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LETTERS TO THE EDITOR *Send letters via our online form: sfgate.com/submissions*

Don't be skeptical of climate change

Regarding "Pope keeps the faith on climate change" (June 18): Denial of climate change is not a battle against a religious orthodoxy, as Debra J. Saunders contends. It is a rejection of scientific evidence. The pope reminds us that ignoring this evidence, and other clear indicators of environmental damage, is immoral due to the human and ecological consequences of this damage (particularly impacts on the weakest and most vulnerable among us, including our children and grandchildren).

Saunders' response to the pope's leadership by taking potshots at Al Gore proves both the need for the pope's message and the inability of most American conservatives to engage with the reality of our global predicament. Conservative voices and concepts must be a part of the solution, but that will not happen until Saunders and her colleagues get real about the problem.

Andrew Gunther, Oakland

Be prepared

Debra J. Saunders needs to take a good look in the mirror. Employing faith over reason, she is among the so-called "climate skeptics" who continue to deny the overwhelming evidence of human-caused climate change. The skeptic cult exists mainly in the U.S. and is fueled by politics, not science, as conservatives do not like or trust environmentalists and are wary of scientists.

Shell Oil, BP and Chevron, the U.S. military, the CIA, and most major insurance companies, among many others, have all looked at the science and are preparing themselves.



Tom Meyer / www.meyertoons.com

These groups are hardly best buds with Greenpeace and not the types to be easily duped by guys in lab coats. Accepting hard truth is difficult, and the first human reaction is often denial. The pope should be congratulated, not ridiculed, for recognizing reality with regards to climate change or calling for man to protect God's creation.

Bill Hildebrand, Sunnyvale

Priorities first

Regarding "Reframing 'pro-life' in ecological terms" (Open Forum, June 17) and "Who decides racial identity?" (Open Forum, June 17): I believe some comments are appropriate. Claire Hutkins Seda reframing the phrase 'pro-life' in ecological terms to prioritize its use in saving the planet ignores the most important factor of controlling population growth. We

simply must prioritize birth control. The availability and advocacy of birth control are absolutely necessary. Population control is essential in saving the planet.

The other piece by Margalynne Armstrong and Stephanie Wildman is interesting, but ignores a basic factor regarding Rachel Dolezal's racial identity outing. A lie is a lie and is not right, regardless of the fact that the liar might do good deeds. Dolezal's behavior is shameful, not to mention the fact that her lying may very well subject her to criminal indictment as well as setting a horrendous example for young people.

Joseph Friedman, Oakland

Political flaw

Donald Trump's risible campaign for president of the United States won't be entirely

pointless if we use it to illustrate the essential flaw in our political system. Trump has money but no ideas of substance or value. So he gets a place on the national stage. Many Americans have ideas of substance and value but no money. Their contributions go unheard. As the saying goes, what's wrong with this picture?

Riley VanDyke, San Francisco

Graffiti judge

Regarding "Indulgent judges are taggers' best friends" (June 18): I hope that when Andrew Yarbrough appears for his court case, he brings his spray cans and tags the courtroom, and maybe even the judge's face. Perhaps then Judge Brendan Conroy will start taking seriously these assaults on the public.

Chip Goldstein, Half Moon Bay

Preschool progress

Regarding "Legislature OKs budget, seeks more aid for poor" (June 16), I am writing to express my gratitude and hope about this year's budget investment. In past years, our budget has been filled with devastating cuts, especially for early learning. This deal reflects the Legislature's strong commitment to early care and education investments, and I thank both the Legislature and Gov. Jerry Brown for standing by California's infants, toddlers, preschoolers, working families and our future. By building on the progress made last year and providing 9,500 additional preschool spaces, California takes the first step toward ensuring that our youngest children start kindergarten ready to learn, regardless of their income or ZIP code.

Deborah Kong, Oakland

Condolences

The balcony tragedy could have happened anywhere. But it didn't. The balcony collapsed in our own backyard while they were guests in our home. Our first response was horror. Our second, guilt. We didn't know them, didn't even know they were here, yet we feel the weight of our failure to protect them from their fate. To mothers of the dead and injured, from mothers on foreign soil: We can't fathom the measure of your grief, but know the infinite measure of your love and share your pain. The loss of a child anywhere, regardless of cause, is a loss to mothers everywhere.

Linda Thorlakson, Castro Valley