

Readers Write

Immigration policy

To underscore Al Norman's history of opposition to affordable health care (My Turn, Jan. 4), consider the following facts.

According to U.S. Customs and Border Protection, border crossings by Central American refugees — the border crossings Trump and Fox News rage about 24/7 — ranged from 20,000 to roughly 60,000 people per month in 2018. In February 2019, more than 76,000 migrants crossed the border without authorization, an 11-year high and a strong sign that stepped-up prosecutions, new controls on asylum and harsher detention policies have not reversed what is a powerful lure for thousands of families fleeing violence and poverty. They trek across hundreds of miles of unforgiving desert, vulnerable to exploitation by human smugglers and risk family separation, only to experience cruel treatment and sometimes death in custody of US border agents.

Now consider that in Los Algodones, Mexico alone, nearly five times as many American "dental refugees" (up to 6,000 every day) are crossing the border in the opposite direction. In contrast to receiving "cruel treatment," U.S. citizens seeking affordable dental care can park in Yuma, Ariz. for \$5, walk across the border, get the help they need and come back for dinner.

Then there is the fact that the high prices of health care in the U.S. also finance a politically powerful health care industry, which

means lowering prices will always be difficult.

For a typical angioplasty, a procedure that opens a blocked blood vessel to the heart, the average U.S. price is \$32,200, compared with \$6,400 in the Netherlands, or \$7,400 in Switzerland. An injection of Herceptin, an important breast cancer treatment, costs \$211 in the United States, compared with \$44 in South Africa.

Our immigration policy allows desperate U.S. citizens to get affordable health while denying it to those coming the other way.

JOHN BOS
Shelburne Falls

Nuclear power

I am writing in response to your front page article about Joshua Goldstein's opinions on the bright future of nuclear power on Jan. 7. First, in my opinion, this is an opinion piece in the guise of news.

Printing it without any counterpoint of other opinions, as a front page news story no less, is not responsible journalism. Second, nuclear power generation is not cheaper than coal and natural gas. From mining to energy production to management of the most toxic waste on the planet, it is all subsidized heavily by us taxpayers. Why? Partly because it helps the U.S. government keep up its stockpile of nuclear weapons.

Third, yes, sure, nuclear power generation could be made safer, but it will never be safe. It uses some of

the most incredibly noxious, lethal fuel imaginable (uranium) and generates all kinds of highly radioactive particles and materials that will be poisonous for millennia. (What nuclear power folks call "spent fuel" taken out of the reactors is in fact extremely radioactive.)

But that begs that question of why isn't it safer than it is? The answer is that nuclear power is generated by profit-making companies that have an incentive to cut costs and rely on taxpayer bailouts. And it's because the Nuclear Regulatory Commission doesn't regulate the industry; it is in its pocket. Just ask the folks around the Plymouth Nuclear Station how clear that is to them!

Yes, sadly, there are some "environmental" groups that think nuclear power is a good bridge away from fossil fuels. And there are many, many more that know that anything that creates that much toxicity throughout the entire fuel cycle shouldn't even be murmured in the same breath with "green."

ANN DARLING
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Responsibility

Why do women have to accept everything that results from their pregnancy? Surely, the man who got them that way bears some of the responsibility as well.

JIM ADAMS
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