

LETTERS

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youth organizations in this county for more than 10 years, I have seen tremendous community support! I have also seen that many of our children miss out on that support. Too many of our kids in Klickitat County experience substance use issues, bullying, abuse, and mental health challenges. Too often these kids land in the court system or worse.

Joanna Turner is a parent and recognizes that the youth in our county need more support. Joanna is committed to helping Klickitat County support every child with prevention — providing and increasing services like after-school tutoring, mentoring programs, youth centers, food support, child care, reproductive health education and support, and in-county treatment centers. These preventive services will help us build a safer, healthier, more supportive Klickitat County, and will ensure all our youth have the chance to thrive.

Joanna Turner's commitment to our youth and to the longevity of our county is clear. Please join me in voting for Joanna Turner for Klickitat County Commissioner.

Marisa Cieloha
White Salmon

Rushing for Dist. 14

Many seem to believe that health insurance provided through employment is a time-honored concept that was handed down by our founding fathers. In fact, employer-based healthcare only dates back to World War II when wages were frozen by law, and companies

tried to attract workers with health benefits. Time has proven this model deeply flawed. For-profit insurance companies, drug manufacturers, hospitals and providers have steadily made healthcare benefits unaffordable for employers, putting them at a big disadvantage in the world market. The result has been job loss in our country and shrinking coverage, coupled with higher copays. And that's if you are lucky enough to be employed. Otherwise, you are just left out on your own: Uninsured or under-insured. In that situation, you are much more likely to be unable to manage chronic and new medical conditions adequately, resulting in avoidable expensive hospitalizations that we all end up paying for when you are unable to do so. As an ER physician, Tracy Rushing, MD, deals with avoidable health crises every day. She is acutely aware that there needs to be a better way. Some form of universal healthcare is in place in almost every developed country around the globe. It is affordable; their healthcare costs are less than half of ours. It works. They live as long or longer with better health statistics on many measures. Let's get behind someone who will work to make universal healthcare a reality in our state. Let's finally get this right! Vote for Tracy Rushing to represent District 14.

Robert C. Florek, MD
Underwood

On masks

Making a law that kids have to wear seatbelts was good. But when someone is given a license to drive, they should also have the right to decide whether or not to wear a seat belt. It disgusts me that Oregonians voted to make that a law. It is

shameful that police enforce it. It isn't the sort of thing that should be made a law in the U.S. of A. Life, liberty, and pursuit of happiness. My life belongs to me, not the state. It is unconstitutional, and should be revoked.

When something you do is likely to endanger someone else, that's different. Requiring measures to limit disease spread is part of good government..

It really bugs me that people have criticized employees who demand that patrons wear masks. Every place of business has the right to demand a dress code of patrons. Shoes and shirt are not required by law (except as regards decency laws). Some establishments demand that a man wear suit and tie. That is allowed. But unless the dress code is posted at the door, it is illegal to refuse service or ask someone to leave for going without tie, shoes, or anything.

Masks, that's different.

Adrian Fields
Hood River

Leviathan government

Provided it doesn't suffer from constant deconstruction and revision, history can be insightful. In 1932, perhaps the worst year of the Depression, Louisiana Democrat and demagogue Senator Huey Long was asked if fascism was likely to come to America. He replied, "Sure but it will be called anti-fascism."

All shades of socialism are in essence uncomfortably similar economically, socially, and politically in that eventually, to borrow a phrase, there can be nothing above the state and nothing outside the state. Statist Republicans as well as

Democrats subscribe to and faithfully practice this seamless system.

On its hind legs, socialism will eventually intellectualize and even spiritualize violence in its drive to create utopia on earth. Jurist Robert Bork wrote that utopian thinking, without regard to actual realities, will instead result in violence and subjugation for all, including the very people it says it values.

We now have a front row seat of leftist violence coupled with an overall dull response from too many Republicans. At the same time, we're faced with those who demand, for their own interests, hyper-individualism at the same time demanding hyper-collective rights according to their specific preferred group identity.

