Huskytalk | What's a word that you always spell wrong?



"Onamotapia."

Katie Tran
Allied Health Science
Fourth semester



"Rendevous."

Micheal Russo
Digital Media and Design
Second semester



"Prestiougs."

Yohannes Robson
Finance
Second semester



"Gaurantee."

Tom Curran
Ecology & Evolutionary Biology
Sixth semester



COMIC BY SETH WALLEN
CONTRIBUTING ARTIST

Patrick's Politics:

Air travel issues? Blame Trump

by Patrick Minnerly | ASSOCIATE OPINION EDITOR | HE/HIM/HIS | patrick.minnerly@uconn.edu

If you've ever gone on a long trip, you probably know the drudgery of an airport security line. Waiting for agents from the Transportation Security Administration to check you over can be an onerous experience at the best of times, and the recent partial shutdown of the Department of Homeland Security has exacerbated the situation. TSA workers haven't been paid for 40 days, leading many to call in sick or quit their jobs, and security lines are out the door at many airports across the country. It's chaos during a very busy travel period, and if we know one thing from the Trump administration's example, the government is only going to make it worse. This pattern of causing a crisis and doing nothing to solve it has become all too common, and subverts the very idea of how a functioning government should operate.

Why is the DHS shut down? It all stems from the violent and oppressive conduct of Immigration and Customs Enforcement agents. In January of this year, two American citizens were killed in broad daylight by ICE agents. These shocking murders aren't even the half of it, unfortunately; the list of violations and abuses perpetrated by them against migrants is far longer and far more shadowy. Previously in this column, I've written about the new system of ICE concentration camps – or sorry, detention centers – where undocumented immigrants are held in dismal conditions. Thankfully, there has been significant backlash to these injustices, and Democrats refused to fund DHS until reforms to ICE were implemented. Republicans in turn wanted nothing to do with reforms, and 40 days later, no end to the shutdown is in sight.

The impacts of the shutdown have been severe, especially for workers who aren't being paid. They already had to endure a full shutdown last fall, and now they're yet again feeling the strain of not being able to provide for themselves or their families. According to CBS News, one TSA employee asked of the Trump administration, "Why are we being sacrificed? What did we do to deserve telling our families we might get evicted at the end of the month?" A new estimate from DHS shows that over 450 TSA agents have quit their jobs, leaving gaping holes in staffing and the long wait times – some up to six hours – that travelers have experienced. As a result, people expecting to fly are getting increasingly more apprehensive about taking a trip. Those currently snagged in the system are having to deal with significant inconveniences to their daily lives.



Many travelers wait in TSA lines for up to several hours due to the government shutdown. Not only are the lines getting longer, but almost every airport is short on TSA staff and they are being subbed with federal ICE agents causing even more tension.

PHOTO COURTESY OF @BUZZFEED ON PINTEREST.

The recent plane crash at LaGuardia International Airport, in which an Air Canada jet collided with a fire truck, killing the two pilots, illustrates the ripple effects the shutdown can have. An investigator assigned to look into the accident was stuck in an interminable security line in Houston, delaying their arrival on the scene. While not directly related, the shutdown is only making other problems worse, leading to a sense of cascading chaos.

The continued march of government shutdowns puts our dire situation in stark terms. Trump has blamed Democrats for the shutdown's effects, but it's not the left's fault ICE must be reined in. Instead, Republicans should look to their president's own extreme policies and obstinance. In the past month, spurred on by Trump's unwillingness to compromise, Republican senators have frequently blocked bills put forward from the Democrats that would fund the TSA and other agencies under the DHS umbrella, except for ICE and Border Patrol. Trump even rejected a potential deal put forward by his own party's lawmakers over the weekend.

Trump is only doubling down. He has deployed ICE agents to airports, supposedly to help with the long lines, but their presence is only worsening an already tense environment. ICE agents aren't trained to deal with the tasks TSA employees handle on a daily basis, and footage has emerged of them simply standing around or lingering near the snaking lines. It's important to note that ICE, unlike TSA, remains fully funded due to $75 billion from Trump's so-called "Big Beautiful Bill."

Even more concerning, the New York Times reported that the TSA is sharing personal data with ICE, which led to the violent arrest of a mother and her daughter in San Francisco International Airport last Sunday. Far from helping with travel issues, ICE is being further empowered to carry out the agenda Democrats are protesting against.

The government should not behave in this manner. The Trump administration's resistance to making any sort of compromise on the shutdown has caused unnecessary chaos and hardship. Coming on the heels of the previous failure to fund the government, this deadlock has been allowed to feel like a new normal. However, it's anything but normal for the kind of leadership the people deserve. With the Senate hurtling towards Easter recess, will anything get done? With the state of our government, that's an open question.