

Other Views

Nip Rep. Bentz' Trump virus in the bud

Normally, we would give a grace period to a freshly sworn-in politician. But the actions and words of Rep. Cliff Bentz warrant not patience, but condemnation.

Each of us heard President Trump's seditious call to incite violence. We heard him telling the terrorist mob that he "loved them."



ROGER WORTHINGTON
WORTHY BREWING, BEND

But in an interview with Oregon Public Broadcasting the day after the storming and looting of the Capitol, Bentz said he wasn't familiar with what Trump said before or afterward.

Either Rep. Bentz is lying, or he's staggeringly ignorant.

When asked whether he would support invoking the 25th Amendment to the Constitution to remove Trump from office, Bentz said he couldn't be expected to have read the amendment and know what it means.

Yet, in striking contrast, Bentz voted against certifying the electoral votes of Pennsylvania, showing he's well-versed in conspiracy theories.

Incoming President Joe Biden won the election and every state certified their electors. In fact, Biden received 81.3 million votes, a historic number. He pummeled Trump by more than 7 million votes. Biden's win in the electoral college was not even close — at 306 to 232. Voter fraud? Rigged election? Nearly 60 courts heard the claims and unanimously concluded: There's no evidence.

January 6 was supposed to be a ceremonial duty. By joining in with the other Republicans in the attempt to overturn the results of a fair election simply because they were angry with the result, Rep. Bentz must accept responsibility for the terrorism that ensued.

No, Bentz: You do not get a pass by your constituents of Eastern Oregon, including my home town of Bend. You may have entered the office as a Trump loyalist, but you took an oath to defend the U.S. Constitution, not a despot. You swore to defend our country against all enemies, both foreign and domestic.

In order to lead, we need to trust your judgment. You knew before being sworn in that Trump had completely failed to control the spread of the coronavirus. You knew the havoc the virus was unleashing on our economy, as well as the horrendous and mounting loss of lives. You knew his record on rejecting science, denying climate change, abusing women, undermining civil rights, bullying allies, spreading self-serving misinformation, thwarting the rule of law and fanning the flames of hate and division.

