and Chicago Avenue South, near the Cup Foods store that called in the original police complaint against George Floyd. By that evening, the crowd of protesters, now numbered in the thousands, marched to the Minneapolis Police Department's Third Precinct station at Minnehaha Avenue South and Lake Street East. It began peacefully, but as the evening wore on, some protesters tore down fences, smashed windows, attacked squad cars, and threw water bottles at officers. After police responded with rubber bullets and tear gas and rain began to fall, demonstrators eventually fell back.

WEDNESDAY, MAY 27

Tensions remained high after the confrontation at the Third Precinct. During a Wednesday morning news conference, longtime Minneapolis civil rights activist Spike Moss pleaded for protesters to keep their cool. "You have to be patient and strong and be determined with the rest of us," he said. "You don't have to waste your life in the street, go to jail, get shot down. Understand people here care enough about you to fight for you is the reason this press conference is so important."

But, instead of echoing calls for calm, Frey used his own morning press conference to pour fuel on the smoldering embers. Disregarding the fact that Minneapolis police officer Mohamed Noor was not arrested and charged for eight months following the 2017 shooting death of Justine Ruszczyk Damond, Frey demanded Officer Derek Chauvin's immediate arrest. "We watched for five whole, excruciating

Why did the authorities—particularly Jacob Frey, the 38-year-old rookie Minneapolis Mayor, and Minnesota Governor Tim Walz—fail so spectacularly? Is it because they couldn't do anything to prevent the cities sliding into chaos, a worrying enough possibility in itself? Or is it because, out of sympathy with even the more extreme elements responsible for this mayhem, they wouldn't act as needed?

minutes as a white officer firmly pressed his knee into the neck of an unarmed, handcuffed black man," he said, emotional once again. "If you had done it, or I had done it, we would be behind bars right now." Frey, a former lawyer, declined to say what specific charge he wanted to see brought against Chauvin.

Frey's outburst prompted Hennepin County investigators to issue a sharp rebuke against the Mayor, warning him against violating Chauvin's right to due process. "In order to bring charges and obtain a guilty verdict, there are very specific parts of the law which must be met in prosecuting any crime of violence," the Hennepin County Attorney's office statement read. "The Minnesota Bureau of Criminal Apprehension is working as quickly as possible to gather the necessary evidence, and we will expeditiously review the case when we receive the case file and make our decision."

Hamline University political science professor and author David Schultz argues Frey missed a critical opportunity on Wednesday morning to get out in front of the agitators bent on exploiting protesters



At a late-night press conference, a reporter asked Frey, "What's the plan here?" Frey struggled to answer.

for their own aims.

"There is no question that there is a legitimate space and place for appropriate First Amendment expression and mourning. No one doubts or debates that," Schultz said in an email. "The problem we saw was that when it became clear after the first night [that] protests might turn bad or that there might be some provocateurs involved who wanted to exploit the situation, more decisive action needed to be taken. I am not arguing for a military presence or crackdown, but an earlier call for a curfew or more decisive action to condemn looting and violence was needed."

Up to now, Walz had been keen to use the coercive power of the state government to enforce his anti-COVID-19 measures. But as of his Wednesday press conference, Walz's ban on large gatherings effectively disappeared. Instead, he warned protesters to be careful. "I was saddened to see that some of the protesters were in harm's way last night," he told reporters. "And I just want to encourage everyone to be safe, especially in light of the COVID-19 pandemic, and thank the

protesters for their commitment to safely protest during this pandemic."

The protest continued through the day, again starting at 38th and Chicago Avenue South and moving on to the Third Precinct. There, the crowd became more violent. Bottles and rocks rained down on the Third Precinct building. Around 6:00 p.m., officers used rubber bullets, tear gas, and flash-bang rounds to disperse the rioters, but the violence simply escalated. Somebody set fire to the AutoZone on East Lake Street, and a crowd of at least 100 people started looting a nearby Target store. Video circulated of looters punching a woman in a wheelchair. A pawnshop owner shot and killed a man who he allegedly thought was burglarizing his business. The violence continued throughout the night. Rioters ignited fires and looted stores all the way to Uptown. Arsonists set at least 30 fires along the way, including a towering blaze that gutted a six-story affordable housing apartment building still under construction. A thick curtain of smoke lingered over Lake Street as dawn broke on Thursday morning.

THURSDAY, MAY 28

On Thursday, Frey declared a state of emergency in Minneapolis, and the Minnesota National Guard deployed 500 troops to the Twin Cities area.

But even this sparked no immediate urgency in the authorities' attempts to gain control of the situation. Instead, Frey and Arradondo decided early that afternoon to "significantly reduce our footprint in the Third Precinct," Frey said later. "We also decided early that the option to vacate the Third Precinct needed to be on the table as a way to both help de-escalate and prevent hand-to-hand combat."

Walz later confirmed that he had received real-time briefings on Thursday that Frey was openly considering abandoning the Third Precinct station. It marked another missed opportunity to step in to prevent the complete breakdown of law and order that soon left the Governor no choice but to take command and control belatedly.

"I will assume responsibility," Walz admitted the next day. "I, if the issue was the state should've moved faster, yeah,

that is on me.”

As the day progressed, looting and rioting spread along University Avenue into St. Paul. The St. Paul Police Department said that thieves and arsonists looted and damaged more than 170 businesses. Fires continued to burn early on Friday morning, with the largest one at Big Top Liquor near Snelling and University avenues. As with Lake Street the previous night, lower-income, minority neighborhoods bore the brunt of the rioters’ assault.

Just like his Minneapolis counterpart, St. Paul Mayor Melvin Carter failed to anticipate and contain the intensifying violence.

Former U.S. Senator and St. Paul Mayor Norm Coleman took to Facebook to decry the ineptitude of the two mayors. “As rioters—criminals disguised as protesters—drove through the streets of their city terrorizing law-abiding citizens—Frey and Carter were silent,” he said.

Frey and Walz looked and sounded like broken men, baffled that their repeated statements in support of the protests had brought them no goodwill on the streets.

Rioters repeated the previous day’s pattern in south Minneapolis. They massed at the Third Precinct building, and that evening torched nearby buildings on two sides. When they tore down fencing surrounding the facility, police responded with tear gas. “[A]t roughly 9:25 p.m.,” Frey explained later, “when it became clear we needed to divert resources from the Third Precinct to help provide a response to activity downtown, I made the decision [to abandon the Third Precinct]. I notified the Chief, then the Governor shortly after.”

As Thursday turned into Friday, worried Minnesotans were glued to

continuous live local television coverage of the mayhem. They watched as a mob of thieves and arsonists now apparently governed the streets of Minneapolis. They were hard-pressed to find any police or the fire department anywhere on the scene, undoubtedly forced to abide by the Mayor’s dictate that they run away. The coverage was interrupted by an early-morning news conference convened by the haggard-looking Minneapolis mayor.

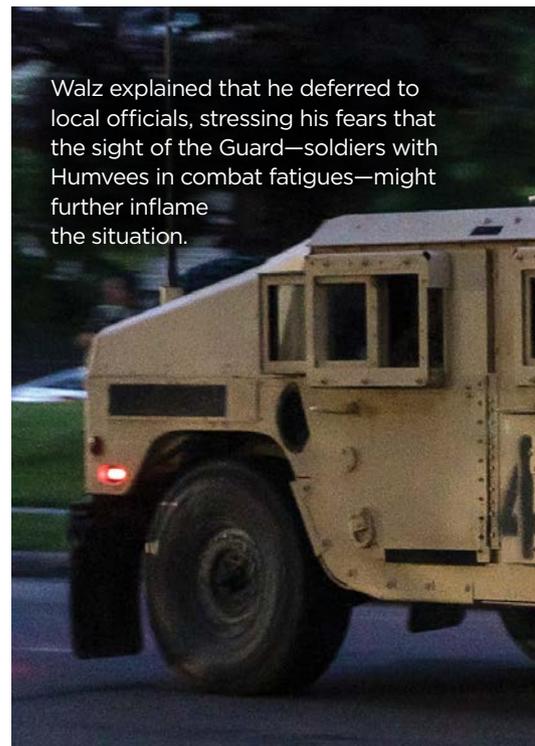
One reporter asked Frey, “What’s the plan here?” Frey struggled to answer.

At around midnight, Frey finally requested the National Guard’s help in restoring order around the Third Precinct. The state formally assumed control, and forces began to enter the city. Still, the contingent of several hundred from the State Patrol and National Guard didn’t actually begin to retake ground until around 3 a.m.

FRIDAY, MAY 29

One puzzling question raised by the unprecedented devastation is why Walz, a 23-year veteran of the Minnesota National Guard, failed to decisively deploy the national guard units, whose capabilities he was so familiar with, much sooner. Yet this isn’t the first time Walz has faced controversy over deployment issues with the Minnesota Army National Guard. When Command Sergeant Major Walz faced certain call-up for duty in Iraq with the 1-125th Field Artillery Battalion in 2005, he retired to run for Congress. Walz’s departure left his unit without its senior Non-Commissioned Officer at a critical time, according to two other officers. “For Tim Walz to abandon his fellow soldiers and quit when they needed experienced leadership most is disheartening,” retired Command Sergeant Majors Thomas Behrends and Paul Herr wrote in a *West Central Tribune* op-ed.

Friday got off to a chaotic start when troopers arrested CNN correspondent Omar Jimenez and his crew live on air. Police released Jimenez before 7 a.m., and Walz personally apologized to the network’s president. CNN reported: “The



Walz explained that he deferred to local officials, stressing his fears that the sight of the Guard—soldiers with Humvees in combat fatigues—might further inflame the situation.

governor of Minnesota just showed what leadership in a crisis looks like.” With the state now in control, Friday would show Minnesotans exactly what that leadership meant.

Walz began his Friday morning press conference by validating anger towards the police: “The very tools that we need to use to get control, to make sure that buildings aren’t burned and the rule of law collapses, are those very institutional tools that have led to that grief and pain.”

He then launched a stinging attack on Frey’s “abject failure” in handling the crisis. Major General Jon Jensen, adjutant general of the Minnesota National Guard, explained that guardsmen under his command had been mustered that evening and were awaiting orders—which should have come from Frey—but no orders came. Walz explained that he deferred to local officials, stressing his fears that the sight of the Guard—soldiers with Humvees in combat fatigues—might further inflame the situation.

“That was the turning point,” Walz said of the fall of the Third Precinct, “where we were prepared, and that’s



Looking to Friday night, Walz adopted a Churchillian pose: “There will be no lack of leadership and there will be no lack of response on the table,” he promised. The Governor’s deeds did not match his bravado.

where we moved in, and we did not believe the Third should be given up and that area was taken back.” He went on: “If this would have been executed correctly, the state would not lead on this.”

Looking to Friday night, Walz adopted a Churchillian pose: “You won’t see that tonight,” he promised. “There will be no lack of leadership and there will be no lack of response on the table.” When asked if he would consider imposing martial law, he said, “Certainly, all those tools are there.” That afternoon, Walz declared an 8:00 p.m. to 6:00 a.m. curfew for both Minneapolis and St. Paul that would be in effect on Friday, May 29 and Saturday, May 30.

The Governor’s deeds did not match his bravado. Charges of third-degree murder and second-degree manslaughter brought against Chauvin that afternoon did nothing to calm the protests and crowds assembled as they had on previous days. When the 8 p.m. curfew arrived, no one attempted to enforce it. Rioters quickly repeated the pattern of previous nights. “Heaping violent contempt on an 8 p.m. curfew declaration

and on widespread pleas for forbearance and peace, rioters rampaged across Minneapolis for a fourth night Friday and into early Saturday, creating unprecedented havoc as they set towering fires, looted and vandalized businesses and shot at police officers,” the *Star Tribune* reported.

A crowd gathered outside the Fifth Precinct, chanting and throwing fireworks at the building. Fires erupted across the city’s south side, including at a Japanese restaurant, a Wells Fargo bank, and an Office Depot. Many burned for hours, with firefighters unable to reach them because the areas weren’t secure.

“This is a very difficult night for everybody in Minnesota, everybody in Minneapolis and St. Paul,” WCCO-TV reporter Pat Kessler said on the air. “We’ve watched these protests grow, and I think one of the big questions is why isn’t the city of Minneapolis and St. Paul stepping in, why isn’t the state stepping in to stop this violence?”

As the violence spiraled, the authorities’ ability to coordinate a response collapsed. State Representative Aisha Go-

mez tweeted that she and a fellow state representative had “spent 90 minutes trying to get a gas station fire put out. A basic city service. When I have time and our community isn’t burning I will explain the dizzying game of jurisdictional hot potato we experienced.” Minneapolis City Council member Jeremiah Ellison tweeted: “I did not want to defy curfew, but I also do not understand the plan and no one can explain it to me.” And later: “Communication among officials is not fluid, to say the least. I am trying to get answers re: national guard/MPD. MFD is over north successfully putting out fires.”

The government had collapsed in Minneapolis once again, this time under the leadership of Governor Tim Walz.

Finally, just before midnight and into early Saturday, hundreds of police officers, state troopers, and National Guard troops, some in armored vehicles, fanned out into troubled areas, confronted rioters with mass force, tear gas, and orders to disperse, issued via bullhorn. Their efforts belatedly restored some order, but not before rioters exacted much more damage.

At 1:30 a.m., Walz and Frey held an emergency press conference. Gone was the confidence of the morning. Frey and Walz—who had been lauded for his leadership by CNN just that morning—looked and sounded like broken men, baffled that their repeated statements in support of the protests had brought them no goodwill on the streets. They begged rioters to stop wrecking the cities. “You need to go home,” Walz pleaded. “If you have a friend or a family member that is out there right now, call them and tell them to come home,” Frey implored. “It is not safe. It is not right,” he added, leaving immediately after finishing his remarks and before any journalists could question him.

Sounding a desperate note, Walz repeatedly said that the sheer size of the crowds and intensity of the violence had been so shocking that there was no way for authorities to anticipate or prepare for such an onslaught—this, after three nights of rioting. With the force on the streets now three times what it was during the 1960s race riots in Minneapolis, Walz wailed: “There are simply more of them than us.” In a far cry from the bullishness of a few hours previously, “What you see tonight will replicate tomorrow unless we change something in what we’re doing.” Minnesotans watch-



City and state leaders failed George Floyd by allowing the peaceful protests in his name to be hijacked and overwhelmed by looting and rioting.

ing at home understood the reality that their state government wasn’t going to protect them. Indeed, in armed groups in affected areas, many had already decided to defend themselves.

Minnesota’s media, usually a sympathetic audience for its politicians, was unimpressed. Ryan Faircloth of the *Star Tribune* tweeted: “Lots of wishful comments from Gov. Tim Walz and Min-

neapolis Mayor Jacob Frey. But no clear plan of action detailed for how they will stop riots in the coming days, other than saying they are doing everything they can.” David Montgomery of *MPR News* tweeted, “The thought that I can’t get past: this is the *fourth* night of protests in Minneapolis. Despite having a huge coordination edge over the decentralized crowds, and despite being able to learn from past nights, government forces have been repeatedly unable to get an edge.”

