

Opinions

Everybody has one...

Time to Volunteer

Union County Fire Department is a combination department. That means we are made up of career firefighters (full-time paid) and volunteer firefighters. It takes both to get the job done. The department, as well as the entire nation, has seen a decline in volunteer firefighters. The explanation for this decline is unclear. Regardless the reason, every fire department is in need of volunteers. The application period for volunteer firefighters is now open, and we are looking for volunteers.

What do you get out of volunteering at the fire department? First, you get valuable training that can save you, your family, and people in your community. The initial training involves approximately 60 hours of fire ground training where volunteers learn how to safely operate on a fire or emergency scene. From there, the level of certifications and training is limitless. A person may take training in emergency management, emergency medical response, auto extrication, search and rescue, apparatus engineer (pumping the fire truck), and more advanced firefighting.

Second, you get to do things and see things that most people never experience. Volunteer firefighters respond to a multitude of emergency incidents. These incidents can range from car accidents to brush fires to searches. Each incident is different and brings unique challenges that firefighters must overcome.

The best thing about being a volunteer firefighter is that you get to be part of a unique group of people who are dedicated to helping their community. It's a great feeling to know at the end of the day that you, as a volunteer firefighter, were instrumental in helping a person in need. It takes special men and women to make this commitment, which includes training, responding, and being there to help their community. That could be you.

Any person who wants to be a volunteer firefighter can simply fill out an application at the headquarters station. If the person qualifies, the person will be placed in the initial training. After that initial training, volunteer firefighters will be able to respond to emergency calls that they receive on their handheld radio or cell phone.

Volunteering in the fire department can be an extremely rewarding experience. For more information, please contact Union

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Fire Dept. from Union County Fire Chief
David Dyer



America's Memory

If one of my sons died as a soldier, I would ask the question on the heart of every Gold Star Family: For what exactly did my son die? For his country? And what exactly is the U.S.A., given it's not a continent or ethnic group? America is an idea. The founders embarked on The Great Experiment to "secure the Blessings of Liberty to ourselves and our Posterity." "It's a republic," Benjamin Franklin pronounced, "if you can keep it."

Are we keeping it? Are we avoiding the bewitching ideas that crumbled the great powers of the past? Is America conserving its unalienable rights? Cultural commentator Os Guinness thinks not. "America has succumbed to the seductions and illusions of its unprecedented power and (post-WWII) prosperity. America has come to mistake freedom with the pursuit of unappeased appetites, it has trifled with its ideals and bartered truth for power, heroism for celebrity, goodness and beauty for entertainment and diversion, self-discipline for comfort and convenience, and self-reliance for welfare and dependency. In the process America has...lost its soul and inner strength." A grieving family needs to know their hero sacrificed for something far better than that. We join them in hoping and praying for America to merit their sacrifice.

This is not about "Christian nationalism," however it is defined. This is, however, to point believers to the path forward, especially those who may have allowed their emotional investment in the politics of the moment to obscure their mindset and unique calling as Christians. I borrow from Rod Dreher, who writes a challenge for such a time as this to the church in the West. "We have to return to the roots of our faith, both in thought and in practice. We are going to have to learn habits of the heart forgotten by believers in the West... change our lives, and our approach to life, in radical ways. In short, we are going to have to be the church, without compromise, no matter what it costs." We "are the light of the world." Jesus said, and in a secondary way, that is good for America. "A city on a hill cannot be hidden" (Matt. 5:14).

We share in the purpose of Jesus. "For this I have come

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All Things New
Wayne Fowler



Commissioner's Questions

Q. In last week's Q & A, you mentioned county ordinances. What is an ordinance?

A. The Georgia Constitution spells out some basic requirements for local legislation. In order to perform its various functions, Union County Government enacts its own legislation, usually in the form of an ordinance. An ordinance is a permanent rule of conduct - legislative enactment. An ordinance is equal to a municipal statute, and it governs matters not already covered by federal or state law. Union County may adopt clearly reasonable ordinances, resolutions, or regulations relating to county property, affairs, and government. Union County may also adopt ordinances to protect and preserve the public health, safety, and welfare in the unincorporated areas of the county so long as they are not "preempted" by the state. Some examples of Union County ordinances address issues such as animal control, short-term rentals, and amplified sound.

