



On the Fence

Oregon's Sanctuary Law is a core state value reflects dignity and respect, core state values

Editor's Note: The Republican writer did not submit an On The Fence piece for this week's topic.

In November's midterm election, 1,172,828 Oregonians demonstrated support for dignity and respect by voting decisively to defeat Oregon Measure 105, the Repeal Sanctuary State Law Initiative, 63.47 percent to 36.54 percent. Although racism persists, we have made important progress reducing racial and ethnic discrimination.

Oregon is home to thousands of immigrants and refugees who've been here for generations because a family member courageously immigrated to the state. Today's immigrants join the long American tradition of coming in search of a better life and the freedom and opportunity Oregon and our nation offers.

As progressive Democrats, we believe no Oregonian, including immigrant Oregonians, should live in fear that doing everyday things like going to work, going to school or reporting crimes to the police could



BILL WHITAKER
UNION COUNTY
PROGRESSIVES/
DEMOCRATS

result in harassment or families being torn apart.

We believe dignity and respect are core Oregon values. We believe Oregon is a special place where most Oregonians cherish constitutional and human rights and value protecting those rights for everyone who calls Oregon home. We believe all Oregonians should be treated with dignity and respect regardless of where they were born.

One of the most important steps toward eliminating fear and affirming dignity and respect occurred when our Legislature, with overwhelming bipartisan support, passed Oregon's "Sanctuary Law." The bill passed the Oregon Senate 29 to 1 and the House 58 to 1. Gov. Goldschmidt signed it into law on July 7, 1987.

The law states: "No law enforcement agency of the State of Oregon

or of any political subdivision of the state shall use agency moneys, equipment or personnel for the purpose of detecting or apprehending persons whose only violation of law is that they are persons of foreign citizenship present in the United States in violation of federal immigration laws."

By preventing local law enforcement from using local resources to enforce federal immigration law, the law effectively established Oregon as a "sanctuary state."

Our path toward becoming a sanctuary state began at the Hi Ho Restaurant in Independence, Oregon, on Jan. 9, 1977. Several police officers, without warrants or identifying themselves, approached four Chicano men and began interrogating them about their citizenship status.

One grabbed Delmiro Trevino, forcing him to stand in the middle of the restaurant before other customers. Trevino, a U.S. citizen of Mexican descent, became a class action lawsuit plaintiff. Ten years later, Rocky Barilla, the lawyer

who brought the lawsuit on behalf of Trevino and others, was elected state representative and promoted a bill creating Oregon's sanctuary law.

At that time, the sanctuary law wasn't controversial. Discussing his bill with police and members of both parties, Barilla found local governments didn't want to spend money enforcing laws they didn't have to.

The sanctuary law has been protecting Oregonians from unfair racial profiling for more than 30 years, increasing trust in law enforcement critical for officers who rely on community members to come to them when they are victims or witnesses of crimes and providing guidance to local law enforcement officers on how to handle complicated immigration issues.

Ramon Ramirez, civil rights leader and long-time resident of Woodburn, remembers what Oregon was like without the sanctuary law. "Before," he says, "I saw immigration agents, aided by local police, busting down doors and

grabbing people off the street, with no way of knowing their immigration status. Local police harassed my friends and neighbors, including U.S. citizens, demanding to see their papers. Passing this law made things a lot better."

Today, immigrants are critical to Oregon's cultural and economic vitality. They are our neighbors, our friends, our co-workers. All of us call Oregon home.

Tragically, Oregon's value continue to be under attack by local and national white nationalist groups pushing racist, anti-immigrant and anti-Muslim policies that have the power to tear apart Oregon families and communities.

Progressive Democrats will defend dignity and respect. We will stand strong for fairness for every Oregonian.

Bill Whitaker is a precinct committee person of the Democratic Party of Union County and an active member of Union County Progressives. All information in this comment is from ballotpedia.org, opb.org and Oregonians United Against Profiling.

GUEST EDITORIAL FROM THE ALBANY DEMOCRAT-HERALD

Trouble brews for growers of holiday trees

Can "It's Christmas: Keep It Real!" do for the nation's Christmas tree growers what "Got Milk?" did for the dairy industry?

The answer could be important for Oregon's agricultural economy. Oregon is the nation's top producer of Christmas trees.

The Christmas tree crop in Oregon in 2017 had an estimated value of more than \$92 million. The trees aren't the state's No. 1 crop — that honor still goes to greenhouse and nursery plants — but it's still a significant bit of business.

And the crop is particularly important in the mid-valley Benton County, for example, consistently ranks among the state's leaders in terms of Christmas tree production.

But the industry is under renewed assault from an old nemesis: artificial Christmas trees.

It used to be, of course, that these artificial trees were objects of pity, pale imitations of the real thing. You could pick out a fake tree at 50 paces.

