



Letters: Guns, Camden and fracking

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By [Letters to the Editor | The Star-Ledger](#)



A child looks out of a bus window as it passes by Saint Rose of Lima Church where the funeral of James Mattioli, 6 is taking place on December 18, 2012 in Newtown, Connecticut. Most children in Newtown returned to classes for the first time since last week's massacre, but survivors of the shooting stayed at home and their school remained a crime scene. In a thin drizzle, yellow school buses once again rolled through the Connecticut town, where some 5,400 children are enrolled. **Getty**

Cling to humanity

Perhaps the gun-loving public and the legislators who refuse to pass gun control laws should be forced, at great length, to study photos of the recent carnage in Newtown, Conn.

I can't imagine anything more horrific than to look at pictures of these little children, some of whom were shot multiple times. Maybe then they will get it, stop clinging to their guns and cling instead to humanity. Remember, guns DO kill people.

Susan J. Waldman, Randolph

Camden's children

We are all so saddened by the news from Newtown, Conn., and vicariously retraumatized by the constant coverage, which we found ourselves turning away altogether.

I found myself saying all day, "What about the daily horrors of our inner cities here in New Jersey? Who is grieving the random murders in Newark? Paterson? Camden?" I was horrified when the police forces were cut back in those cities ... and we sat back and watched the crime rates go up. Who are we? Does this make us monsters, too?

Then, I saw [your perfectly timed article about Sister Helen Cole in Camden](#). Three cheers for you and for the paper for including it among all the hand-wringing about Newtown. I am truly saddened by the mass murder, but I don't hear the outpouring of grief for the weekly murders in Camden.

I am a licensed clinical social worker now in private practice in Hamburg and am the child therapist at our Sussex County child advocacy center, Ginnie's House. I fear the recent Republican stance on entitlements increased the public's view that poor people are to blame for their poverty. And that adds to the emotional content of "these innocent children" of Newtown. Somehow, the children of Camden are guilty for their poverty.

Judy L. Spinney, Hamburg

Fracking waste

This fall, Gov. Chris Christie vetoed an important bill that would ban the disposal of fracking wastewater at New Jersey's wastewater treatment plants. Fracking, a form of nonconventional natural gas drilling, produces millions of gallons of toxic wastewater for each well drilled and Pennsylvania alone is projected to have 60,000 new wells by 2030.

This wastewater contains more than 700 chemicals, including known carcinogens, endocrine disrupters and radioactive materials, potentially destroying important drinking water supplies. With the governor's veto, this waste can continue to come to our state's treatment plants.

This is especially alarming in the aftermath of Hurricane Sandy, where we saw just how vulnerable these facilities are. More than 20 percent of the state's wastewater treatment plants failed and discharged raw waste into waterways. More than 3.3 million people were impacted by the damage.

We got lucky that those discharges did not result in long-term contamination, but in the future, those plants could spew radioactive, toxic fracking waste directly into waterways. The dangers of fracking waste are too great. We need the Legislature to override the

governor's veto to protect our treatment plants, water supplies and communities from this toxic pollution.

Kate Millsaps, N.J. Chapter, the Sierra Club

Helping the hungry

Tom Robertson is correct that food stamps are not meant to be "an unending way of life generation after generation" ([letter, Dec. 12](#)). Yet one-seventh of children in our country are in poverty. Do we not have any concern about the children? What to do?

Even working people earn so low a wage that they need food stamps. The Earned Income Tax Credit provides working Americans with additional income to rise out of the generation-after-generation problem. Ask Congress to support EITC and SNAP.

Frank Siwiec, Bernardsville

Boehner's cliff

I wholeheartedly disagree with columnist John Farmer's viewpoint on House Speaker John Boehner's performance in the negotiations on the resolution of the fiscal cliff (["Boehner's lonely stand in D.C.," Dec. 16](#)).

As we have seen in the earlier rounds of negotiations on the extension of the debt ceiling limit, Boehner (R-Ohio) cowers in fear before the tea party segment of the Republican Party and anti-tax activist Grover Norquist. Boehner failed to deliver his caucus during the previous negotiations as reports say he was threatened with a coup d'état by his lieutenant in the House, Rep. Eric Cantor (R-Va.), after agreeing on a deal with the president that would have raised taxes in return for large cuts in entitlements.

The speaker needs to become a real leader and help craft a grand bargain in which each side relinquishes something it holds dear in return for a healthy package that delivers growth, reduces the deficit and, in the long run, provides benefits to all Americans.

Bill Gottdenker, Mountainside

A sacred symbol

I was disgusted to find the editorial cartoon Dec. 15 that used a Chanukah menorah to describe the effort in Washington to solve financial problems, renaming it "the Festival of Fights."

The menorah is used to celebrate the Jewish Festival of Light and an ancient victory for religious freedom. To make it a symbol of the fighting going on in Washington is despicable. It seems to infer this fight has something to do with Judaism.

It makes me wonder what would have happened if the cartoonist had used a Christian, Hindu or Muslim symbol. My guess is that it would not have been printed.

Is there no sensitivity to Jews?

Patricia Bader, Rockaway

Support network

Friday's front-page article on the poor (["For Jersey's poor, a never-ending fight"](#)) highlighted a 24-year-old single mother with three young children, the youngest of whom is 1 year old. Am I the only person wondering where their father is and why he is not providing support? Why is this woman having children she cannot feed? Oh, I forgot, it's government and the taxpayer's responsibility.

C.A. Sandholt, Neptune

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