

Editorial...

A reluctant “yes” on Measure 101

Sisters voters should hold their nose and vote “yes” on Measure 101.

Measure 101 would approve temporary assessments — a tax — on insurance companies, some hospitals and other providers of insurance and healthcare coverage to help cover healthcare for low-income families and children and people with disabilities.

This is a lousy way to make policy and a lousy way to provide health care coverage. It’s nothing more than using duct tape and binder twine to patch up a broken and failing system. It’s tempting to just say “Enough!” and stop trying to put patches on this worn-out system and insist upon a real fix. But there are real people’s lives at stake, and it’s hard to justify putting the heaviest burden of fixing our

healthcare system on those least equipped to bear it.

It’s true, as has been famously noted, that healthcare is “complicated.” Americans used to be known for figuring out how to do complicated, difficult and challenging things. Now there are many nations in the world — democratic nations with market economies — who have healthcare systems that are much less expensive than ours and deliver better outcomes.

At some point, we’re going to have to decide whether a great nation ought to have a great healthcare system or if we’re just going to limp along in Jed Clampett’s jalopy with a roll of duct tape handy.

For now, vote yes on Measure 101.

Jim Cornelius, Editor

Letters to the Editor...

The Nugget welcomes contributions from its readers, which must include the writer’s name, address and phone number. Letters to the Editor is an open forum for the community and contains unsolicited opinions not necessarily shared by the Editor. The Nugget reserves the right to edit, omit, respond or ask for a response to letters submitted to the Editor. Letters should be no longer than 300 words. Unpublished items are not acknowledged or returned. The deadline for all letters is noon Monday.

To the Editor:

How does this keep happening? In the past several months, countless healthy ponderosa pines have been cut down within Sisters city limits — the most recent on South Pine Street: nine healthy ponderosas taken down by a private resident.

As a previous president of an HOA within the city limits, I had more than one request from homeowners to have trees in our common areas taken down. My first response was to call an arborist and have the trees evaluated. If the trees were deemed healthy, no action was taken. I was also aware that if the trees in question were on public — or city — property, bordering the HOA, nothing would be done unless the City deemed it appropriate. The recent removal of countless trees in front of Sisters’ elementary and middle schools, and now on South Pine seems unconscionable to

me.

I will play the devil’s advocate here and lean on the side of property owners who may simply not know the rules, which is in and of itself not acceptable. Every resident should know the rules of their community. But how is it that the companies called in to harvest the trees do not know the rules? Unacceptable, and unbelievable.

I am concerned it comes down to greed; they cannot not know the rules in our community, yet go ahead unheeded and ask for forgiveness after the fact. I would hope that in view of the recent travesty on South Pine that our City Fathers will determine that severe fines need to be imposed on offending residents and tree-cutting companies who are willfully ignoring the City ordinances.

See **LETTERS** on page 22

Sisters Weather Forecast

Courtesy of the National Weather Service, Pendleton, Oregon

Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday	Sunday	Monday
Cloudy 48/34	Rain Likely 40/26	Chance Showers 37/26	Chance Snow 38/28	Rain/Snow Likely 38/26	Chance Snow 36/26

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Jonah Goldberg

In 17th century England, France and America, theaters were widely considered dens of iniquity, turpitude and crapulence. Under Oliver Cromwell’s Puritan dictatorship, the theaters were forced to close to improve moral hygiene. The Puritans of New England did likewise. A ban on theaters in Connecticut imposed in 1800 stayed on the books until 1952.

Partly out of a desire to develop a wartime economy, partly out of disdain for the grubbiness of the stage, the first Continental Congress in 1774 proclaimed, “We will, in our several stations ... discountenance and discourage every species of extravagance and dissipation, especially all horse-racing, and all kinds of gaming, cock-fighting, exhibitions of shews [sic], plays, and other expensive diversions and entertainments ...”

Needless to say, times have changed. And I suppose I have to say they’ve changed for the better. But that’s a pretty low bar. I don’t think acting is a dishonorable profession, and I’m steadfastly opposed to banning plays, musicals, movies and TV shows.

But in our collective effort to correct the social stigmas of the past, can anyone deny that we’ve overshoot the mark?

Watch the TV series “Inside the Actors Studio” sometime. It’s an almost religious spectacle of ecstatic obsequiousness and shameless sycophancy. Host James Lipton acts like some ancient Greek priest given an audience with Zeus, coming up just shy of washing the feet of actors with tears of orgiastic joy. I mean, I like Tom Hanks, too. But I’m not sure starring in “Turner & Hooch” (one of my favorite movies) bestows oracular moral authority.

Similarly, to watch the endless stream of award shows for Hollywood titans is to subject yourself to a narcissistic spectacle of collective self-worship.

In 2006, George Clooney

gave an (undeserved) Oscar acceptance speech in which he said, “We are a little bit out of touch in Hollywood every once in a while, I think. It’s probably a good thing.” He went on to deliver a semi-fictional though no doubt sincere account of how actors are like a secular priesthood prodding America to do better.

The most recent Golden Globes ceremony has already been excoriated for being a veritable geyser of hypocritical effluvia, as the same crowd that not long ago bowed and scraped to serial harasser and accused rapist Harvey Weinstein, admitted child rapist Roman Polanski and that modern Caligula, Bill Clinton, congratulated itself for its own moral superiority.

The interesting question is: Why have movie stars and other celebrities become an aristocracy of secular demigods? It seems to me an objective fact that virtually any other group of professionals plucked at random from the Statistical Abstract of the United States — nuclear engineers, plumbers, grocers, etc. — are more likely to model decent moral behavior in their everyday lives. Indeed, it is a bizarre inconsistency in the cartoonishly liberal ideology of Hollywood that the only super-rich people in America reflexively assumed to be morally superior are people who pretend to be other people for a living.

I think part of the answer has to do with the receding of religion from public life. As a culture, we’ve elevated “authenticity” to a new form of moral authority. We look to our feelings for guidance. Actors, as a class, are feelings merchants. While they may indeed be “out of touch” with the rest of America from time to time, actors are adept at being in touch with their feelings. And for some unfathomably stupid reason, we now think that puts us beneath them.

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