

OUR VIEW

# Mob violence has no place in American democracy

Some called it an historic moment, but the expulsion of Rep. Mike Nearman from the Oregon House of Representatives was really more about making a clear statement regarding unbecoming conduct by a lawmaker and its consequences.

GOP lawmakers united with majority Democrats in the House and voted to expel Nearman on a 59-1 vote. The only vote in support of the lawmaker was his own. The expulsion is the first in the 160-year history of the House.

Readers probably remember the undisciplined political brush up that occurred last December when Nearman let a group of protesters into the Capitol building as legislators convened an emergency session to decide on a path forward through the economic hit from the coronavirus pandemic.

Protestors barged into the building — closed because of COVID-19 restrictions — tangled with police and sprayed them with bear spray.

Nearman maintained he only let the protestors in because he believed the Oregon Capitol should be open to voters. Nearman would be correct if the individuals seeking to enter were not carrying guns, brandishing bear spray and generally acting like a mob. A group of voters who seek to peacefully commune with elected leaders is not a mob.

Nearman's actions point to a far larger problem that manifested itself on a larger stage and in a more serious manner in January when another mob stormed the nation's capital and threatened lawmakers.

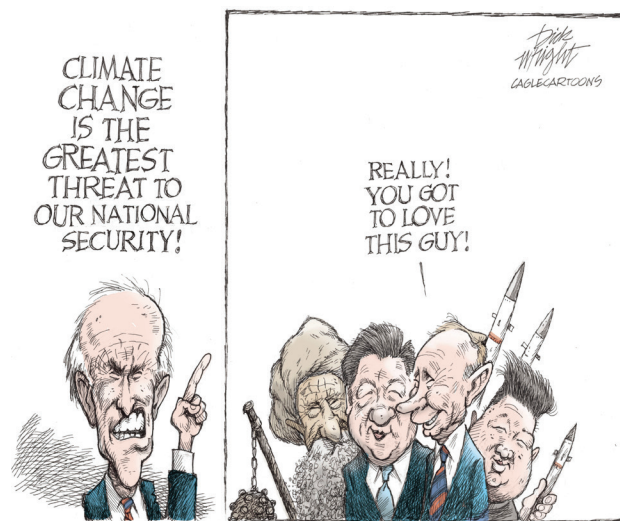
The larger problem is a sudden loss of common sense and discipline among those of us who should know better. Actions such as the Nearman's stunt in Salem and the attack on the nation's capital in January are not part of democracy. The two incidents are prime examples of mobs running amok.

No doubt there are those who believe the actions by protestors in both Salem and Washington, D.C., were justified. They are opinions that should be heard. That is what democracy in America is all about. Disagreeing over a political issue is part of our American DNA. We should never be afraid to debate.

Toting guns and screaming rhetoric and then running wild through the halls of Congress, though, is not productive. Already there are extremely stringent security measures in place at the U.S. Capitol. Those security measures mean access to the government is restricted. Not because of a foreign security threat but because of an American mob.

Oregon lawmakers made the right call with Nearman but in the end they did not have much choice.

Mob violence has no place in American democracy.



LETTERS

### American Jobs Plan is our chance to do right by future generations

In Union County our moment to recover from the COVID-19 pandemic and Build Back Better is now. We must meet the scale of the crises we face with big investments in our economy, infrastructure and climate action with justice and equity incorporated throughout.

Clean energy is the fastest-growing industry in America and provides a huge opportunity for high-quality jobs that help rebuild the middle class while simultaneously taking much needed action on climate and putting us on the path to 100% clean energy. The Oregon Legislature is doing its part by working to pass House Bill 2021, and it's time for Congress and even our local leadership to do their part. I'm grateful to my representatives in D.C. for their leadership in partnering with President Biden toward ambitious climate justice goals.

To ensure a just transition, we must prioritize equitable solutions, and not just in large cities, ensuring that at least 40% of benefits go to those who need it most — in Union County, the communities most harmed by toxic pollution are low-income and agricultural workers. We will also need a national clean energy standard, along with tax law that incentiv-

izes clean energy and good jobs for Union County workers.

We have a moral responsibility to our children and grandchildren to pass along to them a safe, cleaner and healthier planet. The American Jobs Plan is our chance to do right by future generations.

Randy Knop  
Union

### Musical idea for renaming EOU library

I would like to propose we start a mail-in to suggest a new name for the EOU library. Here are my four suggestions: 1. Sharon Porter Library, 2. Carla Arnold Library, 3. Matt Cooper Library, 4. Eastern Oregon University Library.

If No. 4 is selected, maybe we can get 1, 2 and 3 to gather on the library steps and play us some tunes. What do you think?

Jabe Merricks  
La Grande

### Bentz's reasoning seems wrong

Cliff Bentz, in his recent newsletter, wrote that he voted against H. R. 1333, because it "weakens our national security by preventing the President from suspending immigration from unstable regions of the world."

I wonder what bill Bentz read

because H. R. 1333 states the president may temporarily restrict the entry of any alien if the State Department makes a determination that the restriction would address specific and credible facts that may threaten our security or public safety. Obviously, the bill does not prevent the president from suspending immigration.

The bill also states that any restriction must address a compelling government interest; it must use the least restrictive means to achieve that interest; and it prohibits religious discrimination unless there is a statutory basis for such discrimination.

Since there is nothing in the bill that would weaken the President's ability to suspend immigration, then why did Cliff Bentz write what he did? Either Bentz did not read the bill or he is intentionally misleading his constituents, and if he is misleading his constituents then one must ask, why is he doing so?

In his newsletter, Bentz also provided reasons for not voting for other bills, such as allowing the marijuana industry to use the banking system, but given his stated reasons for not voting for H.R. 1333 and what that bill actually states, one must now question the truthfulness of our congressman, and that is not something we should need to do.

Steve Wallaert  
Bend

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