Q. What is the difference between an ordinance and a resolution?

A. When compared to an Ordinance (which generally provides permanent rules of conduct or government), a resolution usually deals with matters of a special or temporary character. In other words, a Union County ordinance is a legislative act, and a resolution is an expression of opinion or mind or policy temporarily concerning some particular item of business coming to the County's knowledge. Some examples of resolutions passed in Union County include appointing Union County citizens to local Boards, setting election qualifying fees, and declaring local states of emergency, just to name a few.

Q. What is the difference between an ordinance and a proclamation?

A. Whereas an ordinance generally provides permanent rules of conduct or government, a proclamation is not law. Instead, a proclamation is a formal public statement. A proclamation is usually issued honoring an organization, a person or a group, for an achievement or simply as an honor. Additionally, proclamations signify the importance of a community event, significant achievements by community members or to bring atten-

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Q & A from Union County Commissioner
Lamar Paris



Letters to the Editor

Thank You Pastors

Dear Pastors of Blairsville,

My husband and I would like to thank you from the bottom of our hearts for your prayers and response to the letter I hand delivered to some of you Wednesday, May 8, regarding the 90-day trial of open carry of alcohol in our town. I was so happy to hear Monday morning, May 13, that the City Council decided against it. They had received several signed letters from you, and our voices were heard. We prayed hard that our pastors would have done all, to stand, when it came to this very bad idea for the people of our community. Blairsville needed not only our prayers, but our voices to communicate our concerns. I'm sure there were others as well, and I am thankful for all who took a stand.

I have learned that TEAM stands for "Together Everyone Accomplishes More." It is easy to think and to pray, and even to complain, but

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Let All Voices Be Heard

Dear Editor,

Georgia is the first state I've lived in that has closed ballots, i.e., you can only vote within your chosen party. I was upset to see that I couldn't cast a vote for sheriff, or school board, or judgeships that affect my daily life, because there were only one party's candidates running for those offices.

I think that all candidates - particularly for law enforcement offices, such as sheriff - should appear on all ballots, regardless of party, because law enforcement is required to uphold the law equally for all citizens within their jurisdiction, not just those who belong to one political party or another. The law is the law. It applies to literally everyone equally (or is supposed to).

Therefore, a sheriff election should be fully open, and voters of any party should be able to cast a vote for the person who is sworn to protect

See St. Lawrence, page 7A

Thank You

Dear Editor,

Steve Rowe, from the Chamber of Commerce, presented me with the Citizen of the Year Award for 2023 at the Commissioner's meeting on May 16. This was a surprise to me. I had no idea I was receiving this award. My son, John, told me he was receiving an award and wanted all his family to be there for the presentation. I was not prepared to speak because it was such a surprise to me. I would like to thank people I did not get to thank at the meeting.

First of all, I would like to thank Steve Rowe and the Chamber of Commerce for choosing me for the Citizen of the Year Award. This is such an honor to me and I appreciate it so much.

I would like to thank my husband, Steve, and my sons, John and Michael, for their love and support with all my endeavors over the years. I would like to thank my sisters, Bobbie

See Hill, page 7A

Convinced Yet?

Dear Editor,

So, as a lot of you know, I've been writing in and telling y'all my opinion of the current resident of 1600 Pennsylvania Ave. Who am I? I'm every man. I'm no one of consequence. I'm an American. I believe he's weak. I believe he's a criminal and I believe he is a man so lacking in morals he will do anything for the attainment, maintenance of and centralization of power. Not convinced yet? Need more evidence? OK.

Anyone who has been paying attention knows all about Sheriff Joe's successful extortion of Ukraine in March of 2016, but if you don't, let's recap. Joe Biden was put in charge of relations with Ukraine by then President Barack Obama. Then, when a Ukrainian prosecutor was investigating corruption at the energy company Burisma, a company that at the time had Biden's

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A Lesson in Friendship

As a child, I grew up in southern Georgia in a very quiet and calm town. To me, Fitzgerald was a perfect place to live - the kind of a place where everyone knows almost everyone else. Next door was my best friend; she was born twenty days after I was, so our relationship started out very young. Her name: Gail. If one could combine all the positive terms surrounding the true meaning of friendship, you would have a glimpse of who Gail is... to this day. It was indeed a very tragic day when my family had to move away. We ended up in Florida, 300 miles from where Gail was. However, we were faithful to keep in touch.

