

READERS RESPOND

Self control: a valuable life skill that must be taught

While accountability and punitive measures are needed to curb violence among young people, self-control is equally important ("Baltimore pastor: Let's take back our children and our city," Jan. 31). If it is not taught in the home, it must be taught in our child care, educational, and corrective institutions as well as to prospective foster and adoptive parents. Turning away from a perceived offense helps to build character.

Police officials have repeatedly stated that youth often harm others to settle minor grudges and grievances, to get revenge, to show superiority in a controversial or competitive matter. Violence is used to "pay back" others for insults, name-calling, and other minor issues. This must stop.

While strong feelings of anger, hurt and betrayal can be normal, they must be handled in nonviolent ways. Self-control is a godly virtue, but learning it must be undertaken in places in addition to the church.

Let's add it to our basic skills. It could save many lives and much heart ache.

— Margaret D. Pagan, Baltimore

To evaluate Jackson, you have to look at his non-starter games, too

The article, "Five things we learned from the Ravens' 2022 season," (Jan. 24), said, "you don't lightly cast aside a quarterback with a record of 45-16 as a starter."

To properly evaluate Jackson's value to the team, one also has to take into consideration the games in which he was not a starter. He missed eight regular season games. That would make his record effectively 45-24. Plus, one should also add the playoff games in which he and the team did not play, either, because he did not finish or because he lost in earlier playoff rounds. These total 17 games. Adding them would make his record a relatively mediocre 45-41.

Many have warned that Jackson, as a running quarterback, risked a short career due to injury. It seems to have escaped notice that, having failed to finish the last two years due to injuries, that has already happened, making him an extremely poor risk for a long-term, guaranteed contract. Both Jackson and the Ravens realize that, which is why he wants one, and why the Ravens have been reluctant to give it to him.

— James Kelly, Ellicott City

Keep ammunition out of the Chesapeake Bay

There's an issue that's not addressed in the article about the Greenbury Point danger zones ("Cardin, Van Hollen and Sarbanes urge more public input on Navy's proposed Greenbury Point 'Danger Zones,'" Jan. 26)

When they want to close the waters around Greenbury Point because of use of the firing range, that implies that the Navy is firing actual ammunition into the Chesapeake Bay.

While we certainly don't want civilian watercraft in the path of ammunition, we also don't want to pollute the Chesapeake Bay with ammo made of heavy metals, all of which are poison when dissolved in water.

Simulation technology has progressed to the point that Naval Academy cadets can be trained in simulators that will give them a more realistic training experience with live fire than actual live fire on an artificially sanitized firing range. And simulated ammo won't pollute the bay.

— Henry Farkas, Pikesville

Annapolis is Maryland's political capital, but Baltimore is the capital of all else

Maryland is a well run beautiful state with one very major flaw. The one major city, Baltimore, has been neglected for too long ("With his first budget plan in.

MARYLAND VOICES

BALTIMORE SUN.
THURSDAY, FEB 2, 2023

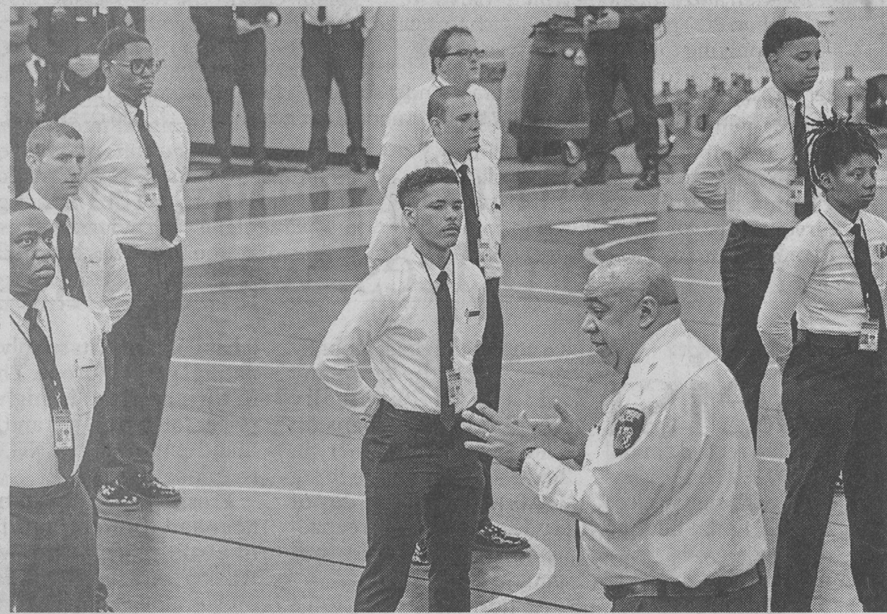
EDITORIAL

Maryland should allow noncitizens to fill key health and public safety job vacancies