That's changed. Although we would continue to argue that a fake tree still is no match for a real tree, there's no doubt that the gap has narrowed in recent years. As an Associated Press news story noted this week, it can be hard these days to tell the difference between a fake and the real thing — especially if you believe that real trees come with lights already attached and ready to be plugged in, the way that some artificial trees now are packaged. (The people who believe this presumably are the same people who believe that chocolate milk comes from brown cows.)

To some extent, we can understand the convenience of an artificial tree. But we think

that whatever advantages they offer are easily offset by the charms of the real thing, no matter how good the fake ones get.

We apparently are in the minority here.

It was shocking to see in the AP story that the vast majority of Americans who have a Christmas tree — the number is somewhere between 75 and 80 percent — have opted for the artificial variety. Americans buy an estimated 10 million fake trees every year. (Oddly enough, even though you might think that consumers would just opt to bring the same tree out of storage year after year, the fake-tree market still is growing at about 4 percent a year.)

By contrast, the best estimates are that the Christmas tree industry harvests 25 million or so evergreens every year, and most of those

presumably are sold.

But the trends suggest that there's trouble brewing for real Christmas tree operations.

Hence the new campaign for real trees, sponsored by the Michigan-based Christmas Tree Promotion Board. The campaign is funded by a 15-cent fee that tree farmers pay for each tree they harvest.

The goal of the "It's Christmas: Keep It Real!" campaign is to connect with so-called "millennial moms" who might be in their first houses with their first children and starting up their own holiday traditions. The campaign features Instagram and Facebook posts showing real families as they search for the perfect tree, either at tree farms or in lots featuring pre-cut trees.

The families targeted by

Write to us

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

The Observer welcomes letters to the editor. Letters are limited to 350 words and must be signed and carry the author's address and phone number (for verification purposes only).

We edit letters for brevity, grammar, taste and legal reasons. We do not fact check. We will not publish poetry, consumer complaints against businesses or personal attacks against private individuals. Thank-you letters are discouraged.

Letter writers are limited to one letter every two weeks. Email your letters to news@observer.com

the campaign "may never have done this before," said Marsha Gray, the executive director of the Tree Promotion Board. "And we need to help them discover it and figure out how to include it in their holiday."

If the campaign misses the mark now, real tree farmers could wind up losing a generation of customers — and, already, those farmers are feeling the pinch. It's a business where you have to

be thinking ahead at least a decade — the time it takes for a seedling to grow to maturity — and it can be hard to assess what the demand will be in the future.

So here's hoping that "It's Christmas: Keep It Real!" strikes a chord with Americans across the nation. The holidays already are filled with so much artifice. It would be a shame to see that artificiality extend to our Christmas trees.

SUBSCRIPTION INFORMATION

SUBSCRIBE AND SAVE

NEWSSTAND PRICE: \$1.50

You can save up to 34% off the single-copy price with home delivery. Call **541-963-3161** to subscribe.

Stopped account balances less than \$5 will be refunded upon request.

Subscription rates per month:

By carrier.....\$10.50
By mail, all other U.S.\$15



A division of
Western Communications Inc.

THE OBSERVER

An independent newspaper founded in 1896

(USPS 299-260)

The Observer reserves the right to adjust subscription rates by giving prepaid and mail subscribers 30 days notice. Periodicals postage paid at La Grande, Oregon 97850. Published Mondays, Wednesdays and Fridays (except Dec. 25) by Western Communications Inc., 1406 Fifth St., La Grande, OR 97850 (USPS 299-260)

COPYRIGHT © 2018

THE OBSERVER

The Observer retains ownership and copyright protection of all staff-prepared news copy, advertising copy, photos and news or ad illustrations. They may not be reproduced without explicit prior approval.

Phone:

541-963-3161

Toll free (Oregon):

1-800-422-3110

Fax: 541-963-7804

Email:

news@agrandeobserver.com

Website:

www.lagrandeobserver.com

Street address:

1406 Fifth St., La Grande

POSTMASTER

Send address changes to:

The Observer, 1406 Fifth St.,

La Grande, OR 97850

Periodicals postage paid at:

La Grande, Oregon 97850

STAFF

Regional publisher.....	Karrine Brogoitti	Home delivery advisor.....	Amanda Fredrick
General manager/		Customer service rep.....	Mollie Lynch
Regional operations manager.....	Frank Everidge	Advertising representative.....	Karen Fye
Regional audience		Advertising representative.....	Juli Bloodgood
development director.....	Kelli Craft	Advertising representative.....	Amy Horn
Editor.....	Cherise Kaechele	Graphic design supervisor.....	Dorothy Kautz
News clerk.....	Lisa Lester Kelly	Graphic design.....	Cheryl Christian
Sports editor.....	Ronald Bond	Pressman.....	Jay Magnuson
Reporter.....	Dick Mason	Distribution center supervisor.....	Larra Cutler
Reporter.....	Max Denning	Distribution center.....	Terry Everidge
Classifieds.....	Devi Mathson	Distribution center.....	Ernie Grende
Customer service rep.....	Sharon Magnuson		