

**E. Fletcher McClellan, PhD
Professor of Political Science Emeritus
Elizabethtown College**

Op-Ed Columns, 1995-25

***Student or Alumni Co-Author**

I started writing for newspapers in the 1990s. I've been fortunate to work with great editors, including the late Dale Davenport and Heather Long (who's now with the *Washington Post*) for the *Harrisburg Patriot-News*, John Micek with *PennLive/Harrisburg Patriot-News* and the *Pennsylvania Capital-Star*, and Barbara Hough Huesken and Suzanne Cassidy for *Lancaster Sunday News/LNP/LancasterOnline*.

Since the summer of 2016, I've been a regular contributor to Harrisburg and/or Lancaster-based media, as well as occasionally writing for national and regional publications. I've co-authored 18 columns with 14 students and alumni. Currently, I write monthly for *LNP/LancasterOnline*. As of February 2025, I list 185 authored or co-authored op-eds.

FMcC

February 2025

1995-2010

For the *Harrisburg Sunday Patriot-News* and the *Lancaster Sunday News*

"How Will Clinton Fare?" *Lancaster Sunday News*, August 27, 1995

"It's Performance in Office, Stupid," *Lancaster Sunday News*, October 15, 2000

"Gore Performance Will Trump Personality," *Harrisburg Sunday Patriot-News*, October 29, 2000

"And the Winner Is...Rendell," *Lancaster Sunday News*, May 19, 2002

"Texas-Sized Agenda Could Work Against Bush Popularity," *Harrisburg Sunday Patriot-News*, July 6, 2003

"Social Security/Insecurity: Fix the Program, Don't Junk It," *Lancaster Sunday News*, April 3, 2005

"For Many Recent Presidents, 2nd Term Brings Political Chaos," *Harrisburg Sunday Patriot-News*, October 30, 2005

"Obama Builds Momentum as Campaign Hits Homestretch," *Harrisburg Sunday Patriot-News*, February 10, 2008

"Chinese Optimism: Real but Conditional," *Harrisburg Sunday Patriot-News*, August 3, 2008

"Obama's Window of Opportunity Won't Last Long," *Harrisburg Sunday Patriot-News*, January 18, 2009

“Checking In: Obama’s First 100 Days,” *Harrisburg Sunday Patriot-News*, April 26, 2009

“Iran Uprising Recalls Scenes of Tiananmen,” *Harrisburg Sunday Patriot-News*, June 28, 2009

2010-16

For PennLive/Harrisburg Sunday Patriot-News

“Can President Obama Get Back on Track?”

http://www.pennlive.com/editorials/index.ssf/2011/01/can_president_obama_get_back_o.html,
January 11, 2011

“Santorum’s Doggedness Serves Him Well,”

http://www.pennlive.com/editorials/index.ssf/2012/01/santorums_doggedness_serves_hi.html,
January 8, 2012

“Pennsylvania Election Results Echo Arlen Specter Era,”

http://www.pennlive.com/opinion/index.ssf/2012/11/pennsylvania_election_results_echo_arlen_specter_era.html, November 11, 2012

2016-17

For the Washington Post Monkey Cage

“Obama Has Set the Record for the Most Presidential Medals of Freedom,”

<https://www.washingtonpost.com/news/monkey-cage/wp/2016/11/22/obama-has-set-the-record-for-the-most-presidential-medals-of-freedom/>, November 22, 2016, with Kyle Kopko,*
Christopher Devine, Jillian Casey*, and Julia Ward*

For PennLive/Harrisburg Patriot-News

“As Much as They’re About the Future, Elections Are Still Fights Over the Past,”

http://www.pennlive.com/opinion/2016/07/post_93.html, July 14, 2016

“Call Yourself an Independent? You May Not Be as Independent as You Think,”

http://www.pennlive.com/opinion/2016/08/call_yourself_an_independent_y.html#incart_river_index, August 9, 2016

“How Long to Expect Donald Trump’s Latest Pivot to Last? Not Long,”

http://www.pennlive.com/opinion/2016/08/donald_trump_will_probably_lose.html#incart_river_mobile_index, August 24, 2016