MINNESOTA—FAILED STATE

Couldn’t or wouldn’t—this is the crucial question. Were city and state authorities *unable* to protect Minnesotans from the destruction wrought by rioters? Is our government truly that powerless? Or, instead, were they *unwilling* to apply the force necessary to protect the lives and property of the citizenry?

Early Saturday morning, the Guard announced it had just enacted the most massive domestic deployment in its 164-year history: More than 1,000 additional citizen-soldiers and airmen would now join the 700 that had been on duty the day before. That number was soon increased to a mobilization of 2,500 personnel by midday on Saturday. “The



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Tom Steward is Center of the American Experiment’s Government Accountability Reporter, where he focuses on government waste, spending, transparency and policy issues. He is a veteran broadcast journalist, documentary filmmaker and communications strategist. His television and radio special reports and documentaries were broadcast on local, national and international media outlets.

governor just announced the full mobilization of the Minnesota National Guard for the first time since World War II,” Jensen said. “What does that mean? It means we’re all in.”

It had taken four nights of unprecedented rioting to force this decision on the Governor. His action came too late to save the destroyed homes and livelihoods for many in south Minneapolis or St. Paul. Protests continued, but the night of Saturday/Sunday passed in relative calm, demonstrating what Walz could have accomplished had he acted earlier.

“Once the violence began, any effort to ‘understand’ it should have stopped, since that understanding is inevitably ex-culpatory,” wrote Heather Mac Donald, a Manhattan Institute expert on policing who’s familiar with the Minneapolis Police Department. “The looters are not grieving over the stomach-churning arrest and death of George Floyd; they are having the time of their lives. You

Worried Minnesotans were glued to continuous live local television coverage of the mayhem. They watched as a mob of thieves and arsonists now apparently governed the streets of Minneapolis. They were hard-pressed to find any police or the fire department anywhere on the scene, undoubtedly forced to abide by the Mayor’s dictate that they run away.



“This is a very difficult night for everybody in Minnesota, everybody in Minneapolis and St. Paul,” WCCO-TV reporter Pat Kessler said on the air. “We’ve watched these protests grow, and I think one of the big questions is why isn’t the city of Minneapolis and St. Paul stepping in, why isn’t the state stepping in to stop this violence?”

don’t protest or mourn a victim by stealing oxycontin, electronics, jewelry, and sneakers.”

Why didn’t Walz act sooner? Recall his words in the Friday morning press conference: “The very tools that we need to use to get control, to make sure that buildings aren’t burned and the rule of law collapses are those very institutional tools that have led to that grief and pain.” Recall, also, how on Thursday, he respected a sentiment of some that the sight of the Guard—soldiers with Humvees in combat fatigues—might further inflame the situation, as if it could have been further inflamed. Quite simply, Walz didn’t want to act.

Why not? Fundamentally, Walz, Frey, and much of the rest of the city and state leadership agree with the protesters’ aims. But they struggle to differentiate between the protesters exercising their First Amendment rights and the hardcore troublemakers looking for violence.

An example of this struggle manifested itself on Saturday morning as Walz, Frey and Carter all sought to pin responsibility for the mayhem on “white supremacists” and “out-of-state instigators.” At a press conference, Walz said: “I think our

best estimate of what we heard are about 20 percent are Minnesotans, and 80 percent are outside.” Frey said: “I want to be very, very clear... The people that are doing this are not Minneapolis residents. They are coming in largely from outside of this city, outside of the region.” St. Paul Mayor Melvin Carter said: “Every single person we arrested last night I’m

told was from out of state.”

Arrest records showed that this was totally false. Of the 45 people arrested for rioting, unlawful assembly, stolen property, burglary, or robbery in Minneapolis on May 29 and May 30, 84 percent (38 people) had Minnesota addresses, according to publicly available jail records. It was a similar story in St. Paul. Of the 18 people arrested between Thursday and Saturday morning, 67 percent (12 people) were from Minnesota. When Walz was confronted with these numbers on Sunday and asked about his claim that the vast majority of agitators were from out of town, he said that he *wanted* it to be true.

The brutality and senselessness of MPD Officer Derek Chauvin’s excessive use of force caught on camera guaranteed there would be a widespread, emotional reaction that would drive thousands to the streets to exercise their legitimate First Amendment right of free expression. Not that the protests that broke out the day after George Floyd’s death were inevitably going to turn violent.

Yet once violence did erupt, the devastating riots, looting and arson that gutted vast swaths of Minneapolis and destroyed sections of St. Paul were all but inevitable. Not because the level of danger exceeded authorities’ capacity to maintain law and order, but rather due to the indecisiveness, ineptitude, inexperience and ideology of the three highest-profile elected officials in Minnesota state and local government—Governor Tim Walz, Minneapolis Mayor Jacob Frey and St. Paul Mayor Melvin Carter. ★

SPECIAL REPORT

A FAILURE TO LEAD

'ABJECT FAILURE'

— GOVERNOR TIM WALZ

The morning after Minneapolis Mayor Jacob Frey forced his officers to turn and run as rioters torched the Third Precinct police headquarters, Governor Tim Walz described the situation as an “abject failure” —even though he stood by and allowed it to occur. We thought we should use images to memorialize the steep price of disastrous leadership.

Photos
by Paula
Primeau



win

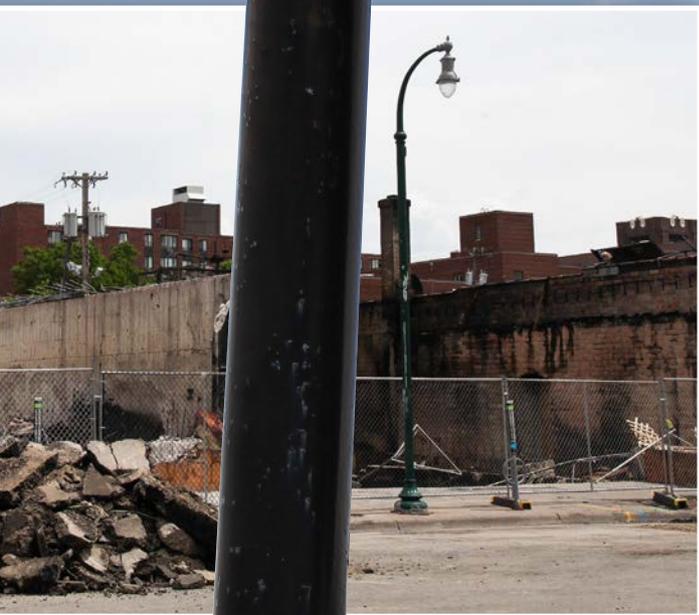
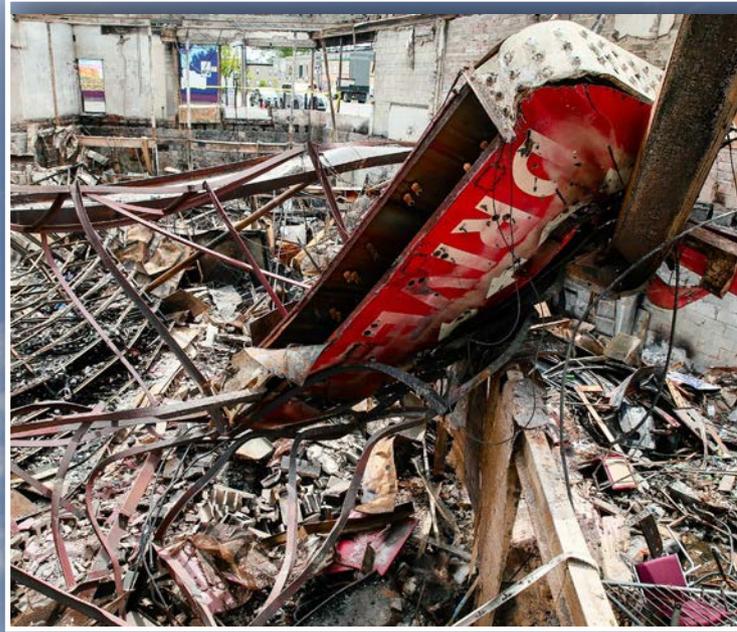
CAUTION CAUTION

SPECIAL REPORT
A FAILURE TO LEAD



When it was over, rioters had vandalized and/or looted around 1,500 buildings along a five-mile stretch of Lake Street in South Minneapolis and 3.5 miles along University Avenue in St. Paul's Midway neighborhood. Some public estimates predict the cost of repairing the damage might exceed \$500 million, making the Twin Cities riots the second costliest in American history, behind only the 1992 "Rodney King" riots in Los Angeles.





SPECIAL REPORT
A FAILURE TO LEAD



CALM

AFTER THE STORM

In the midst of the overheated political responses to the Twin Cities riots, Minnesotans steadily support their cops but overwhelmingly expect reform.

After absorbing the shocking death of George Floyd in police custody, five days of riots, and then the response of the Minneapolis City Council to defund the police, Minnesotans in the new *Thinking Minnesota Poll* have stepped back and asserted a calm perspective over the whole situation.

For the current *Thinking Minnesota Poll*, Meeting Street Insights interviewed 500 registered Minnesota voters between June 15-17, via cell phones (40 percent) and landlines (60 percent).

Minnesotans said they support law enforcement but thought

the protests after George Floyd's death were largely justified, and—in an exhibition of remarkable nonpartisanship—they expect policymakers to reform policing. Dismantling the police department, however, is not a viable alternative, they say. And, in a pointed message to the Minneapolis City Council, respondents say they will reduce their visits to Minneapolis restaurants and sports-and-entertainment venues if the police are defunded.

The survey tested Minnesotans' attitudes toward local law enforcement. The results were overwhelming: 85 percent say



Eighty-five percent of Minnesotans say **the presence of police makes them feel safe.**

they have confidence in the police in their community to act in the best interest of the public. Activists often say that the presence of police makes them feel unsafe, but if so, they are a very small minority. In keeping with the confidence Minnesotans express in local law enforcement, 85 percent say the presence of police makes them feel safe, with only 12 percent saying police make them anxious. (Figure 1)

The poll found little difference between Twin Cities metro residents and those who live in Greater Minnesota. Three quarters of residents in Hennepin and Ramsey Counties expressed confidence in their police departments. On this and other

About the pollster

Rob Autry, founder of Meeting Street Insights, is one of the nation's leading pollsters and research strategists.

FIGURE 1: MINNESOTANS ARE LARGELY CONFIDENT THAT THE POLICE IN THEIR COMMUNITY ARE ACTING IN THE PUBLIC'S INTEREST AND MAKE THEM FEEL MOSTLY SAFE.

"Thinking about the police in your own community, how much confidence, if any, do you have in the police in your community to act in the best interest of the public?"

"And, how would you describe your feelings about the police in your community? Would you say they make you feel mostly safe or mostly anxious?"

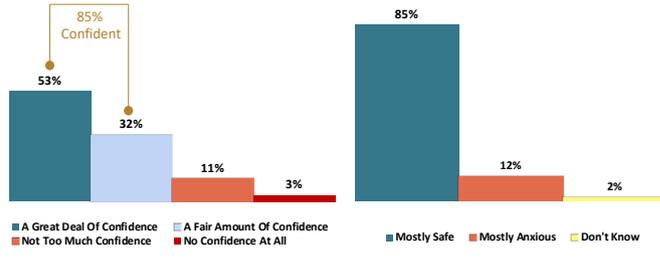


FIGURE 2: LARGE MAJORITIES IN EVERY REGION OF THE STATE HAVE CONFIDENCE IN THEIR POLICE AND SAY THE POLICE MAKE THEM FEEL MOSTLY SAFE.

Confidence In Police To Act In Public's Interest By Region

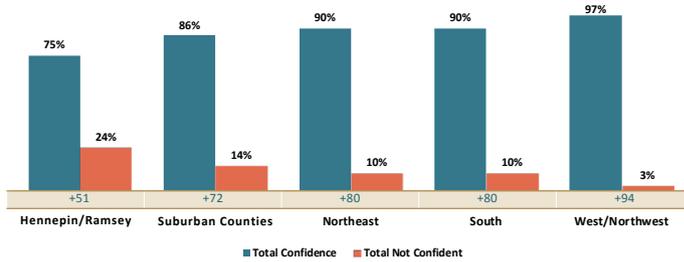


FIGURE 3: THERE IS STRONG OPPOSITION TO DEFUNDING AND DISBANDING THE POLICE.

"As you may have seen, read, or heard, a majority of members on the Minneapolis City Council have come out in support of a plan to defund and disband the Minneapolis Police Department. Is that a plan you would SUPPORT or OPPOSE?"

"And, would you SUPPORT or OPPOSE a plan to defund and disband your local community police department?"

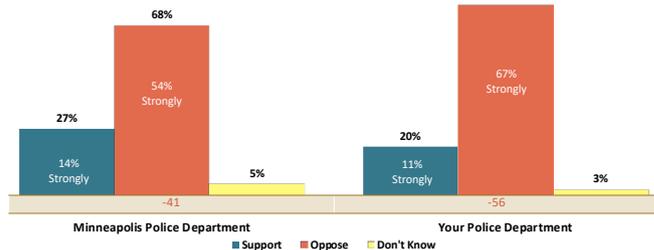


FIGURE 4: A MAJORITY OF VOTERS IN EVERY REGION OF THE STATE OPPOSE DEFUNDING AND DISBANDING THE POLICE DEPARTMENT IN MINNEAPOLIS AND IN THEIR COMMUNITY.

	Defunding & Disbanding The Minneapolis Police Department		Defunding & Disbanding Your Police Department	
	Support	Oppose	Support	Oppose
Hennepin/Ramsey	41%	53%	32%	63%
Suburban Counties	24%	72%	18%	80%
Northeast	16%	78%	6%	90%
South	24%	69%	18%	77%
West/Northwest	14%	81%	11%	87%

FIGURE 5: NEARLY THREE IN FOUR SAY THEY WOULD BE LESS LIKELY TO TRAVEL TO MINNEAPOLIS IF THE POLICE DEPARTMENT IS DISBANDED.

“And, if the City of Minneapolis did away with their police department, how would that impact your likelihood to want to travel to Minneapolis to eat out or attend an athletic event or other gathering? Would that make you more likely or less likely to travel to Minneapolis?”

(Asked only among non-Minneapolis voters.)