While I was recovering from a collapsed lung during my first year of junior college, Gail convinced her mom to drive the distance to check on my well-being - 300 miles just to see if I was doing okay. Their visit was only for a weekend, but it mattered to Gail. Such friendship is not measured by a spatial distance. The length of time and space is not even questionable. It didn't even merit a conversation between Gail and her mom about "should we go see Ray" or "should we wait" - "Mom, gas up the car, pack the luggage, and let's head out now."

This is unquestionable, authentic friendship.

Impeachable Offense

Actions speak louder than words - and President Biden's latest action is an impeachable offense.

In the months following Iran-backed Hamas terrorists' brutal October 7th attack on Israel, President Biden has routinely claimed that his commitment to Israel is "ironclad." Yet this month, he confirmed reports that the White House is halting shipments of lethal aid to Israel if Prime Minister Netanyahu orders a major invasion of Rafah, a city in the southern Gaza Strip.

While Biden affirmed the U.S. will continue providing defensive weapons to Israel, he announced that his Administration is withholding certain offensive weapons and artillery shells due to his concern for civilians in Gaza.

Notably, the Israel Defense Forces' combatant-civilian death ratio is roughly 1:2, meaning that for every Hamas terrorist killed,

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Successful Mental Health
Dr. James Ray Ashurst
PH.D.



Miss Pollardi

Not long after I was born, my father lost his job at the textile mill and our family moved to Chicago. Dad soon found a job working as a day laborer on a carpentry crew. At night Dad attended a school for carpenters through a local labor union. An acquaintance of Dad was also attending this same school. One windy day this young man was working on a skyscraper that was more than 50 stories tall. The young man was carrying a piece of plywood when a burst of wind carried him off the skyscraper into the thin air. The young man didn't panic. He simply clung to the plywood and guided back to the building and onto another floor.

After hearing about this young man's experience, Dad decided on another vocation. He applied for and secured a job with a Finance company in a place called Cicero. Soon Dad found himself in a management training position under the guidance of a man by the name of Fitzgivans. Mr. Fitzgivans was a man which thought hill people were inferior in intelligence. Dad said, "My new boss was not hateful or mean, he simply thought he was smarter than me because I was from northern Alabama." He was always explaining things to Dad in a very condescending manner.

One phase of management training required of Dad was the interview process. Dad had to practice interviewing potential customers seeking loans. After a grueling day of practicing these interviews, Fitzgivans told Dad, "Paul, you must learn to get personal with potential customers. Through the interview you must try to determine the best way to help your client." The very next day he was training another potential manager, and Dad was working the front desk when he walked Miss Pollardi.

Miss Pollardi told the receptionist she wanted to talk with someone about a loan. So, Dad invited the elderly lady into the interview room. Dad asked about her needs, and she indicated she needed a \$250 loan. Dad asked about her ability to pay back the loan. The 80-year-old lady explained that she was an entertainer. Dad asked her to clarify that statement, and much to his surprise, she stood up and began her routine. Dad quickly realized the elderly lady was a stripper and stopped her. He explained that since he was nothing more than a trainee he could not make a decision. Dad said, "However, my supervisor is here today, and he will be able to go through this interview and make a decision about your loan." She was asked to remain in the interview room while Dad retrieved Mr. Fitzgivans.

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Around The Farm
Mickey Cummings



Chamber of Commerce

What another great speaker! Thanks to Agriculture Commissioner Tyler Harper for spending time with us at the Union County Schools Agriscience Center and providing us with information on what is going on with agriculture in the State of Georgia. Georgia is still the number one producer of peanuts and pecans (even if Alabama is trying to steal the title), and we are now shipping to India, which has really expanded the market. Agriculture is one of the largest economic engines in the State of Georgia and one of the most important industries for both the State and the Nation. From the use of mules to plow the fields to now using self-driving tractors; farming in Georgia has come a long way. Keep an eye on our website or contact the Chamber about being added to our emails so you will not miss out on our upcoming speakers, programs, or events.

Again, congratulations to our 2024 graduates, and we hope you have a bright and successful future.

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Blairsville - Union County Chamber President
Steve Rowe



Watering Plants

All plants, but especially annuals (such as veggies) and freshly planted perennials, are affected by dry soil, because their root systems are not yet large enough to support the plant and do not yet efficiently collect water from surrounding soils. There is a fine balance to be observed when irrigating plants, though: too much water will wash nutrients away from young roots and may cause rot, while too little or shallow watering will either allow the plant to dehydrate or bring the roots too close to the hot surface of the soil.