“The Clinton/Trump Debate Was Just as Notable for Everything They Didn’t Talk About,”

http://www.pennlive.com/opinion/2016/09/the_clintontrump_debate_was_ju.html#incart_river_index, September 29, 2016

“Can Donald Trump Revive His Fading White House Hopes?”

http://www.pennlive.com/opinion/2016/10/can_donald_trump_revive_his_fa.html#incart_2box_opinion, October 11, 2016

“Will Trump Put Power over Principle on Nov. 8? The Warning Signs Are There,”
http://www.pennlive.com/opinion/2016/10/will_trump_put_power_above_pri.html#incart_river_index, October 26, 2016

“Will Donald Trump Really Be a Transformative Leader?”
http://www.pennlive.com/opinion/2016/11/will_donald_trump_really_be_a.html#incart_river_index, November 21, 2016

“Donald Trump, CEO, Will Soon Find Government Really Isn’t Like Business,”
http://www.pennlive.com/opinion/2017/01/donald_trump_ceo_will_soon_fin.html#incart_river_index, January 12, 2017

“Gov. Wolf’s New Budget Is a Page Out of the Bill Clinton Playbook,”
http://www.pennlive.com/opinion/2017/02/gov_wolfs_new_budget_is_a_page.html#comments, February 14, 2017

“Almost to the 100-Day Mark, Is Trump Finally Finding His Feet?”
http://www.pennlive.com/opinion/2017/04/almost_to_the_100-day_mark_is.html#incart_river_index, April 25, 2017

2017-18

For PennLive/Harrisburg Patriot-News

“Trump Will Survive Latest Scandals – For Now,”
http://www.pennlive.com/opinion/2017/05/trump_will_survive_latest_scan.html#incart_2box_opinion, May 20, 2017

“Did Vladimir Putin Help Donald Trump Win Pa.?”
http://www.pennlive.com/opinion/2017/08/did_vladimir_putin_help_donald.html, August 1, 2017

“It’s Been a Rough 200 Days, But Don’t Write Off Donald Trump Just Yet,”
http://www.pennlive.com/opinion/2017/08/its_been_a_rough_200_days_-_bu.html#incart_river_mobile_index, August 15, 2017

“Debt Ceiling Deal Was a Triangulation Triumph for Trump,”
http://www.pennlive.com/opinion/2017/09/debt_ceiling_deal_a_reminder_t.html, September 13, 2017

“A Generation Later, We’re Still Gazing Through Vietnam’s Looking Glass,”
http://www.pennlive.com/opinion/2017/10/a_generation_later_were_still.html, October 6, 2017

“This Is Why Donald Trump Isn’t Giving Up on Killing Obamacare,”
http://www.pennlive.com/opinion/2017/10/this_is_why_donald_trump_isnt.html#incart_river_index, October 19, 2017

“Could the U.S. Catch Secession Fever Again? Here Are the Signs,”

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“Tax Reform? Please. Make It Stop,”

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“Is This The Beginning of The End – Or The End of The Beginning – for Donald Trump’s Presidency?”

http://www.pennlive.com/opinion/2017/12/is_this_the_beginning_of_the_e.html#incart_river_index, December 5, 2017

“Can Democrats Carry Their Momentum Into 2018? Here's Some Factors to Think About,”

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“After a Year of Trump, The Opposition Needs to Raise Its Game,”

http://www.pennlive.com/opinion/2018/01/after_a_year_of_trump_the_oppo.html#incart_river_index, January 17, 2018

“Don’t Let the Filibuster Fizzle,”

http://www.pennlive.com/opinion/2018/02/dont_let_the_the_filibuster_fi.html#incart_river_index, February 1, 2018

“This Is How Republicans Learned to Stop Worrying and Love the Debt,”

http://www.pennlive.com/opinion/2018/02/this_is_how_republicans_learne.html#incart_river_index, February 13, 2018

“In Search of a Way to Make Life for Food Stamps Recipients Worse, Conservatives Finally Found It,” http://www.pennlive.com/opinion/2018/03/in_search_of_a_way_to_make_lif.html, March 8, 2018

“Tariffs? Sure. But There’s Way More Trump, GOP Can Do To Actually Help Workers.”