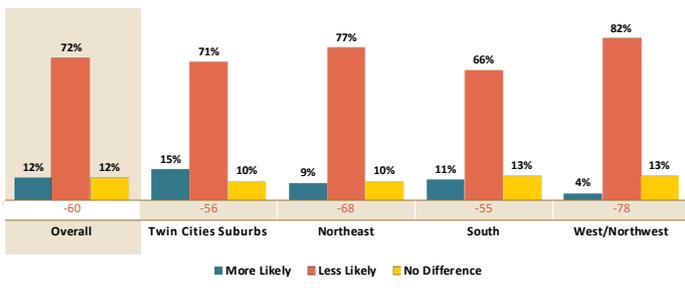
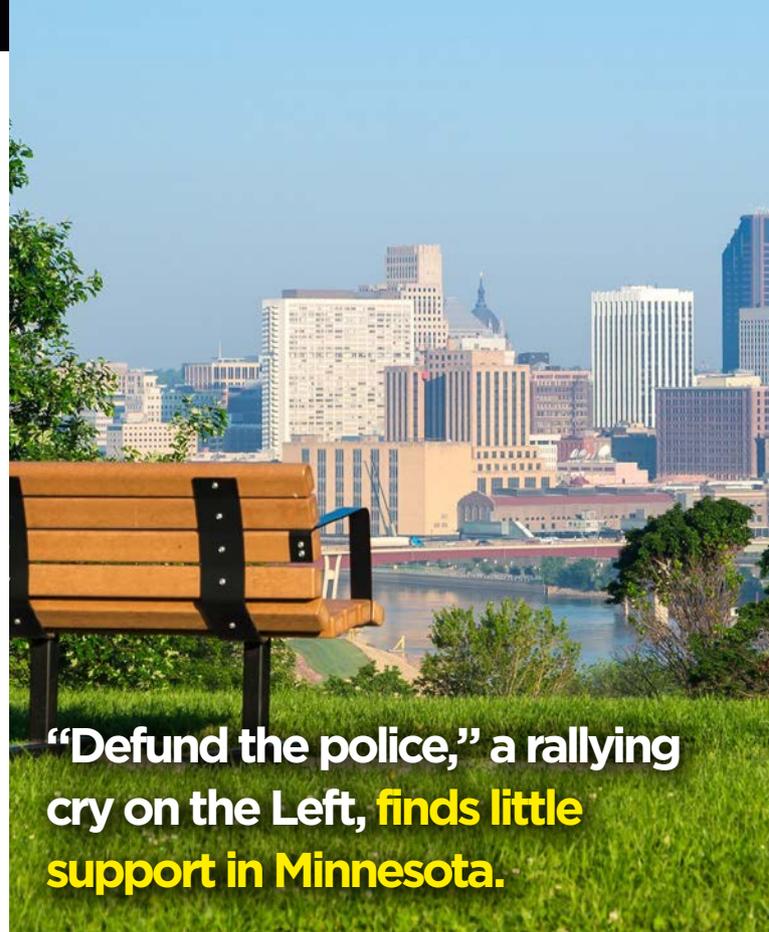
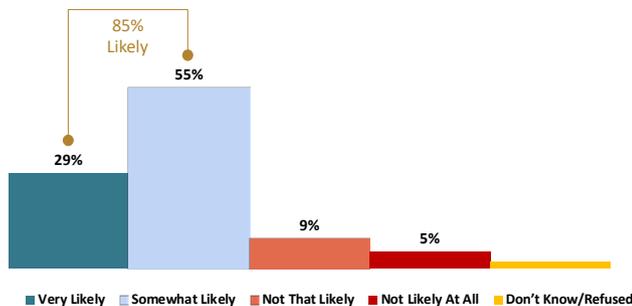


FIGURE 6: MOST EXPECT REFORMS AND POLICY CHANGES TO OCCUR AS A RESULT OF FLOYD’S DEATH.

“How likely is it that we are going to see real police reform and policy changes as a result of the death of George Floyd?”

Do you think it is very likely, somewhat likely, not that likely or not likely at all?”



“Defund the police,” a rallying cry on the Left, finds little support in Minnesota.

questions, the Twin Cities suburban counties look very much like Greater Minnesota in their support for law enforcement. (Figure 2)

“Defund the police,” a rallying cry on the Left, finds little support in Minnesota. By 68 percent to 27 percent, Minnesotans oppose the defunding or disbanding of the Minneapolis Police Department. And when asked about defunding or disbanding their own police department, the results were even more overwhelmingly negative: Minnesotans are opposed by 76 percent to 20 percent, with 67 percent strongly opposed. (Figure 3)

Here again, Minnesotans do not divide by geography. There is no county in the state where anywhere near a majority wants to defund or disband the police, and the suburban counties around the Twin Cities are nearly as firmly opposed as residents of Greater Minnesota. In fact, there is no majority in any demographic, regardless of age, gender, party, or region, that is in support of defunding their local police department. (Figure 4)

The *Thinking Minnesota Poll* should serve as a warning to Minneapolis politicians who say they want to do away with the Minneapolis Police Department. It asked respondents whether such a move would make them more likely or less likely to come to Minneapolis to visit restaurants and bars, or to attend sporting events, concerts or other gatherings. The results were stark: fully 72 percent say doing away with the Minneapolis Police Department would make them less likely to visit the city. Only 12 percent say that such a move would make them more likely to come to Minneapolis. Again, that sentiment is



FIGURE 7: MOST MINNESOTA VOTERS BELIEVE THE PROTESTS WERE JUSTIFIED, WHILE MOST DON'T BELIEVE THE BURNING AND LOOTING WERE.

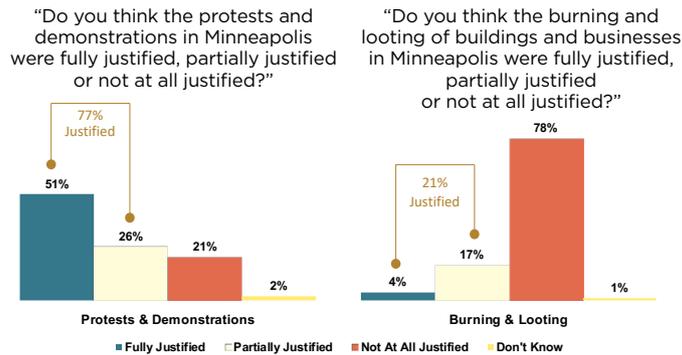


FIGURE 8: MOST MINNESOTANS, INCLUDING THOSE IN AND AROUND THE TWIN CITIES, WERE NOT CONCERNED ABOUT THEIR OWN PERSONAL SAFETY DURING THE DEMONSTRATIONS.

“How worried were you about your own personal safety during the riots, protests, and demonstrations? Were you very worried, somewhat worried, not that worried or not at all worried?”

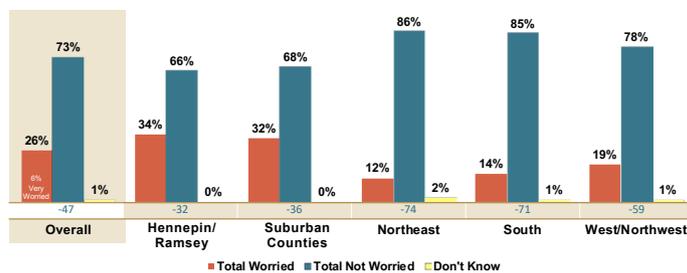
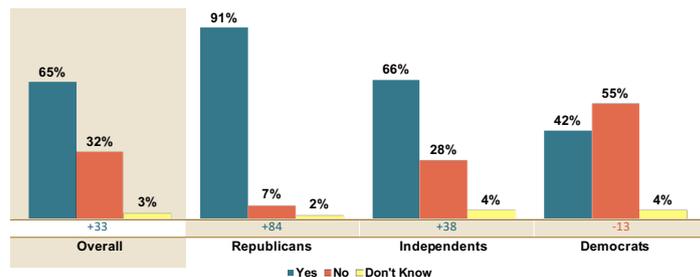


FIGURE 9: BY A TWO-TO-ONE MARGIN, VOTERS STATEWIDE THINK THE NATIONAL GUARD SHOULD HAVE BEEN DEPLOYED SOONER AND IN GREATER NUMBERS.

“After the third straight night of protests, the Governor of Minnesota deployed the National Guard to the streets of Minneapolis. Do you think the National Guard should have been deployed sooner and in greater numbers?”



virtually uniform across the state. (Figure 5)

Some politicians on the left say that they want to disband the Minneapolis Police Department, and in some cases other departments as well, on the ground that racism is “systemic” and therefore reform is impossible. This defeatism flies in the face of the civic-minded optimism that generally has characterized Minnesota’s history. Not surprisingly, it is overwhelmingly rejected by the respondents in our survey.

In fact, Minnesotans are highly optimistic about the direction in which policing will move in the future. A remarkable 85 percent say it is likely that “real police reform and policy changes” will occur as the result of the death of George Floyd while in police custody. It is noteworthy that there is no significant difference based on party affiliation: 87 percent of Democrats and 84 percent of Republicans are optimistic about the chances for reform. (Figure 6)

The news media often blur the difference between protests and demonstrations on one hand, and riots, looting and arson on the other. But Minnesotans are subject to no such confusion. They understand the difference between demonstrating and looting, and their attitudes toward these activities are entirely different.

Minnesotans strongly support the right to protest and demonstrate; in fact, 77 percent say these activities were justified as the result of George Floyd’s death. But attitudes toward riots are precisely the opposite. Fully 78 percent say that the “burning and looting of buildings and businesses in Minneapolis” were unjustified, while only 4 percent say the burning and

FIGURE 10: VOTERS ARE SPLIT BETWEEN HAVING THE STATE PAY PART OF THE DAMAGES OR NOT PAY FOR ANYTHING AT ALL.

“More than 500 shops and restaurants in Minneapolis and St. Paul have reported damage when protests turned violent over the death of George Floyd. Experts estimate the costs of the damage could exceed 500 million dollars. Should the state of Minnesota use taxpayer dollars...”

		Hennepin/Ramsey	Suburban Counties	Northeast	South	West/Northwest
To Pay For Part Of The Damages, With The Rest Covered By The City, The Federal Government, And Private Donors	39%	52%	40%	25%	38%	26%
To Loan The Twin Cities The Money To Pay For The Damages	8%	8%	8%	13%	8%	2%
To Pay For All Of The Damages To The Twin Cities	5%	6%	8%	0%	7%	4%
To Not Use Minnesota Taxpayer Dollars At All	39%	25%	35%	48%	40%	65%
Don't Know	7%	8%	7%	12%	5%	3%

FIGURE 11: MINNESOTANS ARE MOSTLY DISGUSTED, ANGRY OR SAD ABOUT THE PULLING DOWN OF THE CHRISTOPHER COLUMBUS STATUE.

“And, as you may have seen, a group of protesters and rioters pulled down a statue of Christopher Columbus outside the Minneapolis State Capitol without any legal consequence. Knowing this, does that make you feel...”

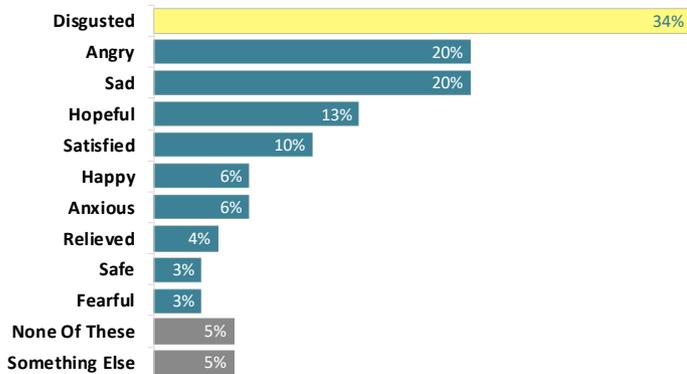
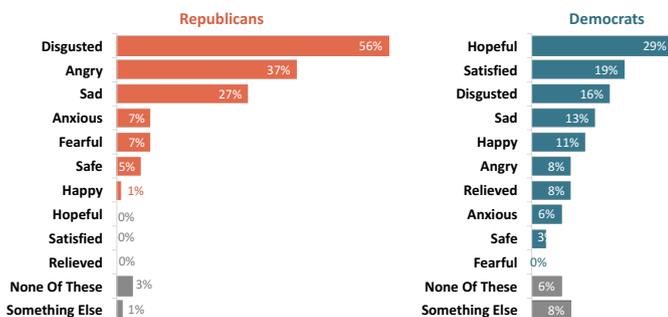


FIGURE 12: REPUBLICANS AND DEMOCRATS REACTED DIFFERENTLY TO THE DESTRUCTION OF THE CHRISTOPHER COLUMBUS STATUE.



looting were fully justified, with 17 percent considering such activities partially justified. (Figure 7) Once again, this issue does not deeply split Minnesotans. A majority in every demographic regardless of age, gender, party, or region believes the riots were not justified.

While rioters destroyed substantial areas of Minneapolis and St. Paul, most Minnesotans, including most in Hennepin and Ramsey Counties, did not feel personally endangered. Overall, 73 percent of Minnesotans say they did not feel threatened. But perhaps the more telling finding is that more than 30 percent of respondents in Hennepin, Ramsey, and the surrounding Twin Cities suburban counties did worry about their own personal safety. (Figure 8)

Elsewhere in this issue of *Thinking Minnesota*, John Phelan and Tom Steward detail the response of the responsible authorities—including Mayor Jacob Frey and Governor Tim Walz—to the riots, looting and arson in Minneapolis and St. Paul. One issue with that reaction was that the National Guard was not called out until several

A majority in every demographic believes the riots were not justified.

nights of rioting had already taken place, and even then, in insufficient numbers. By a two-to-one margin, Minnesotans agree with that critique. Sixty-five percent say that “the National Guard should have been deployed sooner and in greater numbers,” while only 32 percent disagree. (Figure 9)

With the damage caused by looters and arsonists estimated at \$500 million or more, the question whether state funds should be used to pay for the damage inevitably arises. This proposal is unpopular with most voters. Overall, 39 percent don’t want any state dollars used to repair damages caused by rioters, while only 5 percent want the state to pick up the whole tab. The farther one gets from the urban cores of Minneapolis and St. Paul, the less support for using state funds. (Figure 10)

Vandals tore down the statue of Christopher Columbus on the grounds of Minnesota’s Capitol, apparently with the blessing of state authorities. This action was deeply unpopular with Minnesotans. Seventy-four percent say it inspired negative feelings in them: disgust (34 percent), anger (20 percent) and sadness (20 percent). Only a small minority report positive feelings about the lawless destruction of the Columbus statue. (Figure 11) This is perhaps another issue on which some of Minnesota’s politicians are out of step with the views of the state’s voters. However, it is also true that Republicans and Democrats reacted dramatically differently to the destruction of the Columbus statue. (Figure 12) ★

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SPECIAL REPORT

A FAILURE TO LEAD

FALSE ALARM

Using a preposterously flawed scientific model, Gov. **Tim Walz** waged a campaign of fear to shut down Minnesota's economy.

BY SCOTT W. JOHNSON AND KEVIN ROCHE

Governor Walz announced his sweeping executive order on March 25, four days after Minnesota recorded its first death attributed to the virus. Walz chose to set forth an apocalyptic vision of doom.

After Minnesota Governor Tim Walz first declared a peacetime emergency on March 13 and signed his sweeping state shutdown order on March 25, we both started paying close attention to developments related to the COVID-19 epidemic in Minnesota. As we followed the news daily on Power Line (powerlineblog.com, where Scott regularly contributes) and on Healthy Skeptic (healthy-skeptic.com, where Kevin writes), we hoped that our focus on Minnesota might help illustrate more

significant phenomena occurring across the country concerning the epidemic. Combining our interests in politics, public policy, media, and the health care industry, we seek to do the same here, with a longer look back. We hope to clarify a few of the big-picture conclusions that have emerged from the data and yet remain obscured in the public relations of the responsible public officers and the mostly-sycophantic press coverage of their efforts.