In general, vegetable plants would rather have more thorough and less frequent watering. When the entire topsoil layer is saturated at least twice a week, the roots of a vegetable plant will tend to grow downward, towards the damper and cooler soil beneath them. Not only will the root system collect water more efficiently, it will also draw the roots away from the drier and hotter surface of the soil. This promotes a healthier plant growth pattern, reducing the need for external watering when there is a rain and lowering the chances of the root system being attacked by unwanted fungi.

In the case of other young transplants, such as fruit trees, bushes and shrubs, flowering perennials and other ornamental plants, the amount of water will usually vary due to the soil it was planted in, the size of the original root ball and plant, and the type of plant being watered. For example, a young apple tree from a 3-gallon pot transplanted in clay-based soil will require less frequent watering than a group of raspberries starts in the same soil, due to the higher amount of water loss through the leaves (transpiration) in the raspberry starts. It is always best to check the sticker or plant tag that came with the plant for advice first, but as a general rule of thumb, water trees and ornamental shrubs enough to keep the soil 4 to 6" around the root ball (including below it) moist, but not soggy, every other day that it does not rain. Continue this until they are established. For starts such as blueberries, raspberries and blackberries, hydrangeas, and vining flowers and fruits (like clematis), water 4-6" around the root ball every day it does not rain until they are established in the soil.

Common sense applies in this process as well: if the soil around the plant is still about as moist as it should be at day 2, then hold off on watering until it begins to dry again. A good "quick-n-dirty" test for soil moisture is to grab a handful, squeeze it in your hand, and let go. Optimal moisture content is when most of the soil is still in a ball in your hand, but when you touch it,

Watching and Working
Jacob Williams



North Georgia News

Published since 1909 • Legal Organ of Union County

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Website: www.nganews.com • Email: northgeorgianews@hotmail.com • Mail: P.O. Box 2029, Blairsville, GA 30514

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Publication No: 001505

Advertising, News deadlines Friday at 4 p.m. • Mail Service for all subscriptions except 30512, 30514 & 30572 (Union County) - One Year \$45 INCLUDING UNION COUNTY CUSTOMER REQUEST MAIL SERVICE. In county, carrier delivered subscription is \$10. All subscriptions must be paid in advance. NORTH GEORGIA NEWS is published weekly by NGN/TCH, Inc., 266 Cleveland Street, Blairsville, Georgia, 30512. Entered as Second Class Matter as of Dec. 24, 1988, at the Post Office in Blairsville. NORTH GEORGIA NEWS is not responsible for errors in advertising beyond the cost of the actual space involved. All advertisements are accepted subject to the Publisher's approval of the copy and to the space being available, and the Publisher reserves the right to refuse any advertisement.

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tion to a county's role in significant events. Union County has issued proclamations to recognize such things as Master Gardner Appreciation Day, the United States Navy Seabees 82nd Birthday, and Child Abuse Prevention Month just to name a few.

Q. What does local ordinance violation mean?

A. An ordinance violation is a charge issued by Union County Government for violations of ordinances. In many cases, a person may unknowingly violate a rule because he or she did not even know the activity was illegal. It is important to note that this type of violation is typically processed in the local courts as opposed to the state circuit courts. This means it is not the same as a criminal charge; rather, it is typically civil rather than criminal in nature. However, these violations can still incur fines in addition to other consequences.

Q. What are some examples of ordinance violations?

A. Some examples of lo-

cal ordinance violations are underage drinking, building code violations, noise violations, and animal control violations. A citation for a Union County ordinance violation is not as serious as a misdemeanor or felony charge, but an individual can still face stiff penalties. Violations can result in fines and the loss of a building permit or business license. Under certain circumstances, a violation can be upgraded to a criminal misdemeanor charge. This means the violation could appear on a person's background check.

Sources: ACCG. (2024, January 12). *County Homerule and Local Legislation*. <https://www.accg.org/docs/handbook/Counties%20Sources%20and%20Limits%20of%20Power.pdf>

National Association of Counties. (2024, January). *America's County Governments: A Short Primer on our History, Definitions, Structures, and Authorities*. https://www.naco.org/sites/default/files/2024-02/2024%20County%20Government%20Primer_final.pdf

Hill... continued from Page 6A

Wilson and Rosella Williams, for always supporting me in my efforts. Family is very important to me.