http://www.pennlive.com/opinion/2018/03/tariffs_sure_but_theres_way_mo.html#incart_2box_opinion, March 20, 2018

“Here’s What Trump’s Staff Churn Tells Us About His Management Style,”

http://www.pennlive.com/opinion/2018/04/heres_what_trumps_staff_churn.html#incart_river_index, April 3, 2018

2018-19

For PennLive/Harrisburg Patriot-News

“The Last Word on Michelle Wolf: Bring Her Back Next Year,”

http://www.pennlive.com/opinion/2018/05/the_last_word_on_michelle_wolf.html#incart_river_index, May 15, 2018

“Here’s How Philip Roth Predicted Donald Trump,”

http://www.pennlive.com/opinion/2018/05/heres_how_philip_roth_predicte.html#incart_river_index, May 31, 2018

“Trump Firing Comey Was a Gift. It Gave Us Bob Mueller’s Investigation,”

http://www.pennlive.com/opinion/2018/06/trump_firing_comey_was_a_gift.html, June 12, 2018

“Why Does EPA Boss Scott Pruitt Still Have a Job?”

https://www.pennlive.com/opinion/2018/06/why_does_epa_boss_scott_pruitt_1.html#incart_river_index, June 28, 2018

“Trump’s ICE Mess Is a Symptom of a Much Deeper Malaise,”

https://www.pennlive.com/opinion/2018/07/trumps_ice_mess_is_a_symptom_o.html#incart_river_index, July 10, 2018

“To Win in November, Democrats Need to Play Some Very Republican Hardball,”

https://www.pennlive.com/opinion/2018/07/to_win_in_november_democrats_n.html#incart_river_index, July 25, 2018

“For Gov. Wolf in 2018, a Wagnerian Dilemma,”

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“Truth in America: Dead, Alive or Asleep?”

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“We Can’t Rely on Trump to Unite Us. We’ll Have to Do It Ourselves,”

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“With Kavanaugh Fight, A Reminder of Our Historical Amnesia,”

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“To Trump and His Followers, Revenge Against the Elite Makes Winning Worthwhile,”

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“My Fearless Forecast for Election Day,” <https://www.pennlive.com/opinion/2018/11/my-fearless-forecast-for-election-day-e-fletcher-mcclellan.html>, November 1, 2018

“Trump’s Presidential Medal of Freedom Winners Will Show How He Wants to Make America Great,”

<https://www.pennlive.com/opinion/2018/11/trumps-presidential-medal-of-freedom-winners-will-show-how-he-wants-to-make-america-great-opinion.html>, November 16, 2018

“Like It or Not, the 2020 Invisible Primary Has Begun,”

<https://www.pennlive.com/opinion/2018/12/like-it-or-not-the-2020-invisible-primary-has-begun-opinion.html>, December 4, 2018

“Can Washington End Its Shutdown Shenanigans?”

<https://www.pennlive.com/opinion/2019/01/can-washington-end-its-shutdown-shenanigans-e-fletcher-mcclellan.html>, January 2, 2019

“Trump at Mid-Term: Embattled and Beleaguered, But Not Without Some Wins,”

<https://www.pennlive.com/opinion/2019/01/trump-at-mid-term-embattled-and-beleaguered-but-not-without-some-wins-opinion.html>, January 15, 2019

For the *Pennsylvania Capital-Star*

“Sooner – And Probably Not Later – The Time for Legal Weed in Pa. Will Come,”

<https://www.penncapital-star.com/commentary/sooner-and-probably-not-later-the-time-for-legal-weed-in-pa-will-come-opinion/>, February 13, 2019

“Raise the Minimum Wage? For Pa., There’s No Time Like the Present,”

<https://www.penncapital-star.com/commentary/raise-the-minimum-wage-for-pa-theres-no-time-like-the-present-opinion/>, March 8, 2019

“Complete Exoneration? Not Quite. But Mueller’s Report Was a Gift to Trump,”

<https://www.penncapital-star.com/commentary/complete-exoneration-not-quite-but-muellers-report-was-a-gift-to-trump-opinion/>, March 28, 2019