Before looking back, we would like to highlight 10 conclusions.

(1) It became apparent early on that the epidemic presented a risk of fatality to elderly nursing-home residents with serious medical conditions. They represent some 80 percent of all Minnesota COVID-19 fatalities and have done so since the start of the epidemic. Yet Walz's administration sent recovering coronavirus patients from hospitals to nursing homes, which exacerbated an already bad situation.

(2) Others who died with serious medical conditions outside long-term care facilities account for almost all the rest of the fatalities. Those with serious underlying medical conditions—both in and out of congregate living settings—account for roughly 98 percent of all deaths attributed to the disease. By our calculation, these conditions affect approximately 15 percent of Minnesotans.

(3) The median age of all decedents is approximately 83. The disease presents almost no risk of death to the relatively young and the relatively healthy. As we write, only two persons under the age of 30 and 10 under the age of 40 have died of the disease in Minnesota.



The Minnesota Model touted by Walz quickly proved to be a farcical embarrassment. There is no conceivable set of circumstances in which the projection of 74,000 deaths was reasonable, and that should have been clear when Walz asserted it.

- (4) If those with serious medical conditions were warned of the risk and encouraged to act appropriately, the rest of the state could be set free to go about its business.
- (5) Walz has rejected this option, asserting that the disease places everyone at significant risk. This statement is false, based on the data from Minnesota and across the country, and based on the risk relative to many other causes of death.
- (6) Most Minnesotans who contract the virus are asymptomatic or have mild illness. Testing of the exposed population at the Worthington meatpacking plant showed that 90 percent of employees who tested positive were asymptomatic.
- (7) Although it gets lost in the torrent of words in his public comments, Walz has asserted that the measures he has taken only delay the inevitable. According to former state epidemiologist Michael Osterholm, whom Walz has advertised among his brain trust, the virus will infect some 60-70 percent of Minnesotans. The virus will continue to spread until a critical mass—that 60-70 percent—reaches immunity. Epidemiologists debate what level of infection is needed to achieve population immunity, but whatever the level, we have only delayed the inevitable, at great cost.
- (8) Walz imposed his statewide shutdown on the assumption that 74,000 Minnesotans would die of COVID-19 without it. He based this assertion on a “Minnesota Model” that was allegedly customized to fit Minnesota data. He should have regarded the model—at best, an extreme outlier in its predictions—as highly suspect and discarded it as a ground for any serious action. Despite having been revised twice, the model continues to be grossly inaccurate in its projections. Estimates produced by any version of the model are not even close to the actual numbers.

- (9) The Governor’s shutdown led to the loss of 800,000 jobs in Minnesota, seriously damaged our health care system and harmed the health of many of our residents. With no basis in science or data, children have been held out of school and activities. Minorities and low-income persons have been especially hard-hit, with frustration resulting from the shutdown contributing to the rioting and looting following George Floyd’s death.
- (10) The print and broadcast media in Minnesota have failed in their essential obligation to challenge government assertions on behalf of the public and to ensure the presentation of accurate and complete data.

Walz jumps in

Governor Walz announced his sweeping executive order on March 25, four days after Minnesota recorded its first death attributed to the virus. While the future course of the epidemic was uncertain, it was already apparent that the greatest risk was among the elderly. But Walz chose to set forth an apocalyptic vision of doom.

“To battle COVID,” he vowed, “we’re going to make sure that we reduce the

Later versions of the model have **continued to ignore clinical realities and to project unreasonably high deaths.**

impact, especially deaths of our neighbors.” Walz touted his reliance on “the best data possible” as projected by a tailor-made model produced by experts at the University of Minnesota and the Minnesota Department of Health. “We’re using the best scientific data,” Walz assured Minnesotans, and then issued a warning based on the model. “If we just let this thing run its course and did nothing,” Walz asserted, “upwards of 74,000 Minnesotans could be killed by this.”

And Walz emphasized that all age groups are at risk: “Here in Minnesota, our cases range from six months to 94 years.”

We’ve all heard about “flattening the curve.” It’s become a cliché. According to Walz, however, it was already too late to flatten the curve in Minnesota. The best we could do was “move the infection rate out, slow it down, and buy time” to build up the availability of intensive care units and hospital capacity. According to Walz, only 235 intensive care units were available in the state. “Buying time” became a recurring theme of the shutdown. Walz said he needed two weeks. (As we write this article in late June, let it be noted, we are still “buying time,” and we will be paying for it for a long time to come.)

“So the attempt here is to strike a proper balance of making sure our economy can function, we protect the most vulnerable, (and) we slow the rate (of infection) to buy us time to build our capacity to deal with this,” Walz said.

Buying time

Walz’s speech implied that we needed to “buy time” to ward off the huge human toll he depicted. The Minnesota Model said so. Reading Walz’s speech closely, one might reasonably have wondered what “buying time” would buy us, whether the time we were paying for was a good deal, or whether it would buy us anything good at all. Holding out the prospect of 74,000 deaths without the “significant mitigation” imposed by the terms of his executive order, Walz left us hanging. How many lives would be saved by buying time? Walz didn’t say exactly or explain how he arrived at a given number. The infection rate might be slowed, but that meant only that the progress of the disease would be spread out over time. Walz’s own charts showed no practical effect. Most of us would be exposed to the virus. How many lives were to be saved by slowing it down? Walz didn’t say.

The Minnesota Model touted by Walz quickly proved to be a farcical embar-



After the absurdity of the Minnesota Model projections became glaringly apparent, Health Commissioner Jan Malcolm offered this explanation: “(The model numbers) are not about specific point-in-time estimates. They are about directional changes.”

rassment. As we write, the authorities have attributed nearly 1,400 deaths to COVID-19 in Minnesota. We will undoubtedly exceed this number by the time this article reaches print. There is nevertheless no conceivable set of circumstances in which the projection of 74,000 deaths was reasonable, and that should have been clear when Walz asserted it.

The following week it was reported by Jeremy Olson in the *Star Tribune* that with “significant mitigation,” the model projected 50,000 deaths. “Buying time” over two weeks or longer was projected to save 24,000 lives by freeing up intensive care units and hospital capacity. Walz somehow omitted this refinement, perhaps in the interest of plausibility.

The model, it turns out, was the product of a weekend’s work of back-of-the-envelope calculations by young research assistants working for the University of Minnesota School of Public Health. The School of Public Health posted an April 6 profile of the assistants crowing about their work: “I don’t think a lot of researchers get to work on something over the weekend and have public figures talk about it and make decisions based on it three days later.” Later versions of the model have continued to ignore clinical realities and to project unreasonably high deaths. The number of cases and deaths

have not matched those estimated by the model at any point.

After the absurdity of the model projections became glaringly apparent, Health Commissioner Jan Malcolm offered this explanation: “(The model numbers) are not about specific point-in-time estimates. They are about directional changes.” No one has explained how a number (e.g., 74,000 deaths) can be anything other than a number.

Walz has never acknowledged that he may have placed undue reliance on the Minnesota Model to shut down the state following his speech. With hindsight, it is undeniable that reliance on the model was misplaced. Walz, however, has never been called to account for this shortcoming by the media. On the contrary, the *Star Tribune*, for example, supported the Walz administration’s after-the-fact explanation that the data produced by the Minnesota Model were not to be taken literally, but rather taken figuratively to point the way.

If the Minnesota Model pointed the way, however, it pointed in the wrong direction.

The hospital capacity rationale

One concern expressed by experts in the early stages of the epidemic—and supposedly validated by the model—was

that the health care resources to treat all potential cases of serious illness would prove inadequate. There were worries in particular about shortages of personal protective equipment, ICU beds, and ventilators. Walz predicated his March 25 shutdown order on an anticipated lack of hospital capacity and ICU availability. Yet even at the time of the shutdown order it was apparent that there was enormous flexibility in making ICU beds and ventilators available for patients who needed them (as in hard-hit New York City).

We saw this in Minnesota as well, as somehow between the initial and second versions of the Minnesota Model, the state’s estimated ICU capacity grew by over 10 times. There is nothing magi-

There is nothing magical about an “ICU” bed; a patient with severe illness can have his needs met in any number of hospital wards without regard to its designation as an ICU ward.

cal about an “ICU” bed; a patient with severe illness can have his needs met in any number of hospital wards without regard to its designation as an ICU ward. And ventilator need was substantially overestimated due to changes in care guidelines resulting from ventilator use actually worsening the condition of many patients.

It is highly unlikely that Minnesota ever was or ever will be in any real danger of insufficient treatment resources. The third and most recent iteration of the model adds yet another mystery to the mix, as it has 70 percent of elderly patients dying at home, thus never needing hospitalization (apparently based on the

Minnesota data). Given the heavy skewing of serious illness toward the elderly, how would anyone therefore expect that hospitals might be overwhelmed?

Hospitals went begging for patients, and the asserted 235 available ICU rooms quickly morphed into more than 2,000—yet the shutdown continued for months. We won't try to work out the math underlying the alleged 24,000 lives saved by the shutdown through the freeing up of hospital capacity because it was never more than a nightmarish fantasy.

At what price?

Public policy is the realm of costs and benefits of government actions. Tradeoffs are the name of the game. Yet recently disclosed documents show that Walz issued his drastic shutdown order before he had received any assessment of its economic consequences. The Department of Employment and Economic Development delivered its initial report on economic impacts to Walz on April 3. Unlike the COVID model, this projection was eerily accurate. DEED said that Walz's shutdown could cost 805,656 Minnesotans their jobs, almost exactly equal to the current total of new jobless claims. Yet this sobering forecast apparently had no impact, as Walz repeatedly extended his shutdown order.

One perverse cost of the shutdown quickly became obvious. Within two

weeks, hospitals were suffering massive losses, laying off or furloughing employees, and closing wings. Something didn't compute.

To take just one prominent example: On April 10, the Mayo Clinic announced a series of cost-cutting measures to address a projected \$3 billion loss in 2020, half of it due to the effects of the shutdown. Mayo announced furloughs and pay cuts affecting a third of its workforce, some 20,000 employees. The shutdown inflicted enormous damage to hospitals and health care systems across the state.

In addition, Walz has yet to acknowledge the health problems that his shutdown created. These problems derive from canceled appointments, missed vaccinations for children, increased mental health issues, increased drug and alcohol addiction, and other recognized consequences of unemployment.

The economic damage done by the shutdown announced in Walz's March 25 order is shocking. Around 800,000 Minnesotans have filed unemployment claims. They represent the job losses and small-business closures that have yet to be fully accounted for. Consumer spending, the true engine of the economy, has

Since the issuance of the “battle plan,” long-term care facility deaths have continued to represent 80 percent or more of all deaths, week after week after week. This is an obvious failure that rests largely with the Governor.

been eviscerated.

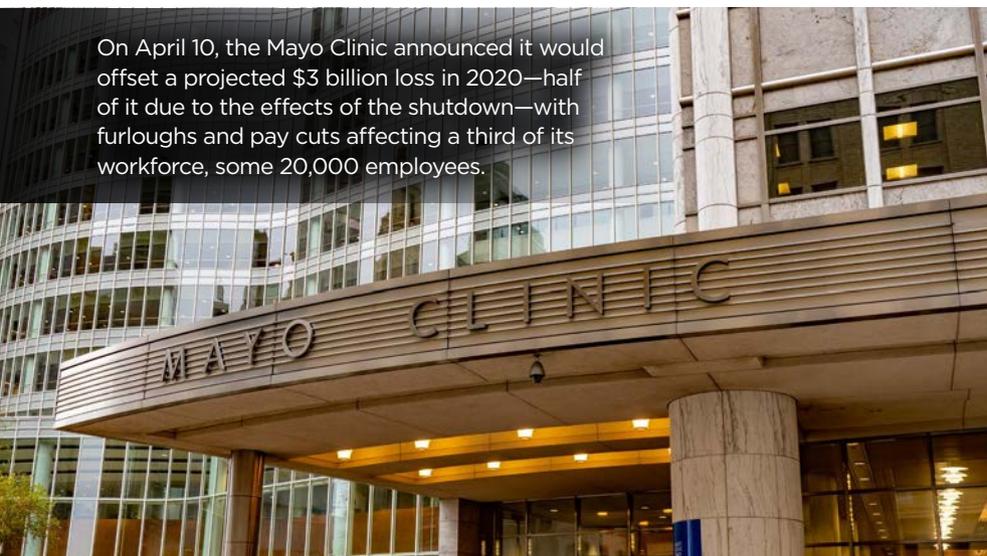
Walz asserted that consumers wouldn't return to business-as-usual as long as they feared contracting COVID-19, yet he used his daily press briefings to stoke their fears. He seems to have been waging a campaign of fear to support the merits of his shutdown orders. Consumers are indeed fearful. Their fear should be assuaged with accurate information, and they should be trusted to manage their behavior appropriately when armed with the facts.

The nursing home crisis

The crisis located in the nursing homes and congregate care settings was evident from the early days of the epidemic in Minnesota. Beginning at about two-thirds, the share of all such deaths attributed to the disease rose steadily to 80 percent by mid-April. On April 27, before the media took notice of the issue, we asked Commissioner Malcolm: “Referring to the 286 total deaths to date, (we note that) every decedent under age 70 has died in long-term care or a similar setting. The youngest person to die outside long-term care was in his 70s. Why is it necessary to close the schools and shut down the state to protect the at-risk population?”

Malcolm responded through Depart-

On April 10, the Mayo Clinic announced it would offset a projected \$3 billion loss in 2020—half of it due to the effects of the shutdown—with furloughs and pay cuts affecting a third of its workforce, some 20,000 employees.





ment of Health press officer Doug Schultz: “We have had deaths in people younger than 70 and certainly many cases in all age groups. It is necessary to take the community mitigation measures we have because all Minnesotans are at risk from COVID-19, as none of us has immunity. Some people, like those in long-term care and those with underlying health conditions, are far more at risk than others. But if we didn’t reduce transmission in the community as we have with the stay-at-home order, we would see far more disease circulating and many times more serious cases that would quickly overwhelm our health care system....”

When the issue of nursing home fatalities became impossible to ignore, the Walz administration promulgated a “5-point battle plan” to address it. Acknowledging the focus of the crisis in long-term care facilities, Commissioner Malcolm announced the “battle plan” on May 7. She summarized the plan in 15 PowerPoint slides. One can only wonder why it came so late. And since the issuance of the “battle plan,” long-term care facility deaths have continued to represent around 80 percent of all deaths, week after week after week. This is an obvious failure that rests largely with the Governor.

On May 19, well after deaths in

long-term care had come to dominate the fatality data in Minnesota, Chris Serres reported in the *Star Tribune* that the Minnesota Department of Health had evacuated COVID-19 patients from hospitals to nursing homes early in the epidemic. “Minnesota hospitals have since discharged dozens of infected patients to nursing homes, including facilities that have undergone large and deadly outbreaks of the disease, state records show.” While the Walz administration has somehow escaped criticism in the local media, Minnesota’s nursing home crisis has become a national disgrace.

What is to be done?

Neither Walz nor Commissioner Malcolm responded to our request for an interview in connection with this article. Three months after Walz began issuing shutdown orders, it seems clear that they went much too far, failed to protect

Within two weeks of the shutdown, hospitals were suffering massive losses, laying off or furloughing employees, and closing wings. Something didn’t compute.

