

What can we do to prevent child abuse and neglect

By Samantha Phipps
Executive Director
FVC of Yancey County

April is both Child Abuse Prevention Month and Sexual Assault Awareness Month. As I state every year, the two of these social issues go hand in hand as we know that child sexual abuse accounts for 20.7% of the types of child maltreatment cases investigated by child protective services social workers every year. The number one type of abuse against children is physical abuse, accounting for 28.3% of recent stats, circa 2014 data in the U.S.

It shouldn't hurt to be a child. That was a quote I recall from years ago that used to be on television often. No, it shouldn't. A child abuse/neglect report is made every 10 seconds in the US and per 2014 data, with an estimated 1,580 children died as a result of abuse and / or neglect. That is four to five children per day.

More than 70% of the children who die as a result of child abuse/neglect are under the age of two and more than 80% were not yet old enough for kindergarten. Eighty percent of child maltreatment fatalities involve at least one parent as the perpetrator of the abuse/neglect.

Not only is child abuse and neglect costly to the individual child involved as his or her life is adversely affected, but it is also costly to society and everyone who pays taxes helps foot

the bill. "For new cases in 2008 alone, lifetime estimates of lost worker productivity, health care costs, special education costs, child welfare expenditures, and criminal justice expenditures added up to \$124 billion dollars." (Child Help. Org)

Chronic child abuse also cuts down the life expectancy of the average child." Individuals who reported six or more adverse childhood experiences had an average life expectancy two decades, or 20 years shorter, than those who reported none." (American Journal of Preventative Medicine, 2009, Vol. 37, Issue 5).

We know these statistics based on longitudinal studies that span decades of time tracking people. Statistics are staggering and useful, but *what can we do* to prevent child abuse and neglect? I argue that violence is a learned behavior. We learn how to be adult human beings when we are tiny little human beings. Violence begets violence is true.

There are child and family life classes offered at our local high school, Mountain Heritage. These classes should be mandatory for every girl and boy. We have to take classes in order to obtain a driver's license, but we do not have to take classes to have babies and be parents!

Be prepared! Take parenting classes before you ever bring a child into this world. Know that you *never, ever* shake a baby.

Crying will not kill your baby, but you or someone shaking your baby can damage him or her for life, or kill your baby.

We learn how to trust another human being, how to have human empathy, when we are quite small, during the first few hours, days, weeks, and months of life. As a baby, we cry and a loving adult needs to pick us up, feed us, change our diaper, hold us and bond/attach to us. If we are neglected during those critical time periods then we stand a very great chance of having attachment and lack of empathy issues later in life.

If you cannot take a class in high school, then ask at your local DSS or your OBGYN, "Where can I take parenting classes?" They are offered for *free* most places and are so very valuable.

It shouldn't hurt to be a child. In the State of North Carolina we are *all* mandated reporters. If you think a child is being abused or neglected. Please make that call to your local child protective services unit or call 911.

The Family Violence Coalition of Yancey County, Inc. is dedicated to breaking cycles of violence, to include violence against children. Together we bring peace on earth.

Samantha Phipps is executive director of Family Violence Coalition of Yancey County, Inc. The 24/7 Crisis Line number is 828 682-0056.

Let's hate hatred toward people different from us

"You ain't from around here, are you?" These words, loosely translated, were probably first uttered by Manteo and Wanchese when Walter Raleigh's settlers first landed on the Outer Banks. What once might have been a conversation starter has now switched to abject hatred toward immigrants.

We've got a history of hating people different from us, beginning with the unwilling immigration of Africans enslaved to plant and harvest crops. We bought and sold them like a plow or a mule.

In 1798, President John Adams, concerned about treason and treachery from foreigners, convinced Congress to give him the power to deport those "dangerous to the peace and safety" of the county with the Alien and Sedition Acts.

At one time or another we have thought "undesirable" the Chinese, Italians, Irish, Jews and now those of Hispanic origin. During World War II, North Carolina played a large role in detaining thousands of Germans at Fort Bragg, Camp Butner and 16 other concentration camps across the state.

But the anti-immigrant hatred has ramped up to levels unexperienced in our lifetimes, sometimes largely for political gain.

If I repeat claims loud enough and often enough, I can convince you that these immigrants are the boogeyman, while detracting attention from other, larger problems.

The hate-isim flames are fanned with charges that immigrants are criminals, rapists and terrorists. The facts refute these assertions, but the charges are repeated and repeated. George



My Spin
By Tom Campbell

Wallace was a demagogue who parlayed these tactics into presidential campaigns, thankfully unsuccessfully.