“This Is the Crisis in Higher Education in Pennsylvania,” https://www.penncapital-star.com/commentary/this-is-the-crisis-in-higher-education-in-pennsylvania-fletcher-mcclellan/?fbclid=IwAR0XP4apQCF2cqSCwSATg0ciujPEbBn3MWfeBY-DFjvx2nocUjHNqikH-_8, April 23, 2019

2019-20

For the *Washington Post Monkey Cage*

“Trump Has Been Awarding a Lot of Presidential Medals of Freedom. Here’s What That Says

About His Values, https://www.washingtonpost.com/politics/2019/06/20/trump-has-been-awarding-lot-presidential-medals-freedom-heres-what-that-says-about-his-values/?utm_term=.e3902d9ac489, June 20, 2019, with Kyle Kopko* and Christopher Devine

For *The Conversation*

“What Trump’s Picks for the Presidential Medal of Freedom – Like Rush Limbaugh and Antonin

Scalia – Say About Him,” <https://theconversation.com/what-trumps-picks-for-the-presidential-medal-of-freedom-like-rush-limbaugh-and-antonin-scalia-say-about-him-131362>, February 6, 2020, with Kyle Kopko* and Christopher Devine

For the *Sunday LNP/LancasterOnline*

“Thoughts on the First Week of Trump’s Trial in Senate,”

https://lancasteronline.com/opinion/columnists/thoughts-on-the-first-week-of-trump-s-trial-in/article_bba1f8ba-3e24-11ea-8428-235c2594a710.html, January 26, 2020

For the *Pennsylvania Capital-Star*

“Will the Rise of Non-Profit News Outlets Help Fill a Gap in Pa. Journalism?” <https://www.penncapital-star.com/commentary/will-the-rise-of-non-profit-news-outlets-help-fill-a-gap-in-pa-journalism-opinion/>, May 15, 2019, with Kayla Gruber ’18*

“From Defense to Offense: The New Politics of Abortion,” <https://www.penncapital-star.com/commentary/from-defense-to-offense-the-new-politics-of-abortion-e-fletcher-mcclellan/>, June 5, 2019

“Yes, the Democratic Prez Debates Will Be a Circus. But They’re Also Policy Incubators,” <https://www.penncapital-star.com/commentary/yes-the-democratic-prez-debates-will-be-a-circus-but-theyre-also-policy-incubators-fletcher-mcclellan/>, June 25, 2019

“How the Dems’ Ongoing Debate Over Busing Is Moving Us Both Backward — and Forward,” <https://www.penncapital-star.com/commentary/how-the-dems-ongoing-debate-over-busing-is-moving-us-both-backward-and-forward-fletcher-mcclellan/>, July 10, 2019

“For Women Seeking Power in Harrisburg, Look to Carson City,” <https://www.penncapital-star.com/commentary/for-women-seeking-power-in-harrisburg-look-to-carson-city-fletcher-mcclellan/>, July 30, 2019

“Will Pa. Lawmakers Move Gun Control from the Third Rail to the Political Fast Track?” <https://www.penncapital-star.com/government-politics/will-pa-lawmakers-move-gun-control-from-the-third-rail-to-the-political-fast-track-fletcher-mcclellan/>, August 21, 2019

“After a Smooth Spring, Can Wolf, GOP Lawmakers Keep the Good Vibrations Rolling This Fall?” <https://www.penncapital-star.com/commentary/after-a-smooth-spring-can-wolf-gop-lawmakers-keep-the-good-vibrations-rolling-this-fall-fletcher-mcclellan/>, September 10, 2019

“Do Social Movements Lose Their Effectiveness as They Multiply?” <https://www.penncapital-star.com/commentary/do-social-movements-lose-their-effectiveness-as-they-multiply-opinion/>, September 25, 2019, with Janel Myers ’18 MPP ’19*

“Tuesday’s Debate for Democrats: How to Stay Strong on Impeachment – and Score Points on Biden,” <https://www.penncapital-star.com/commentary/tuesdays-debate-for-democrats-how-to-stay-strong-on-impeachment-and-score-points-on-biden-fletcher-mcclellan/>, October 15, 2019