Minnesota’s most vulnerable citizens, did vast and needless damage to the state’s economy, and were at all times unsupported by the data. It is not apparent that Walz has sought advice beyond a small circle of supposed experts or his own partisan colleagues. The lack of a critical press has served him especially poorly in this respect.

Minnesotans often feel a keen rivalry with Wisconsin, a state with similar population size, composition and density. On May 13, that state voided its shutdown order. There was no uptick in cases or deaths. In fact, throughout the epidemic, Wisconsin has had fewer cases and

deaths, including fewer deaths among long-term care residents, while conducting the same number of tests. Wisconsin demonstrates the lack of necessity for extreme shutdowns, and the ability to trust citizens to make their own decisions on their risk and how to protect themselves. Walz suggested that the science of the epidemic was somehow different in Wisconsin and has refused to relinquish his dictatorial emergency powers and show trust in Minnesotans.

But it isn’t just Wisconsin—Minnesota has performed poorly in comparison with all five Upper Midwestern states. The Walz administration has managed to achieve *both* the highest rate of jobless claims *and* the highest COVID-19 death rate of any Upper Midwestern state.

Early on in the course of the epidemic and more so with each passing week, it became apparent that there is little risk of serious illness or death to the vast majority of Minnesotans from COVID-19. By contrast, there is a significant risk to the infirm elderly and others with serious medical conditions. The protection of those living in congregate care settings should not be difficult.

We agree with Walz in one respect. The best course is one that has certainty in ending the epidemic, which is letting the virus burn itself out by infection of a critical mass of the population, while protecting the high-risk population. As Walz acknowledged at the outset, this is a concession to the inevitable. The course he has chosen only protracts the process and aggravates the adverse consequences.

The spread of the virus leads to asymptomatic or mild illness in over 95 percent of the population. Achieving population immunity will reduce transmission and protect all remaining uninfected persons, including the vulnerable elderly. That is the course on which we should have embarked and can still elect. It gets us to safety in a reasonable time, with far less economic devastation, adverse health effects, and other harms. And we need to reopen our economy as quickly as possible if we will have any reasonable hope of reversing the considerable damage that has already been done. ★

MACALESTER, THROUGH THE LOOKING GLASS

How Macalester College indoctrinates its students into a militant new secular faith.

This new religion lacks one thing: It has no God. Puritan theology divided human beings into two groups: *Saved and Damned, saints and sinners, sheep and goats. The "Elect" were redeemed through a predestined grace. Macalester's secular religion also divides human beings into two groups: oppressors and victims. Its "Saved" are the sinless victims of white supremacy and the patriarchal power structure. Its "Damned" are oppressors—first and foremost straight, white males—along with members of other groups who victimize those below them in the "intersectional" hierarchy of power.*

Macalester College in St. Paul, with its classic Georgian buildings and leafy quad, is one of the nation's elite liberal arts colleges. The total cost of a Macalester education is more than \$70,000 a year, according to *U.S. News & World Report*. The college promises students an education that will expand their horizons, cultivate "intellectual breadth and depth" and "logical thinking," and ensure tolerance for "many perspectives."

But a stroll through the campus, and a scroll through the course catalog, reveal a starkly different reality. Flyers on bul-

letin boards, extra-curricular activities, student clubs, course descriptions—all reflect a cardboard cut-out world of hackneyed, ideologically charged platitudes. Tolerance, though often invoked, seems in strikingly short supply.

We've come to expect this sort of thing at American institutions of higher education, of course. But after decades, it remains puzzling why the most privileged generation in American history should be so cramped and one-dimensional in its thinking, and so hostile to the priceless heritage its forebears have bequeathed. Macalester provides a fascinating perspective on the answer to this question. Though its students may fancy themselves free-thinkers, most appear in thrall to a new lockstep orthodoxy that, while generally traced to the 1960s, has links to movements in America's past that would likely appall and astonish them.

The ideology that undergirds life at Macalester is grounded in a simplistic, but fervently held, article of faith: Life is a power struggle between oppressors and their victims. A hierarchy—a ladder of "intersectionality" based on group identity (the familiar trinity of race, class and gender)—explains all

By Katherine Kersten



Authentic examples of inequality and unfair treatment are in egregiously short supply at Macalester. The result is an often-amusing spectacle: an Alice-in-Wonderland world of “implicit biases” and “micro-aggressions,” where students conjure up and inflate oppression as they scramble to position themselves at the bottom of the hierarchy-of-power heap.



social relations and outcomes. At the top are powerful, straight white males. At the bottom are oppressed trans “people of color.”

In this binary universe, students who want to align with the angels go through a kind of conversion that “wakes them up” to the injustice and inequality that allegedly pervade society. They become “woke”—and so, driven to denounce and resist it.

Recent events at Macalester reveal this new creed in action. In October 2019, for example, the *Macalester Weekly* newspaper devoted an entire issue to exposing the social evil from which all others are presumed to flow: “the white supremacy endemic to Macalester and Minnesota’s past and present.”

The issue, titled “Colonial Macalester,” impugned the white male benefactors—“the men Macalester immortalized”—whose efforts and fortunes helped make the college the elite institution it is today. They included DeWitt Wallace, the founder of *Reader’s Digest*, businessman Franklin Olin and lumber magnate Frederick Weyerhaeuser. All, it seems, fell far short of contemporary Macalester students’ lofty moral standards: Wallace was “fiercely anti-communist,” Olin manufactured ammunition, and Weyerhaeuser’s family supported compulsory attendance at weekly chapel services.

But the man truly in the crosshairs was Macalester’s first president: the Rev. Edward Duffield Neill. Neill, a Presbyterian minister who founded the college in 1874, was one of early St. Paul’s most eminent and public-spirited citizens. Not only an outspoken abolitionist who served three



The College Fix interviewed students before Thanksgiving about whether Americans should celebrate the holiday. In a video entitled “No Thanks at Thanksgiving,” many students said no, citing what one called the “really awful oppression of indigenous peoples.” Another rejected Thanksgiving as “capitalist bullsh*t.”

U.S. Presidents, he was Minnesota’s first superintendent of public education, the first chancellor of the University of Minnesota, and a founder of the Minnesota Historical Society.

But the *Mac Weekly* contemptuously brushed aside Neill’s remarkable accomplishments. He was, it declared, a “white supremacist,” a “misogynist” who opposed co-education, and a “settler-colonialist who advocated the genocide of the Dakota” Indians and built Macalester on land stolen from them. His crimes demonstrated that Macalester College was morally corrupt from the outset.

The paper intoned the charge against Neill: “His sins are legion, and they are unforgivable.” Stripping his name from the humanities building, it said, “must be

the beginning of a broader institutional effort” to “make amends for [Macalester’s] role in the historic and continuous displacement of indigenous people.” The college’s president and trustees overwhelmingly approved the name change, without serious debate.

One month later, Macalester’s creed was on display again, as *The College Fix* interviewed students before Thanksgiving about whether Americans should celebrate

the holiday. In a video entitled “No Thanks at Thanksgiving,” many students said no, citing what one called the “really awful oppression of indigenous peoples.” Another rejected Thanksgiving as “capitalist bullsh*t.”

It’s difficult to exaggerate the powerful allure of victim status at Macalester. Much of campus life seems to revolve around the quest to secure and exhibit it. The process is marked by extensive moral preening. Victimhood confers power, the cloak of moral righteousness, and an automatic right to special treatment. But there is a way out for students (and faculty) whose Y chromosome or skin color doesn’t qualify them for victim status—in particular, straight white males. They can still display their “woke” credentials by denouncing “oppressors” like Neill and becoming “allies” to women, “people of color” and sexual minorities.

Yet here’s the irony. Today, authentic examples of inequality and unfair treatment are in egregiously short supply at Macalester. The result is an often-amusing spectacle: an Alice-in-Wonderland world of “implicit biases” and “micro-aggressions,” where students conjure up

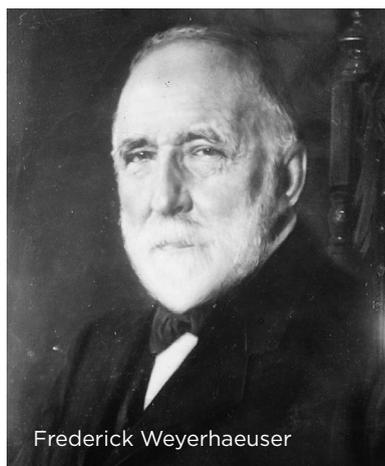


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and inflate oppression as they scramble to position themselves at the bottom of the hierarchy-of-power heap.

Take the “Naming Hate” campaign of February 2020, organized after “racist graffiti” appeared on campus. The *Mac Weekly* described it as “a three-day series of lectures, panels and workshops on the nature of hate and how to respond to manifestations of hate on and off campus.” Here’s what passed for guilt-inducing “hate”: four of the college’s seven academic buildings and six of its eight dorms are named after white men, and only two of these buildings after white women.

“We don’t look up to the figures that are important in Macalester [history] as anyone but white men, and that’s a big deal,” one of the event’s organizers complained. It is “a way to keep people out of spaces...by making them uncomfortable



Frederick Weyerhaeuser

and by saying, ‘Our priority is to honor this bad person.’... It’s essentially saying, ‘We don’t want you here.’” “Macalester,” the organizers charged, “must drastically change its priorities,” as the *Mac Weekly* put it.

The claim that women and POCs (people of color) are unwelcome at Macalester is, of course, absurd. The college’s student body is 60 percent women, and in 2019-20, four of the student government executive board’s five members were “women of color.” “Diversity, equity and inclusion” permeate every aspect of college life. But where zealotry rules, facts are of no importance.

Not surprisingly, during the 2019-20 school year, the most powerful student at Macalester was student body president Blair Cha, a “woman of color.” In her campaign, Cha traded on her alleged underdog status, telling the *Mac Weekly* she was driven to run by her “passion” to “empower students” by “speaking up about her experiences” as someone with a “marginalized” identity. She trounced her white male opponent with 60 percent of the vote.

After her victory, Cha made a play to upgrade her victim status. At a faculty meeting in March 2020, she stood up—surrounded by sign-waving female students—and accused one of her professors of discrimination on the basis of “gender, race, ethnicity and national origin in the classroom.” During the nine-month Title IX investigation that had followed her original accusation in Spring 2019, she said, “I struggled every day with extreme anxiety to the point where I could not stand the pain.”

The professor, who had already been officially exonerated, responded that Cha had breached a confidentiality agreement by discussing the matter publicly. He characterized her conduct as “totally beyond the pale.”

Cha’s inability to highlight real injustice during her run for office reveals how slim the pickings really are at Macalester. In an interview with the *Mac Weekly*, here’s the best she could do: “On the whole campus, it still feels uncomfortable to talk about intersectional topics such as menstruation, being queer, being a POC, etc., at Macalester.” As a result, she said, she had become a leader in initiatives like “Better Sex at Mac” (Title IX, “sexual violence”) and “the Menstrual Hygiene Project” (free menstrual supplies as a human right).

Incidentally, “menstrual health”—or “menstrual equity”—is now one of the hottest social justice issues on American campuses. Its appeal may arise from its combination of two intersecting “woke” causes: feminism and Green activism.

At Macalester, student Miriam Eide, a “Zero Waste Project Coordinator” in the college’s Sustainability Office, was a leader in the menstrual equity project. “I know



The **Rev. Edward Duffield Neill**, the Presbyterian minister who founded Macalester in 1874, was one of early St. Paul’s most eminent and public-spirited citizens. Not only an outspoken abolitionist who served three U.S. Presidents, he was Minnesota’s first superintendent of public education, the first chancellor of the University of Minnesota, and a founder of the Minnesota Historical Society. But the *Mac Weekly* contemptuously brushed aside Neill’s remarkable accomplishments. He was, it declared, a “white supremacist,” a “misogynist” who opposed co-education, and a “settler-colonialist who advocated the genocide of the Dakota” Indians and built Macalester on land stolen from them.

we have free tampons, but why don’t we have free menstrual cups, too?” Eide said in a *Mac Weekly* interview in November 2019. She decided to use menstrual cups from OrganiCup, a “sustainability focused company,” noting “they had a lot less waste in their packaging.” She dubbed the project “SustainaCup.”

“OrganiCups are reusable, vegan and cruelty-free, and they are made completely out of hypo-allergenic, medical-grade silicone,” according to the *Mac Weekly*. (You can’t make this up.) “Health and inclusivity are also very important parts of the program,” the paper noted, adding that according to Eide, “a lot of people struggle with the chemicals in tampons.”

By the way, the word “woman” does not appear in the *Mac Weekly* article about SustainaCup. These menstrual products, it seems, are not for women, but for “people

that have periods.” Presumably, it’s important not to exclude “trans women.”

Where do Macalester students get the preposterous ideas just described? They come from the top. President Brian Rosenberg, who recently retired, appeared fully on-board. The college’s trustees have named Dr. Suzanne Rivera as his successor. Rivera will be the school’s “first female President and first Latinx president,” according to a press release. Rivera told the *Mac Weekly* she was “drawn to Macalester” by its “deep commitments to social justice,” and highlighted her “passion around the importance of equity and inclusion.”

Most of Macalester’s faculty—at least in humanities and social science departments—appear to be prodigiously “woke” themselves, to judge by the course catalog.

That’s no surprise in “oppression studies” departments, such as Women’s, Gender, and Sexuality Studies (WGS), whose mission is to advance an activist, not an academic, agenda. The jargon that saturates these departments is mind-numbing. In WGS, topics examined include “key questions raised within feminist and queer theories and the fields of women’s, transgender, bisexual, lesbian, and gay studies.” Students “examine interlocking systems of cultural and political difference based on gender, sexuality, race, nation, class, ethnicity, and ability.” Courses bear titles like “Comparative Feminisms: Whiteness and Postcolonialisms” and “Constructions of a Female Killer.”

Macalester’s “Courses in the City” include “Energy Justice,” which “builds on” the concept of “climate justice,” focusing on “visible and invisible infrastructures” including pipelines, Yucca Mountain nuclear storage and “issues around the fracking (sic).”

The American Studies department’s home page features a photo of an artwork entitled, “The [American] Flag is Bleeding.” The department describes race as “the central dimension of U.S. social, cultural, political, and economic life,” and proclaims that “we put the knowledge and experiences of marginalized people at the center of our curriculum.” Courses include “Bruce Lee: His Life and Legacy,” “Vi-

sual Culture: Critical Prison Studies,” and “Latinx in the Midwest.”

But the same blinkered ideology appears to dominate mainstream disciplines such as history.

In the History department, the survey courses necessary to understand history’s fundamental events are lacking, or are haphazard and skewed. In general, coursework is organized around the holy trinity



Tolerance, though often invoked, seems in strikingly short supply.

of race, class and gender. The “array of fields” featured on the homepage are “the history of the Environment; Gender; Colonization and Empire; Law and Social Justice; Race and Indigeneity; and Public History.”

