

To the Editor:

There's an elephant in the room, or in this case on the highway, in the form of some political signs of a very personal nature. Before I offer any commentary, let me begin by defending the First Amendment, the freedom that allows us to speak without fear of government interference, even as words may be used against us. There's a reason why the framers of the Constitution included this in their very first update: it is an essential component of true democracy.

But, there are consequences for exercising free speech. When local elections turn neighbors into the enemy, one is left wondering who will run the next time? When the rancor of this election subsides, who will want to step up and step into the fray? If the goal is winning at all cost, how do we measure what we have ultimately lost? 2022 will tell the tale.

Back to the signs... In 2020, I voted in favor of establishing a paid family and medical leave insurance program that would allow workers 6-12 weeks of partial salary to attend to the birth or adoption of a child, address a serious health condition of self or family, or to care for a wounded service member. Like car insurance, an annual premium would be paid into a fund that would cover qualified claims. And like car insurance, you would appreciate it most when you need it.

Following much despairing testimony from school superintendents and community leaders, in 2019 I voted in favor of a school funding proposal that would have extended our current interest and dividend taxes to include capital gains. It would have impacted approximately 5% of residents within the highest income bracket, with exemptions for the disabled and folks over 65. The state has a constitutional obligation to educate ALL of the children of NH with fidelity, but we have failed to do so. Undoubtedly, you will be hearing a lot about school funding in the year ahead.

None of my decisions have been made in a vacuum. I have encouraged people to be in touch with their thoughts and concerns, and I have heard from lots of folks. While I may not be able to represent every constituent on every issue, you can trust that I do represent many.

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