Klickitat County Sheriff, Bob Songer, isn't popular with some people for the right reason. He places the guarantees of the Constitution ahead of and in place of the destructive tendencies exhibited by far too many which is why some find him objectionable.

Judge Bork also pointed out that our Constitution presents a firewall between our individual liberties at tension with the excesses of the leviathan government. Ironically this is available even for those who want to destroy it.

Mike Goodpaster
Goldendale

Dismayed by USPS actions

I am shocked and deeply concerned by the blatant dismantling of our US Postal Service by the Trump administration and Postmaster General Louis DeJoy. The President has made clear that his motivation is voter suppression by reducing

the reliability of mail-in ballots. This action is particularly reprehensible during a pandemic, when voting by mail is a safe way for people to exercise their constitutionally guaranteed right to vote.

The Post Office is enshrined in the US Constitution and is a beloved and essential institution in America, with as high as 90 percent approval ratings. For so many of us, the post office is a lifeline, providing timely delivery of crucial medicines, ballots, information, financial matters, personal correspondence.

I am outraged by the wanton decommissioning and destruction of 500 barcode sorters and the removal of many mailboxes. This has wasted millions of dollars in taxpayer money. All of this equipment belongs to the American people.

I encourage everyone who cares about our Post Office to speak out and stand up for this vital service and for free and fair elections. Our very democracy is at stake.

Carole Anderson
The Dalles

No electricity?

I heard on the radio that we may very well experience brownouts due to the shutting down of the [electricity generating] coal plants.

Climate changers responsible for the shutdowns had said there would be a replacement. to take the place of the coal thereby giving us electricity, but apparently that hasn't happened.

Who is responsible?

Patricia Ward
The Dalles

Mid-Columbia Center For Living seeks to end services to residents with developmental disabilities

By Dennis Ziemer

For the last 30 years, Wasco, Hood River, and Sherman counties have collectively organized a County Developmental Disabilities Program funded by the Oregon Department of Human Services, which has been run by the Mid-Columbia Center for Living (MCCFL).

County Developmental Disabilities Programs provide eligible adults and children with intellectual and developmental disabilities with services like case management of an individual support plan, resource referrals, 24-hour

care, assisted living services and employment support.

Now, in the midst of a global pandemic when the residents of these counties need these services more than ever, MCCFL has claimed that it can no longer run this program and will be laying off 11 employees, 10 of whom are considered essential.

In canceling the program, MCCFL has not identified anyone to take over the program, leaving their clients without the vital services they need.

"As front-line workers serving some of our communities' most

vulnerable individuals, this decision in the midst of a global pandemic, fire season, and the transition for students to begin remote learning, is more than disconcerting" said Sarah Smutz, a service coordinator at MCCFL.

As recently as June, MCCFL negotiated reimbursement rates that more than cover the cost of the program and the dedicated staff who serve the adults and children with developmental disabilities who rely on our services.

Anne Lamb, a mother of a child with special needs who lives in the area, sees the disruption of services

as the most consequential result of MCCFL's decision.

"As a mom of a special needs child who's experienced barriers since birth, knowing that my child is comfortable with their case manager for years and then to have that security yanked away when it's already hard for them to have a voice, is cruel. This is taking their stability away. It's an outrage to mess with kids when they already have difficulties."

As a public entity, before closing this program, MCCFL should have set up a time for public comments, obtained board approval, or at the

very least, provided the public with notice. In closing the program, they did none of these things. Furthermore, MCCFL is continuing to make decisions about the use of public funds and resources behind closed doors. Recently, it set up a private, invitation-only Q&A session for Friday, Aug. 28, at 1 p.m. By limiting who can attend, MCCFL has again denied the public the opportunity to present their concerns.

Dennis Ziemer is media director for Oregon AFSCME Council 75.

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