Course listings include offerings with names like “Sex, Love and Gender in History”; “History of U.S. Feminisms, Gender and Sexuality in Colonial America and the Early Republic”; “Narrating Black Women’s Resistance”; “U.S. Environmental History”; “Captives, Cannibals, and Capitalists in the Early Modern Atlantic World” and “U.S. Imperialism from the Philippines to Viet Nam.”

What’s really going on at Macalester

Yet at the deepest level, something more profound is amiss at Macalester, and its historical roots go back much farther than the 1960s.

Macalester abolished compulsory chapel decades ago. But today, it’s back—in a perverse and twisted form—in classrooms, public events, publications and student activities. Presumably, Macalester students, most of whom seem to know little of history and religion, don’t realize they are being indoctrinated into what amounts to a militant new secular faith.

This faith is enshrined in the college’s curriculum and controls terms of discourse and frames of reference. It has its own dogma, rituals, saints and heretics. Intolerance is its very essence. Its adherents are convinced they possess a Higher Truth and are zealously committed to imposing their vision of virtue on others. This new religion lacks one thing: It has no God. But “the left has grown comfortable in practicing theology without benefit of God,” according to Lance Morrow of the Washington, D.C.-based Ethics and Public Policy Center.

Macalester students would probably indignantly reject a comparison of their new faith with that of our nation’s earliest religious zealots: the Puritans. Yet the parallels are striking, as a number of thinkers have noted. “Puritanism in its negative sense is now less common among the Protestant faithful than among Progressives, who carry on the Puritan tradition unconsciously,” wrote English journalist A.N. Wilson. Commentator John Zmirak put it succinctly: “Woke is the new saved.”

A core tenet of Puritan theology is “innate depravity”—the doctrine that human beings are inherently wicked as a result of original sin. Innate depravity has been “reborn in the 21st century and adapted to the Left’s insistence on the innate depravity of the ruling class: the wickedness of the patriarchy, of white privilege and supremacy and of the nation’s entire past,” according to Morrow. Recall the *Mac Weekly*’s words in consigning Edward Duffield Neill to perdition: “His sins were legion, and they were unforgivable.”

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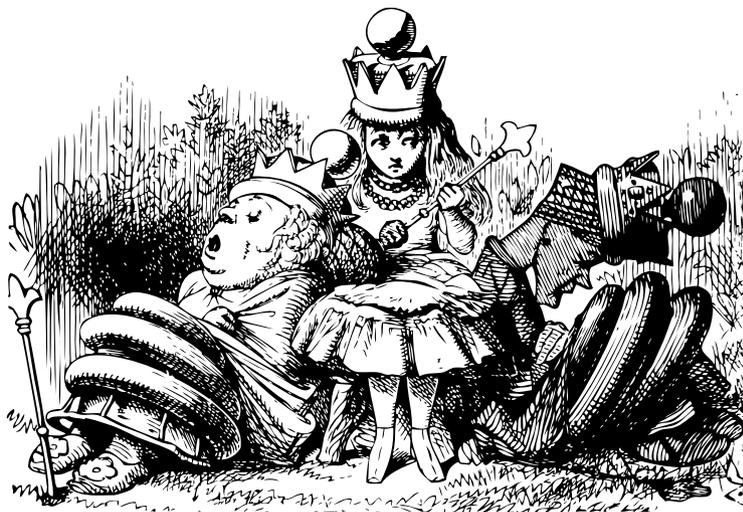
two groups: oppressors and victims. Its “Saved” are the sinless victims of white supremacy and the patriarchal power structure. Its “Damned” are oppressors—first and foremost straight, white males—along with members of other groups who victimize those below them in the “intersectional” hierarchy of power.

Puritans believed those who profess false doctrine pose a danger to the larger community. They often shunned, punished or drove out dissenters who might mislead the Saved, for whom avoiding the occasion of sin was imperative. Today, “bigot” and “hater” are the new “wizard” and “witch,” as commentator Mary Eberstadt has observed. Salem, Massachusetts had its witch trials. Macalester has its “Colonial Macalester” campaign, intended to brand white male benefactors like Wallace and Olin with Hester Prynne’s red “A” of shame, and to erase Edward Duffield Neill’s polluting presence from the campus.

Yet in the new secular Puritan creed, sinners can in fact join the Righteous. To be saved, “you need first to confess, i.e., ‘check your privilege,’ and subsequently live your life...in a way that keeps this sin at bay,” writes Zmirak. “The price is steep: a life of self-denial and penance,” he notes. But those who choose to walk this path “can attain justification.” Not by “your own efforts,” he adds,

but by the righteousness that suffering, innocent victims (non-straight, non-whites, non-males) can impute to you. As an ‘ally’ of the less privileged, you earn the same right to despise the mass of oppressors.

At Macalester, confession and penance are every-day occurrences. At the “Naming Hate” event, for example, students were instructed to acknowledge their guilt and reject future sin, i.e., “to write and sign their own, individualized pledges to continue educating themselves and actively tackling hate in Macalester and



Students go through a kind of conversion that “wakes them up” to the injustice and inequality that allegedly pervade society. They become “woke”—and so, driven to denounce and resist it.

beyond.” A *Mac Weekly* writer made the same point: “[E]veryone, even those who may think they don’t, must conduct some level of self-inventory to root out internal microaggressions and attitudes (emphasis in original).”

Other rituals are designed to atone for the college’s institutional sins. For example, the “Colonial Macalester” campaign included a “land acknowledgment,” and called for renaming Neill Hall as part of “a broader institutional effort” to “make amends for [the college’s] role in the historic and continuous displacement of indigenous people.” The History department, too, contritely acknowledged “the role that academic history has played and continues to play in silence, oppression, and cultural genocide,” and promised to “restore and honor” native cultures going forward.

The “Colonial Macalester” campaign is Macalester’s homegrown version of *The New York Times*’ notorious “1619 Project,” which asserts that “nearly everything that made America exceptional grew out of slavery.” Both exemplify the Left’s

practice of what Morrow has called making “a sacrament of national self-accusation.”

The end-game is clear: If “the entire American project was depraved from the beginning—Columbus was a louse, the Constitution countenanced slavery, and Washington and Jefferson owned slaves—then the whole thing may be, without qualms, damned absolutely and dismantled at will,” in Morrow’s words. At Macalester,

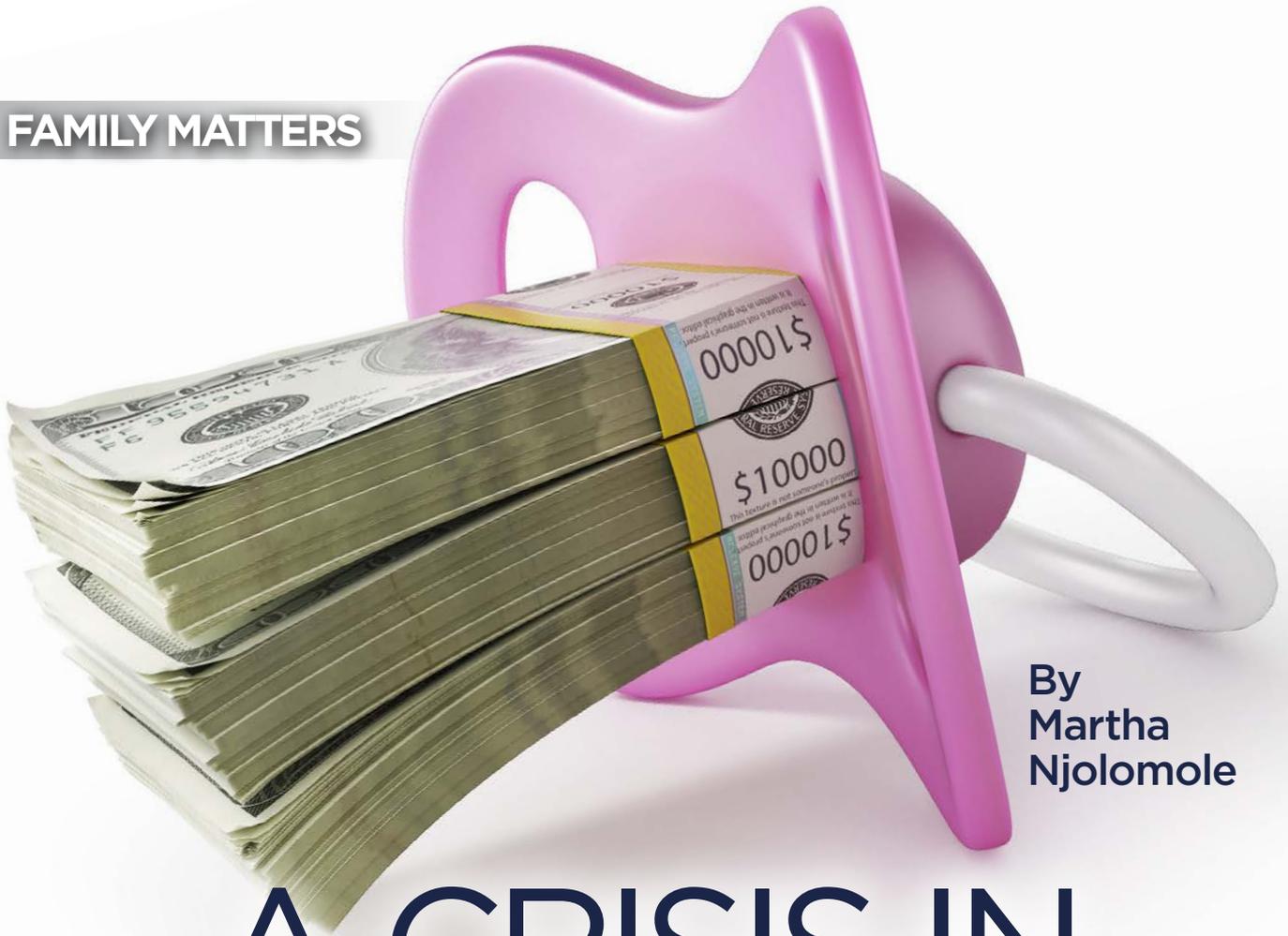
by pronouncing anathema on the college’s founder and benefactors, students declare their intent to wipe out the institution’s tainted heritage and construct their own utopian City on a Hill.

Macalester’s new secular religion offers “some of the same psychic rewards” that a “real religion would do,” to use Zmirak’s phrase. For fervent adherents like Blair Cha, the rewards are many. As a certified victim, she receives the “blessed assurance” that she belongs to the Elect. She also receives gratifying confirmation that “she should feel virtuous for wallowing in anger and resentment,” as Zmirak puts it.

The new faith also offers a path to power. For students like Cha, it provides a head start in the contest for campus influence. For faculty, it offers the opportunity—and the budget—to promote their own activist agenda in place of serious academics. And of course, it underwrites a phalanx of diversity coordinators, equity specialists and gender and sexuality counselors.

Macalester’s new, secular faith has all the vices and none of the virtues of historic Puritanism. Unrestrained by Christian belief, “It replaces worship with protest. Spirituality with unhinged histrionics. Examination of conscience with the scapegoating of others conveniently dead or out of power,” as Zmirak observes.

Prospective students and parents considering Macalester may recognize they will be signing up for a heavy dose of Leftist ideology. They would likely be surprised to learn, however, that entering freshmen may well graduate as Puritan-influenced “true believers.” ★



By
Martha
Njolomole

A CRISIS IN CHILDCARE

The high cost of childcare in Minnesota—**caused chiefly by government regulation**—strains families and our economy, especially in Greater Minnesota.

When Sarah Piepenburg and her husband had their first child, they tried their best to juggle childcare and work. She delayed work up until her child was phased out of infant care, which is the most expensive stage for childcare. However, when she did start working, she was merely taking

home a \$244 paycheck after paying childcare expenses, which did not seem worth it. Things did not get better for her and her husband when they decided to start a small business, something that had been a long-time dream of theirs. Sarah quit her job and the couple used the \$16,000 they would use for childcare to

start up a business. They again struggled mixing full-time care for kids with managing a business. Moreover, one of their best workers quit after they were offered a position with childcare benefits at some other corporation.

Sarah Piepenburg's story is just one example that showcases the critical

childcare crisis affecting numerous working parents around Minnesota and around the country. Parents are forced to choose between staying home to take care of their child or going to work. This choice does not bode well for parents who cannot access childcare either due to high cost or shortage, as research continues to show. In 2016, two million parents of children age five and younger had to quit their jobs, not take a job, or change their job due to childcare issues. Things are worse for parents who live in childcare deserts (i.e., regions with low childcare access). More mothers in these regions end up staying home compared to mothers in non-desert areas.

From high costs to critical shortage, parents cannot catch a break when it comes to childcare. But they are not the only one's suffering. Companies also have trouble attracting and retaining

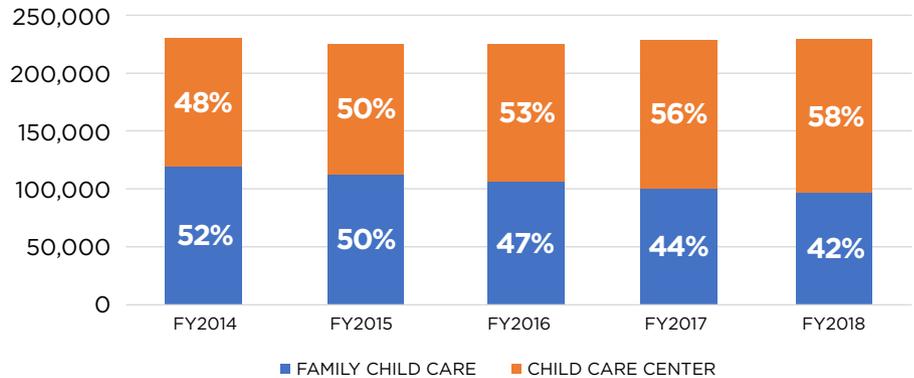
Minnesota is one of the 33 states and D.C. where infant care is more expensive than college.

working parents if they are situated in areas where childcare is expensive or in short supply. They also face reduced productivity when they have to deal with worried parents or have workers who constantly miss work because they cannot find childcare. According to the advocacy group Child Care Aware, during a six-month working period, 45 percent of working parents missed work at least once due to issues with childcare. Additionally, despite the high costs of childcare, providers scarcely make profits and childcare workers remain among some of the lowest paid workers in the country. These are issues plaguing everyone in the country, but Minnesota has it worse.

Costs in Minnesota

Minnesota is one of the 33 states and

Total Childcare Capacity by License Type



Source: Department of Human Services

Washington, D.C. where infant care is more expensive than college. Minnesotans pay more for childcare than the average cost of rent. It is more than the entire income of poverty-level parents.

Minnesota currently ranks as the 4th most expensive state for infant care, behind only California, Massachusetts and Washington, D.C. According to the Economic Policy Institute, parents in Minnesota pay about \$16,087 per year or \$1,342 per month to keep an infant in childcare. The annual cost for a four-year-old is \$12,252, or \$1,021 per month.

The cost of infant care consumes about 21.2 percent of the median Minnesota family income. But according to the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services guidelines, childcare is only affordable if it does not exceed 7 percent of a family's income. By looking at income, only 5.8 percent of Minnesota families spend 7 percent or less of their income on childcare. The rest spend multiple times higher, especially for infant care, which is the most expensive. A childcare worker, for instance, would have to spend two-thirds of their earnings to put their own child through infant care.