The anti-immigrant hatred is reinforced by claims immigrants are taking jobs that should go to native born citizens. Employers will tell you they can't find natives to hire. Our citizens won't work for the wages offered, which would be comical were it not so oxymoronic. Who among us wants to pay more for a car, a TV or groceries than we must? We talk out of both sides of our mouths.

Anti-immigrant haters say 51 percent of immigrants receive one or more government services, compared to only 30 percent of native households, running up government costs. These claims are not supported by facts.

Kevin Johnson, immigration expert and dean of UCal's Davis Law School says immigrants cannot be over consuming public benefits because most aren't eligible to receive them in the first place. Those who do qualify are more likely to receive free-and-reduced school lunches, food stamps and Medicaid, along with the benefit of a public education.

It is time for honest conversation about immigration. The crisis, and it does appear to be

rising to the level of a crisis, is caused by three factors. The first is horrible conditions in other countries causing large numbers of people to seek a better life in our country. The real crisis is a congress that can't or won't establish realistic, clearly understandable and enforceable immigration policies. Place the blame squarely on Congress, not the immigrants. But all the overheated hyperbole stands in the way of commonsense, workable solutions.

Secondly, North Carolina is getting browner by the day. The UNC Carolina Population Center reports that in 1970 whites were 76 percent of our population, with blacks consisting of 22 percent. In 2017, whites had declined to 63 percent, blacks were 21 percent and Hispanics had increased from less than 1 percent to 9.4 percent. Deaths now outnumber births among white people in our state and the Census Bureau predicts that by 2045 whites could drop below 50 percent nationwide.

Here's the most important reality. Hate is a destructive emotion. It doesn't feel good on the inside and doesn't do any good on the outside. It is based on fear - the fear we might lose power, control or wealth.

Hate never has and never will win. It hurts the hater more than the hated.

If we must hate, let's hate hatred.

Tom Campbell is former assistant NC State Treasurer and is creator/host of NC SPIN, a weekly statewide television discussion of state issues that airs on UNC-TV Fridays at 7:30 p.m., Sundays 12:30 p.m. Contact him at ncs핀.com.

North Carolina people and communities at risk of being undercounted in the 2020 census

By Ferrel Guillory
Education NC Daily Digest

The Mary Reynolds Babcock Foundation has joined what it acknowledges is a "highly unusual" effort by philanthropies to influence a decision by the U.S. Supreme Court. The Winston-Salem-based foundation is among 30 philanthropic orga-

nizations nationwide that have filed a brief opposing the Trump administration's attempt to insert a disingenuous citizenship question into the 2020 Census.

The foundations tell the justices of their deep concern that the proposed citizenship question will strike fear in households consisting of both citizens and

undocumented residents and thus lead to an inaccurate population profile of the nation. An undercount, they argue, would especially affect people and communities they serve.

"In the South, where the Babcock Foundation works, many communities are deemed hard to count, particularly children, people of color, low-wealth individuals, immigrants, Native American communities and rural populations," says the MRFB blog explaining its joining in the amicus brief. "The addition of a citizenship question is likely to exacerbate the undercount of those communities, thereby diluting their political voices. Undercounting communities of color opens the door to racial gerrymandering, further diminishing representation of already disenfranchised groups."

Coincidentally at the same time the foundations filed their brief, Carolina Demography, a unit of the UNC Population Center, released a blog and a map to identify North Carolina's

READERS' FORUM

NC needs health care for its working families

North Carolina needs to pass HB 655, the NC Health Care for Working Families Act. We say this as Republicans, Democrats and Independents. We say this as residents from every corner of the state, from rural areas and North Carolina's biggest cities.

We say this because we are nurses.

Far too many of our fellow citizens are putting off preventative care because it's too expensive or simply unavailable. Many of these people are forced to decide between paying for prescriptions and putting food on the table. The status quo is not acceptable.

Every day, we see people turn to our Emergency Departments as their only, last options

for healthcare. This is quite literally the most expensive way of paying for healthcare, and the rest of us foot the bill when these patients cannot afford to pay for it.

Other states have closed the coverage gap, adjusted accordingly, and are flourishing. All of our fellow North Carolinians deserve quality, affordable access to healthcare, and HB 655 is the best solution that the General Assembly has seriously considered in a long time.

We all serve in volunteer roles at the North Carolina Nurses Association. The association will be putting out an official news release supporting this legislation, as it should, but we write to you today as

individual nurses, healthcare experts, and voters who strongly believe that passing this bill is vital for the health and wellbeing of our state. We call on our fellow North Carolinians to join us in asking legislators to pass HB 655.