My years as director at the Senior Center were mentioned. This was a true calling for me, not a job, and every day was a blessing. When I walked through the doors I thanked God for sending me there. Every senior who attended while I was director was a good friend to me, and it took all of us to keep the center running well, and they were all willing to help.

I would like to thank the seniors at the center, our community, our Commissioner

Lamar Paris, County Manager Larry Garrett, County Clerk Jennifer Mahan, all the staff at the Commissioner's Office. I would like to thank all my friends who attended the "surprise" meeting. I would like to thank the North Georgia News for all the years the staff published our fundraiser letters and covered what was happening at the Senior Center!

We all have a purpose on this earth. I truly believe we are here to help each other and make life better for any and all we can. We should always reach out and lend a hand to help others.
Kathy Hill

Rains... continued from Page 6A

son Hunter on its board. Biden called up Ukraine and told them that he was withholding \$1 billion of U.S. aid to them until that particular prosecutor was fired. He was fired, and the aid was approved. As I have stated before, Biden was so pleased with himself that he bragged about his extortion of Ukraine at a meeting of The Council of Foreign Relations, and I believe the video of him proudly admitting his crime is still up on YouTube. Look it up.

Rules for Thee and Not for Me: Next we have Biden's handling of classified documents. Biden was in possession of some classified documents for over 20 years. Here's the rub and the difference between what President Trump did and what Biden did. Biden was never president during the majority of the time that he had these documents. He was a senator and then a vice president. The documents themselves were stored in places as easily accessed as his garage, and he had no right to possess these classified documents off federal government property since he was not the president at the time he attained them. Trump was president, and as such, he had the right to possess and view classified documents off federal government property. Also Trump's documents in question were stored in one place: a locked room in Mar-a-Lago. But, in these times where it's OK for Democrats to interfere in our elections, Trump is charged and Biden is not. Go Figure.

The Vote Buyer in Chief: Once again, if you've been paying attention, you know all about Biden's forgiveness of student loans. Joe Biden was told in a ruling by the Supreme Court that he couldn't forgive student loans. Oh, but not Joe Biden. Biden blatantly thumbed his nose at the ruling by the highest court in the land and did it anyway. In the process, all of our taxes will probably increase due to this loss of revenue. To all of those who paid for their own schooling and those who didn't go to college and are still able to make a good living, I hope you appreciate him buying votes by putting the debts of others on your backs. Wait until I tell you what

he's done now in an attempt to buy votes.

Biden Logic 101: When all else fails, go back to doing what you do best: extortion and throwing others under the bus. This week saw something unprecedented in the history of U.S./Israeli relations. Bowing to pressure from his party's radicals, you know, all the "Death to Israel," "Death to Jews" and "Death to America" screaming pro-Hamas "peaceful" protesting college students, Biden has decided to withhold all smart weapons and artillery shells that were just appropriated to Israel by Congress from being sent to Israel unless Israel stops its advance and doesn't go into Rafah, implementing an immediate ceasefire at the same time. By the way, in a TV interview in April of this year, Biden swore his "ironclad support" for Israel. I don't know about y'all, but when I pledge my "ironclad support" to someone or something, I do it without conditions. That being said, Old "Extortion" Joe falls back on what he does best in an attempt to buy the votes of these Fascist & Anti-Semitic America-Hating Radicals just so he can maintain power and relevance for another four years. By the way, there are still hostages, including Americans, being held by Hamas in Gaza. Funny thing is, I still have yet to hear Biden call on Hamas for their immediate release in return for a ceasefire by the Israelis. Weird, huh? One would think that's the first thing he should have tried to stop the fighting in Gaza, but he didn't. Is this the type of person you want as Leader of The Free World? A man who does anything he can, criminal or not, just for power? If it is, in my opinion, you won't have a Free World for long, nor are you deserving of one.

One last thing. As we watch the Democrat Party's political prosecution of former President Trump, I think the one thing we all should take away from it is this: If they can railroad Donald Trump like they are attempting to do presently, they can do it to anyone they want for any reason they want. If that fact doesn't scare you, it should.
Claude Rains Jr.