The childcare shortage

Stories abound about parents who have to commute 30 minutes or more to find childcare services or how they have to get waitlisted at day care centers before they can be offered a spot. Some parents even go as far as asking providers for the

optimal time to have a baby with regard to available childcare. This is due to the severe shortage of childcare services in Minnesota. There aren't enough licensed care spots for all children in need of care, especially in Greater Minnesota. In 2017, Minnesota had 346,825 children age birth to four years, but childcare capacity was only 227,792—a shortage of 119,033. The number of children needing childcare is expected to stay steady the next 50 years.

Between 2014 and 2018, overall childcare capacity decreased 0.7 percent. While the share and number of licensed childcare centers has been growing, family-based childcare centers have been decreasing, leading to an overall capacity decrease. The increase in childcare centers has not been enough to offset the loss in capacity caused by loss of family childcare centers (FCCs). As shown in the figure above, family childcare providers comprised 42 percent of total capacity in 2018 as compared to 52 percent of total capacity in 2014. Overall, this represents a loss in capacity of 1,671 slots in the whole industry.

Childcare workers

Childcare workers are among the lowest paid professionals in Minnesota and nationwide. More than 85 percent of childcare workers are considered low-wage workers. The Center for the Study of Childcare Employment estimates that the average salary of a Minnesota childcare

worker is \$10.81 per hour or \$24,556 per year. This low wage deters would-be workers from entering the profession and therefore makes it hard for providers to find and keep qualified workers. Because providers have to compete with higher paying jobs that require no experience, they lose workers to these other jobs.

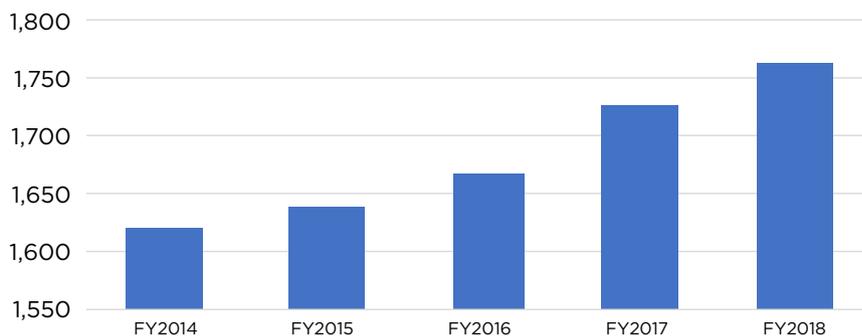
It is also important that childcare workers possess qualifications and training. But their wages do not align with the amount of training the state requires before they can start caring for children. Early learning programs, for instance, need significantly more staff than other settings, and those staff require more professional development and ongoing training. Wages for early childhood educators have also remained stagnant, even though more child workers have attained college degrees now than ever before. It is not surprising to hear of qualified candidates unwilling to take low-paying teacher jobs in childcare.

Greater Minnesota

The increase in Minnesota's licensed childcare centers has been concentrated in the Twin Cities, which has left Greater Minnesota lacking. Between 2000 and 2015, only the metro region experienced an increase in childcare capacity of 2 percent. To understand the issue, licensed childcare centers are expensive to establish and operate; they require higher tuition and higher enrollment. Parents in rural areas cannot afford the high tuition often required to keep a center running. The small populations in rural areas can also be inadequate to supply the needs of maintaining a center. Greater Minnesota is therefore more suitable for FCCs.

Unfortunately, several factors have caused FCCs to leave the market at alarming rates. Baby Boomers, including those who own family childcare

Count of Licensed Childcare Centers, Fiscal Years 2014-2018



Source: Department of Human Services

businesses, are reaching retirement age. People may be choosing other fields that have more flexible schedules and fewer hours. Low wages compared to other professions discourage people from opening FCCs. These are, however, factors that can rarely be controlled. What the state government can control is regulation. Unfortunately, FCCs are having trouble navigating the expanding—as well as changing—regulatory environment.

COVID-19

Governor Tim Walz's stay-at-home order encouraged childcare providers to stay open and provide care to the children of essential workers. But since they have been open, providers have had to spend more money on labor to make sure there was adequate staff to do all the extra cleaning and keep sizes small. This was in addition to paying their regular overhead expenses. At the same time, providers have seen a huge drop in revenue as enrollment rates have gone down. The effect is that some providers closed their business for good because they could not keep up with the costs of operating while bringing in less revenue. Others have

temporarily closed but might face difficulties opening back up, and those still operating are also facing difficulties trying to stay afloat. This is not such an extraordinary occurrence; it is economically impossible for any business to stay open for a long time if it is facing increased costs while bringing in less revenue. The same is true for childcare providers, but they already operate on razor thin profit margins, so they are more fragile.

Do subsidies help?

Governments often turn to subsidies to help low-income families pay for childcare. Subsidies, however, come with their own issues and also fail to resolve other underlying challenges that face childcare. For example, subsidies do not help low-income families who are not part of the market (i.e., people whose kids are cared for by family members or who stay off work to take care of them). Subsidies also tend to increase the cost of providing care, which is in turn disadvantageous to families not eligible for financial assistance. This is because subsidies give providers no incentive to be productive or compete for business. Subsidies furthermore tend to come with increased regulations, as the government tries ways of quality control or accountability for money spent. This results in providers being driven out of the market due to the added compliance costs.

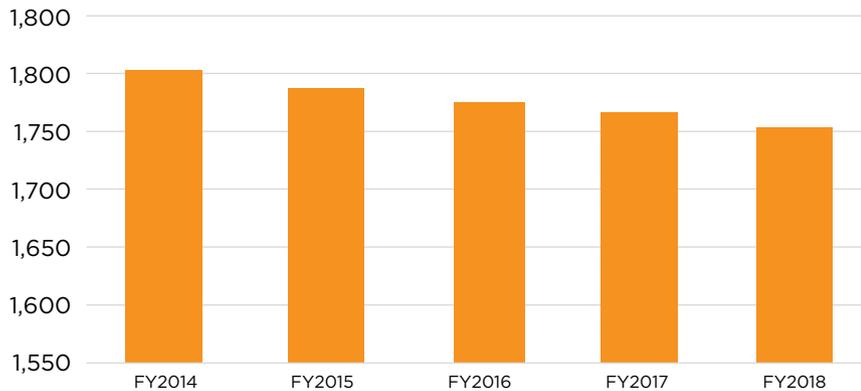
Regulation is a big cause of the crisis

Regulations are a necessary part of childcare—they are there to ensure safety



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Count of Licensed Family Childcare Providers, Fiscal Years 2014-2018



Source: Department of Human Services

and quality. But restrictive regulation contributes to shortage as well as high prices. People are afraid to open in-house facilities, some are forced out due to too much regulation, and even employers who would like to set up childcare facilities on their premises are discouraged by

Minnesotans pay more for childcare than the average cost of rent. It is more than the entire income of poverty-level parents.

the sheer number of regulations that they have to follow. Here are some of the issues with Minnesota's regulations of the childcare industry that possibly contribute to the crisis.

1. Staffing ratios

Every state mandates staffing ratios that are legally enforced. They are there to ensure children get quality service. These ratios differ from state to state. The state of Minnesota, for instance, mandates that centers have one teacher for every four infants (six weeks to 16 months). Some states, however, allow higher ratios for infants, and they tend to cut off infants as anyone between birth to around nine to 12 months. This

means centers can have larger groups for kids age anywhere beyond nine to 12 months, which is not possible in Minnesota. And because teachers are expensive to hire as they require advanced qualifications, providers who have to hire more teachers face high costs of business, which leads to high cost of tuition for parents.

2. Strict enforcement

Childcare providers can also face strict regulation from county licensors. For example, the *Star Tribune* reported that providers have been cited for issues as small as a water heater being one degree higher than the maximum required temperature and for having "prickly grass." These standards are often reinforced by the idea that they lead to quality services, which is not necessarily true. Parents have their own mechanisms for monitoring and rewarding quality, either through ratings or a willingness to pay more for highly rated providers. All that strict enforcement does is make it harder for providers to operate.

3. Strict hiring requirements

Minnesota requires stringent qualifications for providers, which prevents people from entering the childcare industry, especially after considering the low pay. To be a teacher in Minnesota, someone with a bachelor's degree in any field from an accredited college is required to have 1,040 hours of experience as an assistant teacher. Someone with a high school di-

ploma is required to have 4,160 hours as an assistant teacher. It takes 2,080 hours of being an aide or student intern to be an assistant teacher.

4. Inconsistent regulatory landscape

The Minnesota Department of Health and Human Services has delegated licensing power and enforcement to county licensors. However, different county licensors can have varying interpretations of state law and therefore contribute to an inconsistent regulatory landscape. This makes it harder for providers to operate, especially if these laws are strictly enforced.

5. Increased and changing requirements

In 2013, the federal government reenacted the Childcare Block and Development Grant (CBDG) that helps low-income families pay for childcare. As part of the program, states had to enact some changes to their regulatory landscape to improve safety and quality of services. In 2014, training requirements for providers doubled from eight to 16 hours per year. As training costs doubled, so did the costs of hiring substitutes who are few and far between and are also required to have training. Additionally, training courses are hard to find in Greater Minnesota. Subsequent changes have been made the following years, and they have included requiring everyone directly employed by a center to get a background study even if not directly involved in giving care.

Conclusion

Access to childcare is fundamental for the proper functioning of the economy. Lack of access to childcare not only affects parents and businesses, it also affects the whole economy. If people cannot work or have to cut short their hours of work, they lose earnings and businesses lose productivity. This translates to loss of GDP in the economy as well as loss of tax revenue for local, state and federal governments. It is imperative that this crisis be addressed, especially to ensure smooth recovery of the economy. ★

Abolitionism in MINNESOTA

The 1850s produced a string of flashpoints that pushed slavery to the forefront of politics even in Minnesota; and its journey to statehood would be intertwined with the issue.

At 5 a.m. on the morning of Saturday, June 22, 1861, 1,000 men of the 1st Minnesota Volunteer Infantry Regiment boarded the steamers Northern Belle and War Eagle, lying at the wharf of Fort Snelling. The troops were headed for Harrisburg, Pennsylvania, but their journey would take them on to places that would soon become famous: Manassas, Antietam, Fredericksburg, and Gettysburg. Many of them remain buried there to this day.

Why did these Minnesotans travel to the other side of the country to take up arms against men who, just a few months earlier, had been their compatriots? The answer is slavery, and the implacable opposition to it of most Minnesotans.

The contradiction of slavery

The Declaration of Independence, signed on July 4, 1776, declared, “We hold these truths to be self-evident, that all men are created equal, that they are endowed by their Creator with certain unalienable Rights, that among these are Life, Liberty and the pursuit of Happiness.” Yet, as that was being written, 700,000 people were enslaved in North America. The Constitution, drafted in 1787 to help “secure the Blessings of Liberty,” required escaped slaves to be returned from one state to their masters; it counted a slave as three-fifths of a person for apportioning representation in the House of Representatives; and it permitted the slave trade to continue for 20 years.

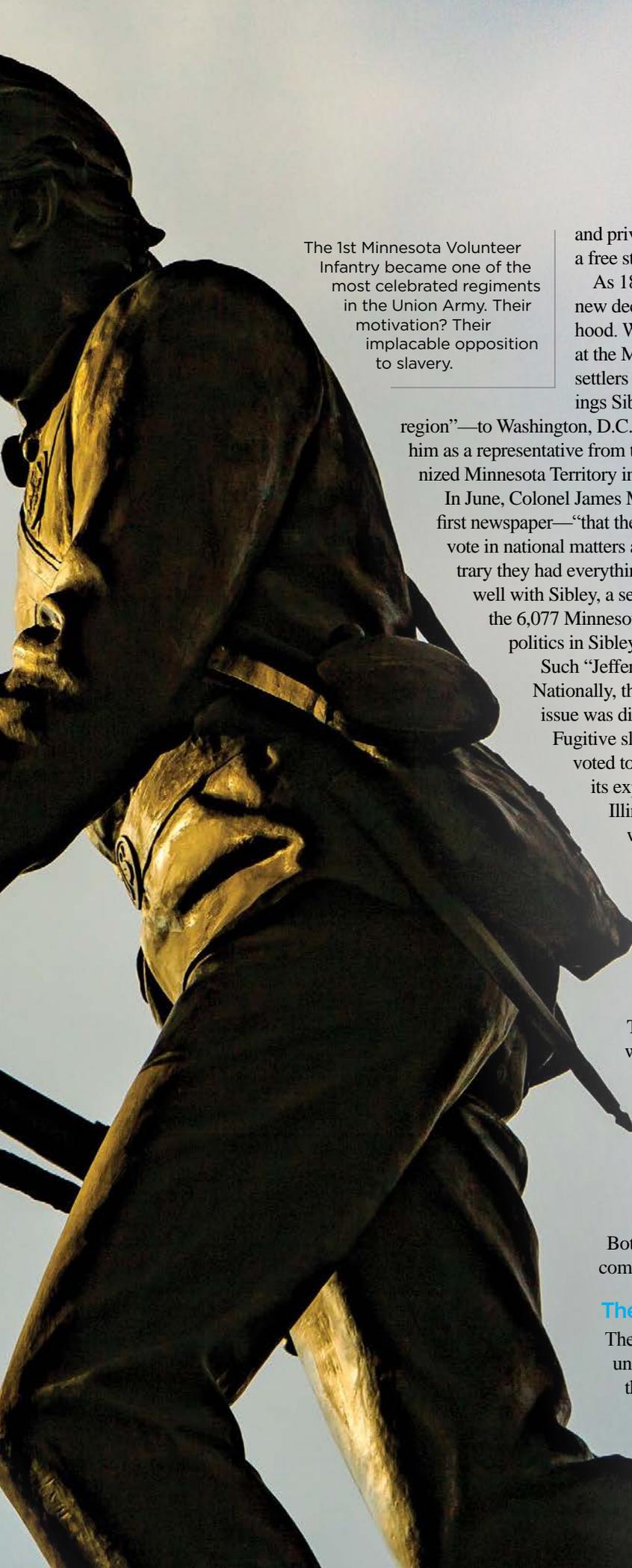
Such glaring contradictions between rhetoric and reality were the product of political compromise between northern states, where the abolitionist cause was gaining ground, and southern states, whose economies depended on slave labor. But, as the young country grew, these compromises were constantly

**By
John
Phelan**

undermined, requiring new ones to reestablish balance. Politics in the fledgling United States was increasingly dominated by the intermittent search for new compromises and the increasing difficulty of reaching them.

Slavery and politics in Minnesota

The lands that would become Minnesota had long-standing legal protections against slavery. The Northwest Ordinance of 1787 forbade slavery in the Northwest Territory, which included Minnesota east of the Mississippi River. Westward expansion necessitated fresh political compromise in 1820. Missouri, part of the Louisiana Purchase of 1803, joined the union as a slave state, balanced by Maine, a free state. This “Missouri Compromise” also barred slavery from the northern portion of the Louisiana Purchase, which included southern and eastern Minnesota. When Congress created the Minnesota Territory in 1849, it declared that its citizens would enjoy the same rights



The 1st Minnesota Volunteer Infantry became one of the most celebrated regiments in the Union Army. Their motivation? Their implacable opposition to slavery.

and privileges as citizens of Wisconsin, which had entered the union a free state in 1848.