Julie DelCasino, Charlotte
Meka Douthit El, Winston-Salem

Teresa Duncan, Clarkton
Carrie Edgison, Asheville
Thompson Forbes, Greenville
Susan Lane, Boone
Allister Morris, Hickory
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You Decide:

How does North Carolina stack up on taxes?

By Dr. Mike Walden

I need to remind you I'm an economist. I say this so I don't shock you with my next statement. One of the publications I eagerly look forward to each year is titled Facts and Figures: How Does Your State Compare? It's published by a Washington think tank called the Tax Foundation. It's a wonderful book because it gives updated numbers for each state on a variety of tax information.

If you collect several years of the Tax Foundation's Facts and Figures - as I have - they allow you to compare how a state's taxes have changed over time - both in looking at the state itself as well as compared to other states.

So, let's delve in to some tax facts for North Carolina. For examining trends, I'll compare the latest data - usually for 2017 - to 2010, which was the first year after the Great Recession.

First is the big picture. In 2017, North Carolina ranked 41st highest among states in state public revenue per capita (per person). Most of this revenue is from taxes, but some is also from fees and licenses. In 2010 the state's ranking was 39th highest.

However, in terms of actual dollars paid, the North Carolina state tax bill per person was \$4635 in 2010 and \$5178 in 2017. Although this was an increase of 11.7 percent, the hike in the tax bill was less than the 12.3 percent increase in average prices in the economy over the same time period - also called inflation. So in terms of "constant purchasing power dollars" (say that ten times!), North Carolina's per person tax bill fell from 2010 to 2017.

If local North Carolina taxes are added to the state tax bill, the results are slightly different. North Carolina's ranking of state and local taxes per capita did drop relative to other states. But in terms of the dollar amount, the combined state and local tax bill in North Carolina rose, even after adjusting

for inflation. This means the reduction in tax taxes - after accounting for inflation - at the state level was partially offset by increases in local taxes.

Now let's bore down to the kinds of taxes North Carolina uses, how they have changed and how the changes compare to other states. Here I will use state and local taxes combined.

In 2016 (latest year available for the state and local taxes together), about 30 percent of North Carolina's tax revenues were from the individual income tax, one-fourth came from the general sales tax, another one-fourth was raised by the property tax, and the rest originated from a variety of smaller taxes and fees.

Compared to the average of all states, North Carolina raises relatively more from the individual income and general sales taxes and takes in relatively less from the property and corporate income taxes, as well as from other taxes and fees.

Some of these differences have gotten larger this decade. In 2010 North Carolina's income tax on corporations was higher than the national average for states. By 2016 it was lower, and the rate is now among the lowest for states that have a corporate income tax. The difference was made up by increasing the share of public revenues from the individual income and sales taxes.

This shift was part of a strategy to make the state more attractive to businesses by lowering the tax burden on corporations. The statistics do show that since 2010 North Carolina has added payroll jobs at a faster rate than the nation. Of course, the question is always, why? Was it due to the lower corporate tax rate or other factors?

There's one tax most of us pay at least every week that I haven't discussed. This is the gas tax we're charged as we fill up at the pump. Most states - including North Carolina - put these revenues in a separate account apart from other tax

revenues.

North Carolina's gas tax per gallon rose from 11.8 cents per gallon in 2010 to 18.05 cents per gallon in 2019, an increase much, much faster than general inflation. In terms of North Carolina's ranking among the states, North Carolina's gas tax rate rose from 14th highest in 2010 to 13th highest today.

There are two major factors behind the big jump in our gas tax. The first is affecting all states, and it is the shrinkage of the gas tax base. As vehicle fuel efficiency has improved, cars and trucks are able to drive more miles per gallon of gas. Of course, more miles driven generates more wear and tear on our roads and the need for more road spending. But with every gallon of gas translating to more miles driven, the gas tax rate has needed to rise to provide the same revenue.

The second factor is unique to North Carolina and a few other states. It is that North Carolina doesn't use other taxes - such as property and general sales taxes - that many states tap to supplement their gas tax money. Of the revenues generated in North Carolina for transportation, 55 percent comes from the gas tax. The remainder comes from license and registration fees and a special tax on vehicle sales.

I'll let you decide if North Carolina has both the correct levels and kinds taxes revealed in the annual Facts and Figures. But before I close, I do want to add another personal note. Besides Facts and Figures, I do anxiously await each year the new John Grisham legal thriller!

Walden is a William Neal Reynolds Distinguished Professor and Extension Economist in the Department of Agricultural and Resource Economics at North Carolina State University who teaches and writes on personal finance, economic outlook and public policy.

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