“Scrap Straight Ticket Voting? Better to Stick With the Devil You Know,” <https://www.penncapital-star.com/commentary/scrap-straight-ticket-voting-better-to-stick-with-the-devil-you-know-fletcher-mcclellan/>, October 30, 2019

“Are We Living in the Age of Woke Capitalism?” https://www.penncapital-star.com/commentary/are-we-living-in-the-age-of-woke-capitalism-fletcher-mcclellan/?utm_source=Pennsylvania+Capital-Star&utm_campaign=e62b056062-EMAIL_CAMPAIGN_2019_11_19_10_17&utm_medium=email&utm_term=0_5015c3184d-e62b056062-7521269, November 20, 2019

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“Trump Was Unshackled by Senate Acquittal. The Worst Is Yet To Come,” <https://www.penncapital-star.com/commentary/trump-was-unshackled-by-senate-acquittal-the-worst-is-yet-to-come-fletcher-mcclellan/?fbclid=IwAR1N90fyUjvaDtzx3oYaEPxmGEMDtt9TuM28ICBhzn830PjPbItUIDm51VM>, February 11, 2020

“Will the Voters Who Stayed Home in 2016 Turn Out for Bernie Sanders in 2020?” https://www.penncapital-star.com/commentary/will-the-voters-who-stayed-home-in-2016-turn-out-for-bernie-sanders-in-2020-fletcher-mcclellan/?utm_source=Pennsylvania+Capital-Star&utm_campaign=531ffbeb2a-EMAIL_CAMPAIGN_2020_02_24_09_48&utm_medium=email&utm_term=0_5015c3184d-531ffbeb2a-7521269, February 25, 2020

“So Much for Pa.’s Chance to Play Democratic Kingmaker in 2020,” https://www.penncapital-star.com/commentary/so-much-for-pa-s-chance-to-play-democratic-kingmaker-in-2020-fletcher-mcclellan/?utm_source=Pennsylvania+Capital-Star&utm_campaign=90c0e480b7-EMAIL_CAMPAIGN_2020_03_11_08_23&utm_medium=email&utm_term=0_5015c3184d-90c0e480b7-7521269, March 12, 2020

“COVID-19 Pandemic: Leaders Are Emerging from Trump’s Shadow to Calm a Nervous Nation,” <https://www.penncapital-star.com/commentary/covid-19-outbreak-leaders-are-emerging-from-trumps-shadow-to-calm-a-nervous-nation-fletcher-mcclellan/?fbclid=IwAR0exqZsLE5dKYOGdWtltHxVBQm1x9fuJW91iJQhXBS6kLuKLxiqVvqTjfu>, March 25, 2020

“When the Floodgates Opened: The Politics of COVID-19 Relief,” <https://www.penncapital-star.com/commentary/when-the-floodgates-opened-the-politics-of-covid-19-relief-fletcher-mcclellan/>, April 7, 2020

“The Big Difference between Trump and State Governors? Only One of Them Is Capable of Governing,” <https://www.penncapital-star.com/commentary/the-big-difference-between-the->

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2020-21

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August 30, 2020

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“On Dashed Expectations, Polling Failures and Saving Democracy,”
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“What Trump and O.J. Might Have in Common,”
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“Gaslighting Democracy and Trying to Rewrite the Narrative of Jan. 6,”
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For the *Pennsylvania Capital-Star*

“Want to Avoid a Cruel Summer for Pa. Students? Start by Closing the Digital Divide,”
https://www.penncapital-star.com/commentary/want-to-avoid-a-cruel-summer-for-pa-students-start-by-closing-the-digital-divide-janel-myers-and-fletcher-mcclellan/?utm_source=Pennsylvania+Capital-Star&utm_campaign=3254578207-EMAIL_CAMPAIGN_2020_05_05_07_14&utm_medium=email&utm_term=0_5015c3184d-3254578207-7521269, May 6, 2020, with Janel Myers ’18 MPP ’19*

“A Second Trump Term Will Be Just As Bad As We Fear, “ https://www.penncapital-star.com/commentary/a-second-trump-term-will-be-just-as-bad-as-we-fear-fletcher-mcclellan/?utm_source=Pennsylvania+Capital-Star&utm_campaign=4b6e09d81c-

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