

Mr. Braswell:

I agree with you that the middle-class was decimated when a boatload of manufacturing businesses left for other countries, but I disagree that tariffs “make a lot of sense as a long-term solution” to this issue, especially for average Americans. Focusing on bringing back an industry we lost awhile back doesn’t make sense to me either, as it would involve a lot more effort and money than, say, focusing on better American industries, like new and clean ones, the ones that pay as least as well as the undesirable manufacturing industries that left us.

I agree with you about low-wage jobs not having any future. When Rick Scott, for example, announced some years back that he was so proud to be bringing Wawa to Florida, I was stunned. Politicians should never be boasting about bringing low-wage jobs to Florida, never.

As for the homeless in Polk, I agree that we can do better and must for the sake of the American lives living here in this county. What I disagree with you on is that our homeless issue is caused by shipping our jobs to other countries. That may have been true at one time but, as best as I can tell, it’s not true anymore.

As for wealth being shipped off, I have to ask, then why is the world’s richest person, a naturalized American citizen, living in the United States with his oligarch buddies? Why, also, are there so many wealthy Russians in southern Florida?

Wealth may have been shipped off at one time but, like jobs were, but that really doesn’t happen anymore. These days, we’re shipping off our scientists and intellectuals. Wealth on the other hand, especially obscene amounts of money, is a very American thing, as is the existence of homelessness in the wealthiest country on the planet, which by the way is on the precipice of getting much worse.

Wealth disparity has significantly increased over time, particularly since the 1970s. In the United States alone, the top 10% of households now hold a disproportionately larger share of wealth compared to the bottom 90%. This movement is driven by factors like the concentration of wealth in the hands of ever wealthier folks and the decline in this share held by the middle class and, especially, the poor. Something must be done.

If you already know that “a lot of our homeless individuals have these low wage service jobs that put them in a situation of having a job but unable to afford rent,” then, as one of our representatives in Polk, elected by our people to serve our county that is supposed to be serving all of our people, you have an obligation to do something about it.

From your response, I concluded that you believe that tariffs will solve the increase in homelessness that is anticipated for our near future. I contend that it will be the reason that homelessness goes up in America. Yes, it will, because of the willy nilly implementation of tariffs by our obscenely wealthy leader’s administration.

With so many well-off and wealthy folks living in Polk, we really should be not be experiencing anything but short-term homelessness issues. We are not, which means we have a problem.

What are you going to do about it except for tariffs? Some health care including vision health and dental health care? Placing blame on employers in Polk that are not paying living wages to human beings? Does Polk County government, which includes you, have any plan whatsoever to provide Polk’s homeless folks with homes? Or, perhaps, finding a way to encourage, if not force our privileged employers, to pay living wages again. They did do that once.