

Your opinions

Mental health important for athletes

I am writing in response to Chris Lillstrung's column in the online edition of the Morning Journal on Dec. 26, "Mental health consideration for athletes should be mandatory." In one word: agreed. The adults who work with our young people in high school sports should be comfortable and informed about the mental health needs of their athletes.

It would be transformative to see organizations like the Ohio High School Athletic Association update their certification requirements to include mental health training. I hope youth sports organizations hear Chris' call to action.

But even if the certifying organizations haven't taken that action yet, coaches and sports parents can complete training on their own. In Lorain County, Mental Health First Aid is offered regularly for free to anyone who lives, works or volunteers in Lorain County. There is also a special curriculum for spotting challenges in youth, popular with coaches and anyone who lives or works with children and teens. The course enables participants to recognize mental health symptoms in children and teens and provides guidance on how to respond.

Because of its ups and downs, wins and losses, athletics can teach resilience. Sports "families" can be a powerful protective factor for youth mental health. That especially is true if the adults know how to detect when a child is struggling with anxiety or depression, and intervene with confidence.

As a mom of three young athletes, a sometimes athlete myself, and a child and adolescent psychologist, I say thanks for shining light on this opportunity for youth sports to be an even greater asset to our developing athletes.

Find upcoming Mental

Health First Aid trainings at lcbmh.eventbrite.com, or call 440-233-2020 to request an on-site training.

Kathleen Kern
Executive director
Lorain County Board of Mental Health
Lorain

Clean Power Plan must be retained

President Trump's U.S. Environmental Protection Agency administrator, Scott Pruitt, has plans to replace or weaken the national Clean Power Plan. I believe this is wrong and unacceptable.

More than 8 million Americans sent comments to EPA in support of standards limiting carbon pollution from new and existing power plants — the most ever received by the agency.

The Clean Power Plan would reduce greenhouse gas emissions from power plants across the country by about 25 percent to 30 percent by 2030. According to a 2015 fact sheet from the U.S. EPA, the Clean Power Plan, when fully implemented, would prevent an estimated 90,000 asthma attacks, 1,700 heart attacks, and 3,600 premature deaths each year.

Dismantling the Clean Power Plan would result in larger toxic algal blooms in Lake Erie, dirtier air and sicker kids in Ohio, and reduced productivity due to lost school and work days. None of which we can afford in Lorain. Replacing or weakening the Clean Power Plan means we are failing to address climate change, and therefore, the EPA administrator is endangering the health of my friends and family.

I urge the Scott Pruitt to stand with Lorainites and Ohioans on the issue of improving the climate and to lead the agency in its core mission of protecting public health by implementing, and not repealing or replacing, the Clean Power

Plan.

Dedra Whitfield
Lorain

Take action to get better lawmakers

For those who aren't aware, Congress just passed a wildly unpopular and damaging tax plan. This is the first major tax reform legislation that has passed in three decades.

Unlike previous tax reform bills, it was done without any bipartisan support, without any hearings, without any forethought planning with the Internal Revenue Service for implementation, and frankly, without any regard to how it will wreck the working class of this country.

It is clear from the roughshod way that the Republicans have forced this bill through Congress that their concerns do not lie with you and me. Chris Collins, a Republican Congressman from New York, said that his donors basically told him, "Pass the tax bill" or don't ever call me again."

That's what matters to these people.

Not the fact that a majority of the benefits of this plan go to the top 1 percent earners in the country, not that 13 million people will lose health insurance, and certainly not that over the next few years the tax breaks they are bragging about for the middle class will have disappeared and turned into tax increases. They have been bought and paid for by big business and their billionaire donors.

If we want real representation, we need to make it happen.

Call your representatives, show up at their offices, and vote them out of office in 2018 if they keep passing legislation that does nothing but harm you.

Don't just sit there and take it, do something.

Kate Rivet
Vermilion

Sound off

Do you support the change in federal policy regarding marijuana laws enforcement? Share your thoughts on our Facebook page and your opinions may appear in a future edition.