As 1850 dawned, it seemed likely that Minnesota politics in the new decade would be dominated by the territory's push for statehood. When Wisconsin became a state, its western border was fixed at the Mississippi and St. Croix Rivers, leaving several thousand settlers to the west in limbo. In August 1848, they sent Henry Hastings Sibley—then “the most eminent and influential person in the

region”—to Washington, D.C. to plead for a territorial government; the House voted to seat him as a representative from the Territory of Wisconsin. President Zachary Taylor recognized Minnesota Territory in March 1849 and named Alexander Ramsey governor.

In June, Colonel James M. Goodhue wrote in the *Pioneer*—the Minnesota Territory's first newspaper—“that there should be no parties in its politics, as the people had no vote in national matters and had no power to command anything, while on the contrary they had everything to ask of Congress.” Indeed, Ramsey—a Whig—worked well with Sibley, a self-described “Democrat of the Jeffersonian school.” Most of the 6,077 Minnesotans recorded by the 1850 Census would have described their politics in Sibley's terms.

Such “Jeffersonian Democrats” dominated Minnesota politics in 1850. Nationally, the party increasingly focused on defending slavery, but this issue was distant from Minnesota. In 1850, only 39 blacks lived here.

Fugitive slaves were rare. But there were rumbles. When Congress voted to seat Sibley, some who did so were opposed to slavery or its expansion and anticipated a new free state. Among them was Illinois Representative Abraham Lincoln. It was also said that, while in the House, Ramsey had written the “proviso” barring slavery from land acquired in the Mexican War. Still, there was little partisanship and Minnesota's Democrats maintained their self-image as the party of Jefferson, safeguarding a republic of rural, landowning citizens. They would not be able to do so for long.

The road to war

The creation of the Minnesota Territory was part of westward expansion that periodically upended established compromises and demanded new ones. The year 1848 brought victory over Mexico in the Mexican-American War and vast new western lands under U.S. control.

Would these be slave states or free states? The 1850s produced a string of flashpoints that pushed slavery to the forefront of politics even in Minnesota, and its journey to statehood would be intertwined with the issue. Both nationally and locally, the possibility of reaching new compromises dwindled then died.

The Fugitive Slave Act

The first flashpoint came in 1850. California applied to join the union as a free state in 1849 and the slave states feared that their power would be diluted and slavery undermined. Eventually, California was admitted, but the compromise

necessary included the passage of the Fugitive Slave Act. This Act increased the power of slave holders to apprehend escaped slaves in free states or territories; gave federal marshals broad powers to arrest runaway slaves; allowed for the jailing and imprisonment of anyone interfering with a marshal; and authorized commissioners to deputize citizens as slave catchers with fines and imprisonment for those who refused. The slave states showed little regard for the rights of free states.

The Kansas-Nebraska Act

Further expansion required a new compromise in 1854—and the next flashpoint. The territories of Kansas and Nebraska were carved out of the Louisiana Purchase, but would they be slave or free soil? The Kansas-Nebraska Act attempted to answer the question using “popular sovereignty,” in which each territory would decide by referendum. And, to allow room for popular sovereignty to work, it effectively repealed the Missouri Compromise’s prohibition of slavery. This directly implicated Minnesota.

The Act “shocked the anti-slavery sentiment of the North and made a deep impression in Minnesota,” wrote one contemporary observer. “A gigantic fraud has been perpetrated,” the *St. Paul Daily Times* thundered in May. “A solemn compact has been violated. Weep, angel of liberty, weep. Call out the people. Let the alarm bell be rung.” In a speech on July 4th, Henry M. Nichols, a prominent abolitionist, said: “This day we have occasion to rejoice with trembling, fair freedom has received a wound. And on this very hour, in many places in our land, the people are holding a funeral service, and tolling the bells as they go to the burial.”

The Kansas-Nebraska Act was a wakeup call to Minnesota’s Democrats, destroying their Jeffersonian fantasy and exposing the Democratic Party as the party of slavery.

The Act’s passage showed the ineffectiveness of the Whig Party as an anti-slavery vehicle, and abolitionists moved to build a new party. On July 4th, “friends of freedom” met in St. Anthony led by John W. North and Charles Gordon Ames to establish one. Instead, they appointed a committee to arrange another meeting. Two days later, a similar meeting in Jackson, Michigan founded the Republican Party. A platform

**Slavery is a big part
of American history.
But so are the
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was adopted at a meeting in St. Anthony called by Ramsey and William R. Marshall in March 1855, which labeled the Kansas-Nebraska Act a “violation of the plighted fate of the South,” called the Fugitive Slave Act unconstitutional, proclaimed “the supremacy of Freedom and free institutions over our whole country,” offered “free land in limited quantities for actual settlers,” and demanded “enactment and enforcement of a Prohibitory Liquor Law.” The Republican party in Minnesota was born.

The Republicans and Democrats would compete in a rapidly changing Minnesota; indeed, the Republican party was a product of that change. The 1860 Census recorded a population of

172,023—an increase of 2,731 percent in 10 years. Most of these immigrants were Yankees bringing their twin political obsessions of abolition and prohibition, such as Nichols and Ames, or the remarkable Jane Gray Swisshelm of St. Cloud. These and the urban financiers and industrialists who began to build Minneapolis were the core of the Republican Party.

The Dred Scott Case

The final flashpoint was the Supreme Court’s notorious decision in the Dred Scott case in 1857. Scott was a slave whose “owner,” a military surgeon, had brought him, his wife, and children to live at Fort Snelling. Fort Snelling was part of the Wisconsin Territory at the time, where slavery was prohibited by the Northwest Ordinance of 1787, so Scott argued that he was a free man. In March, Chief Justice Roger B. Taney’s court decided 7-2 against Scott, ruling that African Americans had no rights that warranted “respect”; that slaves were property, not “persons” entitled to legal protection; and that it was unconstitutional to bar or limit slavery, even outside of the South.

Statehood and slavery

In February 1857, as another step towards statehood and despite opposition from southerners fearing another free state, Congress passed an enabling act allowing Minnesota to draft a state constitution. On June 1st, voters were to elect a convention to meet on July 13th to draft it.

The election took place against the backdrop of the Dred Scott decision and escalating violence between pro- and anti-slavery forces in Kansas. In most states the constitutional convention was a non-partisan affair, but in Minnesota it was inextricably linked with slavery, the issue to the fore with candidates running on party lines. Republicans sought to block slavery’s expansion and secure votes for Minnesota’s blacks, Democrats fought to block both. The *St. Paul Pioneer and Democrat* described the fundamental issue facing the convention as “White Supremacy Against Negro Equality.” Democrats warned that



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Republican control would mean “scenes of violence and bloodshed, as they have in Kansas.” The results were 59 Republicans and 55 Democrats elected.

Upon meeting, the convention split along party lines. After the first day, each held its own convention and drafted its own constitution. A joint committee of five Republicans and five Democrats produced a compromise, with the Democrats conceding Minnesota as a “free” state, and the Republicans conceding on votes for blacks. A referendum ratified the constitution in October, the second section of the first Article reading: “There shall be neither slavery nor involuntary servitude in the State otherwise there is the punishment of crime whereof the party shall have been duly convicted.”

This vote also elected the state’s inaugural governor, and campaigning was bitter. Democrats condemned the “unscrupulous attempt of the opposition” to control the constitutional convention; demanded withdrawal of the subject of slavery from Congress; and endorsed “popular sovereignty.” Republicans condemned the refusal to “recognize the will of the majority”; rejected “Squatter Sovereignty” as “exemplified in the Kansas-Nebraska Bill”; branded slavery a “moral and social evil”; and repudiated the Dred Scott verdict. Sibley defeated his friend Ramsey by just 240 votes out of 35,340 cast and Democrats also won control of the legislature.

But Minnesota’s constitution arrived in Washington, D.C. at the same time as Kansas’ pro-slavery constitution. Congressional Democrats fearing another free state, blocked Minnesota’s application, with one warning: “If you admit Minnesota and exclude Kansas, the spirit of our revolutionary forefathers is utterly extinct if the government can last for one short twelvemonth.” Ultimately, Kansans rejected their constitution and continued as a territory. Minnesota was admitted as a state on May 11th, 1858.

But demographics were shifting against Minnesota’s Democrats. When Ramsey ran for governor in 1859, Republicans assiduously courted German immigrants. Their candidate for state treasurer, Charles Scheffer, was

German born, and German speakers were brought in to address crowds. One speaker, Carl Schurz, wrote: “There was no end of handshaking and of assurances that now they would vote Republican.” Helped by the promise of free land, Ramsey won handily and his coattails were long—the state legislature went Republican, two Republican Representatives were elected, and a Republican was appointed to the Senate. Writing at the turn of the century, a Republican, Charles D. Gilfillan, remembered: “The Republican party was thus entrenched in power in the State of Minnesota, and they have never since been dislodged, during a period of nearly 40 years.” As governor, Ramsey earned a reputation as “one of the most radical” Northern governors, one historian noting: “Minnesota had the most liberal law for the enfranchisement of immigrants.”

1860 and Civil War

Republican and abolitionist confidence was high in Minnesota entering the election year, 1860.

Democrats were divided between those, led by Sibley, who favored popular sovereignty and backed Stephen A. Douglas for president, and those, led by Henry M. Rice, who supported John C. Breckinridge and “federal protection of slavery in the territories.” Republicans were united behind their candidate, Abraham Lincoln.

That summer, a slave named Eliza Winston, brought from the South by her vacationing owner, made local abolitionists aware of her desire for freedom. They secured a writ of *habeas corpus*, freeing her on the ground that she was “restrained of her liberty.” At the subsequent trial, her owner’s attorney cited the Dred Scott ruling, while the abolitionists cited Minnesota’s constitutional guarantee of freedom to all inhabitants. The judge granted the writ, freeing Eliza Winston. Pro-slavery vigilantes gathered at the house of the chief abolitionist, William Babbitt, threatening to tar and feather him. They were dispersed by gun shots, and Winston was evacuated to Canada. To prevent a repeat, Democrats sponsored resolutions in both houses of the state legislature,

permitting slaveholders to bring their slaves with them and hold them to service within Minnesota’s borders for five-month periods, but Republicans defeated these.

The Winston case heightened tensions during the election. Democrats blamed Republicans for her “abduction,” and Republicans branded Democrats “advocates of violence and the enemies of freedom and liberty,” according to one historian. Ignatius Donnelly, Republican candidate for lieutenant governor, foresaw a day when “no human being shall wear the shackles of servitude.” In St. Paul, on September 18th, New York Governor William H. Seward said: “We look to you of the Northwest to finally decide whether this is to be a land of slavery or of freedom. The people of the Northwest are to be the arbiters of its destiny.” On November 6th, with 63 percent, Lincoln won Minnesota with his second largest share of the popular vote after Vermont. Mille Lacs and Kanabec counties gave him over 90 percent of their vote.

Secession followed quickly. The Republican platform was not abolition, but only for halting the spread of slavery. To the south, it amounted to the same thing. A national convention of states was a final attempt at compromise, but matters were too far along. Worried that any compromise might give slavery a further lease of life, Minnesota’s Republicans refused to send delegates. On April 12th, 1861, Confederates fired on Fort Sumter and two months later the men of the 1st Minnesota Volunteer Infantry Regiment were on their way to war.

Slavery is a big part of American history. But so are the efforts to end it. In Minnesota, these efforts were both political, exemplified by Alexander Ramsey and Jane Grey Swisshelm, and military, exemplified by the men of the 1st Minnesota Volunteer Infantry Regiment. Any attempt to make one of these the focus of American history to the exclusion of the other is misleading, and does a disservice to the men and women who fought to end “The Peculiar Institution” and deliver on the promises of the founding documents of the United States. ★

GOODBYE, COLUMBUS

Police did nothing to stop vandals from tearing down a statue of Christopher Columbus.



John Hinderaker

Obviously, the Governor or others in his administration had decided to allow the criminal destruction of the Columbus statue to go forward without impediment.

A number of statues stand on the ground of the Minnesota Capitol. Since 1931, these have included a statue of Christopher Columbus. The Columbus monument was erected, in part, to honor Italian Americans.

Left-wing activists have criticized the Columbus statue for some time, and in the wake of George Floyd's death and the mania for destroying monuments that swept the country thereafter, activists decided to dismantle it. Their intention was no secret. Via Facebook, the activists announced their intent to take down the statue at 5:00 p.m. on June 10.

Minnesota's Department of Public Safety was aware of the planned attack on the Columbus statue, and just after 4:30 p.m., a single state trooper appeared at the monument site. Leaders of the leftist group, arriving at about the same time, explained to the trooper how they planned to destroy the statue. He tried to give them a piece of paper explaining the legal process for removing a statue, which they refused to accept. The trooper then walked away and did nothing to prevent the planned vandalism.

Shortly after 5:00 p.m., the vandals tore down the statue of Columbus. A few minutes later, more than a dozen State Troopers emerged from the Capitol and stood around the now-vacant pedestal. No one was arrested. Obviously, the Governor or others in his administration had decided to allow the criminal destruction of the Columbus statue to go forward without impediment.

Governor Walz released a statement expressing sympathy with the vandals: "As a former social studies teacher, I taught my students that many Minnesotans look at that statue and see a legacy of genocide. Now more than ever, we must take a hard look at the dated symbols and injustices around us." He encouraged lawful process to remove statues, but to this date, nothing has been

done to punish the lawbreakers, even though their identities are known.

Lieutenant Governor Peggy Flanagan was even more supportive of the vandals' criminal destruction of property: "I can't say I'm sad the statue of Christopher Columbus is gone. I'm not. ... The arrival of Christopher Columbus to what is now the Americas set in motion centuries of violence and genocide against the Indigenous people who already lived here."

In their article on the George Floyd riots that convulsed the Twin Cities (p. 18), Tom Steward and John Phelan pose the question whether Governor Walz and Mayor Jacob Frey were unable to stem the looting and arson or were unwilling to act effectively because of an ideological affinity with the rioters and arsonists. In the case of the Columbus statue, there is no doubt. State authorities could easily have prevented the criminal destruction of the monument, but they chose not to do so. The Governor and Lieutenant Governor permitted the vandalism, according to their own public statements, because they agreed with the political aims of the criminals.

Minnesota's Constitution sets forth the powers of the state's governor. They include: "He is commander-in-chief of the military and naval forces and may call them out to execute the laws, suppress insurrection and repel invasion." Here, Governor Walz used the State Troopers not to execute the laws, but rather, to facilitate the flouting of Minnesota's laws.

Walz's actions were not just out of step with Minnesota's Constitution and his duties as governor. They also failed to reflect the strong opinions of the large majority of Minnesotans, as we report in the current *Thinking Minnesota Poll* (p. 30). To be sure, few Minnesotans share the hard left's enthusiasm for destruction of public property. ★

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