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—For section.....Voices/Viewpoint
—Format.....Opinions - Aggregated viewpoints (like grad speeches)
—Dateline.....Brattleboro
—Article Number:.....43673



Notes from editor (not for publication):

Good luck, Tim. (I've formatted this with an initial plan to run with Dan's remarks.)



HEADLINE ELEMENTS:

####BEGIN HED####

1 When the government violates the law, citizens are
2 obligated to act

####END HED####

####BEGIN SUBHED####

3 These magnificent citizen movements have defined our
4 potential for real democracy. We are never more democratic than
5 when we fight for it.

####END SUBHED####

6 TEXT BODY:

####BEGIN TEXT####

7 I HAVE BEEN summoned to the Vermont Superior Criminal
8 Court because of an act of conscience — I willfully broke the
9 law. The state of Vermont has charged me with interfering with a
10 profit-taking corporation, Citizens Bank, which finances private
11 detention centers and prisons for immigrants.

12 These institutions typically violate due process rights by
13 jailing without hearings an average of 70,000 people per day,
14 including about 170 children. Seventy-four percent of these
15 people have [no criminal records](#).

16 Citizens Bank underwrites CoreCivic and the GEO
17 Group, which run these private prisons for ICE (Immigration and
18 Customs Enforcement). In the past years, ICE and other federal
19 agencies have aggressively deported [millions of immigrants](#).

20 These prisons have been charged with multiple abuses,
21 deaths, neglect, fraud, forced labor, and other human rights
22 violations. From 2017 to 2026, [75 have died](#) while incarcerated
23 due to physical abuse and poor medical and sanitary conditions.
24 Amnesty International describes these federal prisons as
25 “appalling” with “torture and enforced disappearances.”

26 The state of Vermont has ordered me to account for my
27 nonviolent civil disobedience against a corporation that sponsors
28 gross human rights violations.

29 When will the state of Vermont and the U.S. Department
30 of Justice hold to account Citizens Bank and the other [679 ICE](#)
31 [contractors](#) for their sponsoring and profiting from the violation of
32 human and constitutional rights?

33 When will the state of Vermont and the U.S. Department
34 of Justice be held to account as accomplices in the
35 unconstitutional incarceration and deportation of millions of
36 people by ICE and others in federal law enforcement?

37 * * *

38 THE VAST MAJORITY of U.S. immigrants have come to our
39 country to escape oppression, to protect their families, and to
40 build a more secure life.

41 I, like millions of fellow citizens of good will, am
42 compelled to resist unjust laws in order to seek social justice and
43 in this small way to try to make a democratic difference.

44 When the government itself violates the law, citizens
45 have an obligation to act. No less than Thomas Jefferson in our
46 Declaration of Independence admonished that “governments

47 derive their just powers from the consent of the governed” and
48 therefore it is the “right of the people to alter or abolish” an
49 unjust government. Jefferson knew what he was talking about.

50 These are perilous times for our nation. Not since the
51 Civil War have our democratic values and institutions been so
52 comprehensively attacked by authoritarian forces here at home.

53 Michael Luttig, the renowned conservative jurist, now
54 retired from the U.S. Court of Appeals for the Fourth Circuit,
55 describes these crisis times as the “[end of the rule of law in](#)
56 [America](#).” He warns that if citizens do not act we will lose what
57 democratic rights we have.

58 While ours is far from a perfect democracy, citizens
59 throughout our history have struggled for social justice in order to
60 expand and strengthen our democracy. Look to the abolitionists,
61 the unionists, the women and civil rights activists, to the
62 community builders, to gay/lesbian rights advocates, to
63 environmentalists, and now at unprecedented levels to
64 democracy defenders. We are sweeping across the nation.

65 These magnificent citizen movements have defined our
66 potential for real democracy. We are never more democratic than
67 when we fight for it.

68 * * *

69 JUDGE, I TAUGHT United States history for 39 years and
70 have been a political activist since the 1960s. I have been in this
71 “patriot’s game” all my life. This love for my country is a love for
72 social justice and authentic democracy.

73 I take this action for social justice with the understanding
74 that democracy is a constant state of being, of always evolving,
75 and that it requires continuous defending. I don’t imagine
76 quitting or going away.

77 Judge, could this act of nonviolent civil disobedience be
78 a considered a citizen’s arrest for the protection of democracy?

79 It can be said that democracy is like good Vermont
80 organic manure: It only works when it is spread around.

####END TEXT####

BIO/COATTAIL:

####BEGIN BIO/COATTAIL####

81 **TIM KIPP** is a retired history teacher of 39 years and a
82 political activist since the 1960s.

####END BIO/COATTAIL####

LAST ISSUE IN WHICH THIS FILE CAN BE RUN:

####BEGIN MAXISSUE####

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####END MAXISSUE####

LINKS:

####BEGIN LINKS####

84

####END LINKS####

VIDEO:

####BEGIN VIDEO####

85

####END VIDEO####

LOGLINE (SOCIAL MEDIA):

####BEGIN LOGLINE####

86

####END LOGLINE####