

OPINION

# Letters to the Editor — Texans of the Year, big money in politics, higher salaries

Readers praise the selection of the Houston microbiologists as Texans of the Year; advocate to remove big money in political campaigns; stress that high salaries, not just COLA, will increase the number of teachers and Dallas County employees.



Dr. Maria Elena Bottazzi, Co-Director of the Center for Vaccine Development at Texas Children's Hospital and Associate Dean of the National School of Tropical Medicine at Baylor College of Medicine, laughs with Dr. Peter Hotez, Co-Director of the Center for Vaccine Development at Texas Children's Hospital and Dean of the National School of Tropical Medicine at Baylor College of Medicine, on Dec. 16, 2022, in Houston. (Smiley N. Pool / Staff Photographer)



By [Letters to the Editor](#)

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## Perfect Texans of the Year tribute

Re: "Texans of the Year: María Elena Bottazzi and Peter Hotez — Houston microbiologists gave the world a patent-free COVID-19 vaccine and are on the trail of eradicating neglected tropical diseases," Sunday editorial

I have had a few issues with some recommendations and editorials from *The Dallas Morning News*. However, the 2022 Texans of the Year is definitely not one of them! Thank you for the beautifully written, informative and insightful tribute to these two outstanding, brilliant, humanitarian, selfless people.

The Sunday tribute was a perfect tone in which to start the new year. Having Drs. Bottazzi and Hotez working and living in Texas is truly remarkable. We need a million more people just like them! Thank you.

*Dan Engelke, Flower Mound*

## **Thanks owed to doctors**

The research and the journalism of this editorial are worthy of a Pulitzer Prize for excellence. The recipients of the Texans of the Year award are worthy of a Nobel Peace Prize. Drs. Peter Hotez and María Elena Bottazzi's dedication to science, medicine, and children are beyond reproach.

The English language doesn't have the superlatives to describe their contributions to the health of children around the entire globe. To *The Dallas Morning News* and to Hotez and Bottazzi, a heartfelt thank-you from a grateful parent and grandparent.

*Jerry Frankel, Plano*

## **A column to relish**

Re: "Their last phone call — Nixon and LBJ talked about Vietnam, Cotton Bowl and Truman's funeral on this day in 1973," by James David Robenalt, Monday Opinion.

Having lived through this very nasty period in our history, I relished the column by Robenalt. He did a fine job including many details that were not well known. He put it together like a historian should with all the nuances and bad feelings included.

Who knew that LBJ's family was replete with men having heart problems? The phone call between two men who hated each other was a story in itself.

*Bob Dewberry, North Dallas*

## **Megadonors blight on democracy**

Re: "Donors not all sold on Trump — His big-money Texas backers may play the field in GOP contest," Monday news story.

This story about rich Republican megadonors was disturbing not because of their support or lack of support for Donald Trump, but because it shows how ultra-rich individuals and business people influence candidate selection through their financial support or lack thereof. The Democrats have their own megadonors doing the same thing.

The use of large sums of money to influence candidate selection and ultimately influence those elected officials is a blight on our democracy. The Supreme Court opened the door to this corruption by its Citizens United decision.

Any politician who says these megadonors do not influence their decision-making is not being honest. Something must be done about money in politics. The current politicians who benefit from this will not do anything to change it. Citizens and the media must keep putting a spotlight on this issue to make change happen.

*Richard Bach, Garland*

## **Raise pay to attract teachers**

Re: "One solution for teachers," by Gene Lantz, Tuesday Letters.

Cost-of-living adjustments for teacher pensions to solve the teacher shortage? That's just another spin to get COLA for teacher pensions. Such an increase would not incentivize people to work as a teacher.

Just like the Teacher Retirement System, the Texas County District Retirement System does not give adjustments for inflation to pensioners. Dallas County also has a huge employee shortage. If Dallas County chose to give their retirees a cost-of-living increase, would new people flock to work for the county? Doubtful. However, increasing salaries would attract employees and reduce the shortage of workers.

This is probably true for the teaching industry as well. Maintaining a pension plan's long-term financial health for future pensioners has to be a critical concern for pension administrators. If laws are changed to require COLA increases for teacher pensions, then make it across the board to all pensions in the government sector. Do not, however, be so short-sighted with COLA increases to reward current retirees to the detriment of the pension plan and future retirees. Increase employee salaries if your real goal is to increase the number of teachers and Dallas County employees.

*Janet Lusk, Far North Dallas*

## **Constitution requires cooperation**

The essence of an enduring democracy is a majority with the vision and courage to rule and a minority willing to be ruled. There is no alternative because there is nothing that can be built in the day that cannot be torn down in the night.

Our Constitution set forth several goals that cannot be attained without the cooperation of the entire population. We cannot “form a more perfect union” if there are those among us who will hold themselves apart from their neighbor.

We cannot “insure domestic tranquility” if there are those who will not live in peace with others. We cannot “provide for the common defense” if there are those who conspire with domestic or foreign enemies of our Constitution.

We cannot “promote the general welfare” if some of us are unable to think beyond our own advantage. And we will never “secure the blessings of liberty” if some of us see liberty only as license to prey on others.

A democracy is a fragile institution demanding the cooperation of all its citizens.

*Stephen L. Love, Dallas*

## **Grow up and unite for U.S.**

What is American politics coming to? For the first time in over a century, the main candidate, Kevin McCarthy, for House speaker has fallen short of the required votes. This seems ridiculous given that the Republicans have the majority, but a minority of this majority seem to have lost the plot. Are they Donald Trump supporters who cling to the delusion that he should be the president now or will be next time?

It's time for a few people to grow up and unite for their own and the country's benefit.

*Dennis Fitzgerald, Melbourne, Australia*

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