The usual anti-immigrant talking heads in the right-wing media may not realize it, but the U.S. military — the one branch of government they reliably see as virtuous — does not require its recruits to be U.S. citizens or even born in this country. Indeed, thousands of immigrants, all living permanently and legally in the United States, enlist each year. Americans should be grateful for their collective service. They defend their adopted homeland and risk their health and well-being so that the rest of us can live safe from the nation's enemies. So why not allow them to provide the same sort of protection for our homes, schools, public areas and places of business from more run-of-the-mill threats?

In recent years, states have been grappling with whether to hire noncitizens as police officers and, in a related issue, whether such individuals should also be given the opportunity to be licensed health care workers. In both cases, there are often chronic labor shortages aggravated by the COVID-19 pandemic. Under Maryland state law, noncitizens can be certified only if they have applied to be U.S. citizens and earn that status within five years. That could change this year, however; the General Assembly is now considering legislation allowing any honorably discharged veteran to be certified as a police officer.

The measure is bound to prove controversial — as all matters involving immigration tend to be under the current political climate — but it shouldn't be. Rarely is there a better opportunity to match an unmet need with underutilized talent. Men and women who can be trusted to patrol the streets of Kandahar or Kirkuk can surely be trusted to walk a beat in Kenilworth Park or Keswick. That's not to suggest we would expect police work to be about firepower; it isn't. But new arrivals with their multicultural and bilingual talents would seem to bring their own set of skills to the table. Who better to help provide outreach to immigrant communities than someone who is a fellow immigrant? Meanwhile, the Baltimore Police Department has experienced chronic staffing problems, often losing officers faster than it can recruit replacements



Baltimore City Police Commissioner Michael Harrison welcomes the new class of 22 police officer trainees at the University of Baltimore on orientation day at the Baltimore Police Academy in March 2022. They undergo 30 weeks of training at the academy, followed by 10 weeks of field training. AMY DAVIS/BALTIMORE SUN

despite signing bonuses and other incentives. Other police departments are in the same boat.

It is particularly laughable that current Maryland law requires police officers to be awarded citizenship within five years. Not just because the wheels of the federal bureaucracy turn slowly but because it suggests that something downright tragic happens if a police officer who was regarded as fully qualified during his first 4 years and 11 months of service had to be shunned after four more weeks in the job. As state Sen. Cheryl Kagan, a Montgomery County Democrat and the bill's lead Senate sponsor points out, the legislation simply allows police departments to cast a "wider net" for recruits.

Sen. Kagan has another piece of legislation, Senate Bill 187, set to be heard Feb. 7 before the Senate Finance Committee that would enable a similarly broadened net for those seeking to fill jobs in a variety of health occupations. It doesn't change any of the standards for licensing involving training, education or other experience, but it would prevent licens-

ing boards from requiring citizenship. Given the health care workforce shortage in Maryland and elsewhere, why is anything beyond proof of legal presence required? Consider, for example, that Maryland taxpayers already pay for public education for such individuals. And now, just at the moment when they can contribute to society in such positions as home health care aide or nurse, we would deny them that opportunity? At least 14 other states have chosen to toss citizenship as a requirement for occupational licensure. Maryland should join the club.

One of these days, we hope the anti-immigrant forces in Congress will recognize what certain people see only as a "border crisis" also offers an opportunity to grow the U.S. economy. That's not to endorse "open borders" but to recognize that current U.S. immigration policy is failing to tap the talents of millions of people who could be valued contributors to society if only given a path to a green card, let alone citizenship. What a waste. But what an opportunity, too.

CARTOON GALLERY