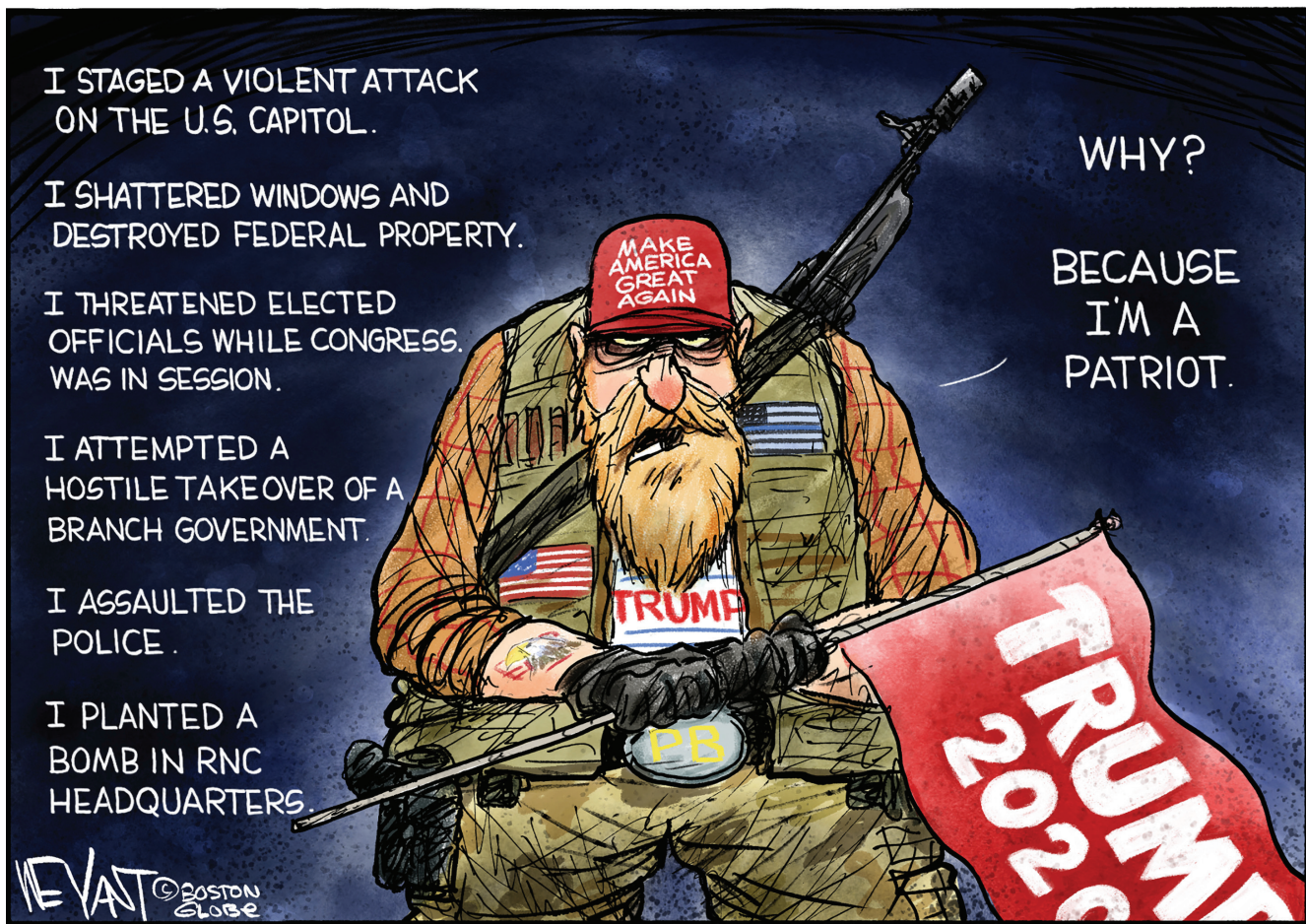
Congressman Bentz, after today, how can we trust you? If we've learned anything from the last four years, it's this: If we know or suspect of a cancer on the body politic, we must intervene early to stop it before it metastasizes. We can no longer assume that a malignant political neophyte will, with time and patience, mature into a healthy and mature statesman. Recall Senator Collins' infamous prediction after her no vote: Now that he's been impeached, Trump has learned his lesson and will now act more presidential.

I call on you, Rep. Bentz, to unequivocally renounce Trump and all he stands for. Apologize for your vote to overturn the will of the people. Apologize for fomenting lies that stirred up extremists to attempt a coup d'etat.

The health and life of our democracy is on the line. Trump may be out, but his stain remains. Is Rep. Bentz stained by the Trump virus of hatred, bigotry, willful ignorance, despotism and sedition? So far, the diagnosis is affirmative. We can't wait two years for rehabilitation.

I implore Rep. Bentz to read the 25th Amendment. Show us you are capable of self-healing by joining the growing numbers of Democrats and Republicans who are advocating for the swift removal of our unfit commander-in-chief. Every moment that the maniacal Trump remains in office is a grave danger to the security of this nation and the world.

Roger Worthington, an asbestos cancer lawyer, is the owner of Worthy Brewing in Bend.



Letters

An open letter to U.S. Rep. Cliff Bentz

As your constituent, it is my duty to call for your immediate resignation as Representative of Oregon's 2nd Congressional District due to your actions Jan. 6 and 7 in the U.S. Capitol.

In the course of your official duties, you objected to the certification of electors certified by the state of Pennsylvania in November's presidential election. You made this objection on grounds of "observed irregularities" in this election. At the time you made these objections, you were clearly aware that claims of these "irregularities" formed the basis of the grievances resulting in the armed occupation of the U.S. Capitol grounds some 12 hours prior by citizens proclaiming intent to overturn the results of that election.

If you believe the accuracy of these claims, your inaction betrays your oath of office by failing to "support and defend the Constitution of the United States against all enemies, foreign and domestic." You were present in the Capitol and as such had every opportunity to join this occupation, yet you chose instead to remain hidden away and allow others to put themselves in harm's way, both for their beliefs and for your own protection. In this case, you would prove a coward.

