Says Plastic Bag Ban Manipulates Us, Again

Editor:

 That retailers in Alameda County can’t dispense plastic carrying bags is another example of how we and others, some at great cost, are manipulated by environmental interest groups.

 Following the first Earth Day in 1970, environmentalists, in the interest of “saving trees,” demanded that the grocery chains switch to plastic bags from paper, even though paper bags are biodegradable and are made from wood scraps or trees planted for that purpose. As a former industry employee, I also know that young, growing trees remove more carbon dioxide from the atmosphere than do mature trees. (Carbon dioxide, which we exhale, has been labeled “a greenhouse gas” by the EPA.)

 The grocery industry complied, pleasing environmentalists who conveniently ignored that plastic bags are not biodegradable and, gasp, are made with a feedstock of a fossil fuel origin.

 Now, paper bags pass muster, but cost 10 cents each. More important is the cost in hours and jobs for those who have been earning a living in the plastic bag industry. As more of us decide not to pay for paper bags, the people making them also will be negatively impacted.

 The newest target is “fracking,” the recovery of oil and gas from shale and rock. Developed by the ingenuity in our market economy, it is producing enough clean-burning natural gas that the industry can consider its export, thus bringing money into the country.

 Further, the crude oil recovered reduces our dependence on unstable and often unfriendly foreign regimes and keeps billions of dollars in our economy. Fracking has created tens of thousands of new jobs, and is sanctioned by the states where it is practiced. Yet, it is in environmentalists’ cross-hairs.

 It’s imperative that all of us become informed on issues such as these and demand that local/national policies be based on facts and benefits, not on messianic fervor.

—**Fred Reicker,** *San Leandro*

Problem of 2nd Amendment Is Its Misinterpretation

Editor:

 In a recent issue, Elie Parker advocated elimination of the 2nd Amendment to the US Constitution *("Believes It's Time to Get Rid of the 2nd Amendment," Letters, Dec. 27)*, which states:

 “A well regulated Militia, being necessary to the security of a free State, the right of the people to keep and bear Arms, shall not be infringed.”

 We should ask, what sort of “arms” – knives, swords, slingshots, machine guns, cross bows, rocket propelled grenades – are referenced in the 2nd Amendment. I suspect, the Founders were thinking of the kind of weapons with which they were familiar. Moreover, the authors of the Amendment imply regulation of weapons in the phrase “ well regulated Militia.”

 The problem is not the 2nd Amendment itself. It is ignoring our dire need for public safety by its misapplication and misinterpretation.

 For civilian use, let’s prohibit high-capacity magazines, semi-automatic and fully automatic guns, as well as anything designed for military use, and let’s license all gun owners who have passed a thorough background check and safety course. Let’s impose stiff penalties on licensed owners who fail to properly secure their guns and ammunition.
Presumably, Adam Lanza’s, mother paid with her life for this omission.

 For those who have a different interpretation, I would like to propose a solution that should

resonate well with an Originalist interpretation of the Constitution:

 Upon coming of legal age, have the mayor of the local town hand each citizen who desires one, a Revolution-era, circa 1789 musket and thus satisfy the “right to bear arms.”

 Being free to arm ourselves, has not reduced the murder rate in our cities. Other countries have demonstrated that gun violence is much less where there are strict gun control laws. We should try to save the lives of our kids, our relatives, our neighbors and our people by following their example.

—**J. Mehner**, *Oakland*

Calls Making Laws to Control Guns 'A Waste of Energy'

Editor:

 I'm sure everyone would agree that the Second Amendment, the right to keep and bear arms, in itself is as fair as the First Amendment, which are people's rights. Guns themselves don't kill people, those that misuse this right do. The NRA has a perfect right to be in business.

 I believe a background check is reasonably sane. You can make all the laws to control this problem, but to me, this is a waste of energy. If someone makes plans to use these weapons, unless you're able to read a sick mind, unfortunately there is no way to prevent this ruthless act.

—**Earl Cava**, *San Leandro*

Thanks to Motorists Who Came to Her Daughter's Aid

Editor:

 On Dec. 22, my daughter spun out and hit a tree with her orange Volkswagen on Fremont in San Leandro.

 Thank you to the man who stopped to help her out of the car and to the lady who called 911. To the city: You should really consider fixing that road with more potholes than someone can count, a shaky road and a turn that is unsafe going even the speed limit on any type of day.

 And to the six or more people who drove by with her pounding on the window and screaming: *Shame on you!*

—**Jacqueline Costa**, *San Leandro*

Milk, Other Dairy Products Take Another Hit

Editor:

 A frequent bugaboo of the “fiscal cliff” debacle was the “milk cliff” – the threat of milk price doubling, if Congress failed to extend dairy subsidies. Parents were forgoing other necessities, because their children “had to have milk.”

 Most industries would gladly give up their tax loopholes for that kind of product loyalty. But this one is totally undeserved.

 Consumption of dairy products, laden with saturated fats, cholesterol, hormones, and drugs elevates the risk of diabetes, heart disease, and cancer. This is particularly critical during childhood years, when dietary flaws become lifelong addictions.

 A study of 12,829 children by Harvard Medical School found that drinking cow's milk leads to weight gain.

 Most African-Americans and Asian-Americans suffer from cramping and diarrhea because they lack the enzyme to digest lactose in cow's milk.

The good news is that green leafy vegetables and legumes supply all the calcium and proteins touted in cow's milk, without the excess calories and other yucky factors noted. Every supermarket offers dairy-free milks, cheeses, and ice creams made from healthy nuts and grains.

 This is why USDA's current Dietary Guidelines for Americans, shunt dairy (and meat) off the recommended plate of vegetables, fruits, and grains.

 Cow's milk is produced for bovine – not human – babies. Let's give our kids a healthy start!

—**Kurt Champler**, *San Leandro*