Cummings... continued from Page 6A

Dad held the door allowing his boss to enter the interview room and introduced him to the elderly lady. Dad smiled as he shut the door and stood in front of it. He overheard his supervisor begin the interview by asking the 80-year-old lady the same questions which Dad had asked. When Dad overheard her tell his boss that she was an entertainer, Dad grabbed the doorknob and braced his feet against the door jamb. As she went into her dance routine he overheard his boss say, "Miss Pollardi, please don't take off your clothes." He soon felt the doorknob move and heard, "Let me out of here." Dad held onto the doorknob and soon heard his boss say these words, "Lady, if you will put your clothes back on, I will give you this loan." When Dad heard these words he let go of the door and ran to his desk, where he acted as if he were on the phone.

Soon his boss came walking through the office red-faced and very angry. He

Chamber... continued from Page 6A

successful future. Be sure to stop by the Square and see all our graduating senior signs and learn what their plans are for the future.

It is festival time, so if you would like to participate, please contact the Chamber or the DDA for more information. Volunteers are always needed, so we will be glad to connect you with the correct person. Remember, a smile will help make Life Better in Blairsville.

Dyer... continued from Page 6A

County Fire Department headquarters at 706-439-6091. Also, please visit our Facebook page or go to www.Makemeafirefighter.org.

Union County Fire Department ~Our Family Protecting Your Family~

Elliott... continued from Page 6A

when we don't act in faith with something tangible God can use, when evil prevails, why are we surprised? Evil met no resistance. But that was not the case this week. We decided not to make the same mistake as was made in 2008 when a bad economy convinced the people that changing us from a dry county to a wet county would be beneficial to this community. Money is not everything; as a matter of fact, our Holy Bible teaches us that "the love of money is the root of all evil" in 1 Timothy 6:10. Isn't that the truth!

May we as a faith community glorify God in our minds, our bodies, and in our spirits, because this battle is not over. This will come back to the ballot over and over, and if we don't resist and don't work together to bring the focus on Jesus rather than our flesh, then this may eventually be passed. Once something like this, such as the alcohol licenses for restaurants, is passed, it is next to impossible to take it away.

We have already given a lot of ground to the devil, but let's take back this mountain for the Lord Jesus Christ, as we minister to those we love and care for in this community. We thank you so much for your sacrifices and love you show to your congregations.

May God bless you richly. To God be all the glory!
In Christ's Love,
Greg and Dawn Elliott

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and serve them.

I believe we should petition the state legislature to change Georgia to an open ballot system so all voters have a voice in who serves us at the local, county, and state levels. Partisanship kills or weakens everything. We should all band together for our greater good, not one party's dominance over another.

Gary St. Lawrence

Honor Flight trips to Washington, D.C. for Veterans

Sponsored (no cost to Veteran) Honor Flight trips to Washington D.C. to see the memorials to the Wars in which they served.

Veterans do not have to have been deployed overseas ... just to have served during the War period.

World War II, Korea, and Vietnam veterans are included. Spring and Fall flights.

If interested, call Paul at 615-232-4445. Thank you!

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an estimated two civilians are killed. Mind you, any civilian casualty in war is tragic. Yet Israel's combatant-civilian death ratio is historically low for modern urban warfare. Additionally, it's important to remember that Hamas strategically uses civilians as human shields. Israel not only warns civilians to leave areas like Rafah but also strives to conduct targeted strikes to avoid mass civilian casualties. Meanwhile, Hamas murdered, raped, and tortured more than 1,000 civilians on October 7th. These terrorists also still have numerous hostages in Gaza, including as many as six Americans.

Despite this, President Biden has taken the unprecedented step of conditioning U.S. aid to Israel. Unquestionably, the nefarious motive behind our Commander-in-Chief's misguided move is to appease radical leftists and Hamas sympathizers ahead of the 2024 election. Young liberal voters across the country have incessantly called for Biden to demand a ceasefire and halt assistance to Israel.

If you recall, Democrats impeached President Trump for allegedly withholding aid to Ukraine for political purposes.

Folks, President Biden is actually doing this with Israel aid to boost his chances of winning in November.

Given Democrats' Trump-Ukraine precedent, President Biden's decision to withhold lethal aid to our ally, Israel, for political gain is undoubtedly an impeachable offense. The House must immediately open an impeachment inquiry due to the President's disastrous decision to play politics with national security.

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into the world," he said, "to testify to the truth" (John 18:37). We stand on unchanging truths about what it means to be created in God's image and to be created in Christ. We embrace Jesus' great commands to love God and neighbor. We carry out His great commission to make disciples of all the nations. Do those things in everyday moments, and you honor God. You also honor the memory of those who died for our religious liberty. And you remind America of the ideas from whence it came.