On the other hand, if you do not in fact believe the veracity of the claims behind your objection, you have betrayed your oath of office, again by failing to support and defend the Constitution of the United States against all enemies, foreign and domestic. You were aware these claims formed the basis of the events at the Capitol mere hours prior yet you chose to repeat these claims in that same Capitol with evident disregard for the clear and present dangers to the very foundations of our democracy. Political posturing in the aim of securing support is an omnipresent facet of our democracy, yet never has it been more clearly neither the time nor the place. In this case, you would prove a domestic enemy of the Constitution.

The people of Oregon's 2nd Congressional District deserve and demand as our representative someone who is neither a coward nor an enemy to the nation. We expect your resignation forthwith.

*Roger Barnes
La Grande*

Bentz vote supports Trump lies

I am disappointed that Cliff

Bentz, our new U.S. representative, used his very first vote to challenge the Pennsylvania election results. By doing so, from the first days of his term, he lent support to all of President Donald Trump's lies about the November election.

How does Bentz ignore a statement from Trump's own Cybersecurity and Infrastructure Security Agency, which assures this was the most secure election in American history? How does Bentz support Trump's claim of election fraud in Pennsylvania after Trump's own attorney, Rudy Giuliani, in court on the Pennsylvania lawsuit denied that Trump was even alleging fraud? What conclusion does Bentz draw from the fact that Trump's lawsuits claiming election fraud have been dismissed, left and right and nationwide, by judges of all political backgrounds?

Despite Trump's claims of election fraud, his lawsuits have failed everywhere because he can produce no evidence to back them up.

When Bentz supported Trump's baseless claims of fraud with his first vote — objecting to the Pennsylvania election results — Bentz enabled Trump to continue with his lies about the election and to encourage his own supporters to riot at the Capitol. Trump's lies have already cost us — heightened rhetoric, deeper divisions and now a riot and break-in at the Capitol, encouraged by Trump and with five people dead.

Bentz.

Second week on the job.

Already pandering in place of reasoned judgment.

An immediate willingness to violate his very oath to defend the Constitution if doing so might bring support from Trump followers his way.

Not a promising beginning.

*Michael Howard
La Grande*

Bentz pulls 'irresponsible political stunt'

Cliff Bentz is off to a bad start. In one of his first official acts as our member of the House of Representatives, he voted to throw out all of the millions of votes from the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania. In a statement issued on Thursday, Jan. 7, Bentz explains:

"Article II of the Constitution sets forth that each state legislature is entrusted with the authority to establish and facilitate elections within that state. In Pennsylvania, the Secretary of the Commonwealth and the state's Supreme Court did not adhere to the statutes set forth by the legislature when they extended deadlines

for the return of absentee ballots."

The problem for Bentz and his thoughtful constitutional analysis is that his issue has already been settled through the proper legal channels. The case is *Kelly v. Commonwealth of Pennsylvania*, and the Supreme Court of Pennsylvania dismissed the case with prejudice on Nov. 28, 2020. And on appeal, the U.S. Supreme Court denied the request for injunctive relief on December 8.

This means that the issue is done, settled, over, finished. Bentz's irresponsible political stunt only added fuel to a fire that we have watched burn out of control. Bentz and his fellow Republicans must stop misrepresenting the results of the presidential election and get back to doing the jobs they were elected to do.

*Jon White
La Grande*

A different opinion on opinions

With opinions so frequently, and sometimes violently, offered these days, it might be useful to read "The Death of Expertise."

*Richard Haddock
La Grande*

Bentz needs to live up to his oath

The man we elected to the U.S. House of Representatives had an important choice to make in his first week in office. The choice was to support democracy and freedom or to support fascism and anarchy. Unfortunately, Cliff Bentz made the wrong choice. Along with 138 other Republicans, Mr. Bentz voted to overturn the presidential election that Joe Biden won by 8 million votes. No doubt he was pressured into doing this by more senior members in the House. And that is what is wrong with our elected officials today. They cannot think for themselves but feel they have to follow the party line. The Republican Party line these days seems to be to attempt to win every election no matter what the cost.

Over 80 million voters cast their ballot for Joe Biden, despite the misinformation spewed out on social media. In addition, the Republicans lost control of the Senate, largely due to the incompetence and lack of moral values of the president. Rep. Bentz took an oath to defend the U.S. Constitution. So far, he has failed to do that. My hope is that in the future he will live up to that oath.

*Ken Hohmann
Wallowa*

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