

OPINION

LETTERS

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widespread loss of faith by many Americans in the 2020 election — including many in my district,” after having acted earlier to create loss of faith in the election.

The last thing we need right now is another person (old white male or other) in a leadership position needlessly sowing discord and distrust in our communities and our country. We have much work to do to restore faith in America and in each other. We need our elected representatives to be part of the solution, not part of the problem.

This week you were an embarrassment to Oregonians and an affront to our democracy, which has been pelted to near-death by the current administration. Please join us in trying to come together and make our country whole.

Bonnie New
Hood River

Recall Bentz

Yesterday, our representative to Congress of Oregon's 2nd district, Cliff Bentz, voted with the conspiracy theorists who objected to the results of Pennsylvania's presidential election of Nov. 6. His vote came AFTER supporters of those conspiracy theories formed a mob that violently overran the Capitol. Said mob was in Washington protesting the election precisely because of the disingenuous spreading of said conspiracy theories, which prior to Jan. 6, Mr. Bentz had openly supported and taken part himself in spreading.

Mr. Bentz made opportunistic use of these ridiculous conspiracy theories and seeing the real consequences of his behavior, chose to double down.

Recall Cliff Bentz.

Nicholas Eby
Hood River

Bentz not worthy

I am a proud liberal and I usually vote Democrat. I didn't always agree with Greg Walden. I wasn't always happy with him. But I was never *ashamed* of him.

On Jan. 6, Cliff Bentz stood up on the side of the traitors who invaded our nation's Capitol building, who attacked our seat of government and threatened it with violence for the first time since 1812. And for what? To try to deny the lawful votes

of people in other states. To try to deny the very principle of democracy, that we listen to the voice of the people and we let the voters choose our leaders.

Democracy doesn't mean your candidate always wins. Sometimes you win, and sometimes you lose. But real Americans accept the truth and work together, to keep our nation strong, while agreeing to debate and disagree honorably, to keep our nation growing.

I don't expect a liberal like me to get elected to represent The Dalles in Washington, D.C.; we are a moderate to conservative rural town, and there's a lot to like about that. And we are also people of principles. Democrat or Republican, I think we should be represented by a patriot, a person of integrity, someone with the courage to stand up for what is right and fight against what is wrong. Is Cliff Bentz the best Wasco County can do? I think I know my neighbors here well enough to say no.

Cliff Bentz isn't worthy of us. We can, and at the next election we should, do much better.

Rhiannon Griffin
The Dalles

Treason

Wednesday Jan. 6, 2021, will go down as one of the saddest and most embarrassing days in U.S. history. On Wednesday, acting President Trump incited a violent riot at the US Capitol, failed to immediately tell the rioters to go home once violence and law-breaking occurred, failed to call in the National Guard as soon as violence started, or suggested anyone who broke the law face criminal charges. The words spoken by the president and the actions that resulted meet the legal definitions of treason, sedition, and insurrection as well as a coup attempt under US code 18 chapter 115 sections 2381, 2383, and 2384. I am not a lawyer, but I can read as well as anyone who wishes to look this up.

I do not believe anyone still supporting Donald Trump will ever be convinced that he is not fit for public office, or is even a decent human being. That fact is something we cannot change as Americans. The people and those in elected office do have an opportunity to take dramatic, legal action to rid our country of the president and prevent him from ever running for political office again. It is time we stop speaking of radicalized, violent

rhetoric and actions as outliers of "a few bad people." We are seeing a powerful, dangerous movement which must be halted as soon as humanly possible.

Steve Kaplan
Hood River

Denounce Bentz

On Wednesday, January 6, a mob egged on on by a populist, megalomaniac president stormed the Capitol in Washington, D.C., and attempted to take members of Congress hostage. A few hours after that, our representative in Congress, Mr. Cliff Bentz, voted to support Trump's attempted coup. I know that many of my conservative friends supported Mr. Bentz. I ask you now to denounce Mr. Bentz and his vote to support insurrection. Our allegiance must be to the constitution and the law, not to a individual.

Greg Chiodo
Ashland

Get a spine, Mr. Bentz

What a tough time to enter Congress. Right off, you have to opine on mob rule. A week into the job, Oregon's new 2nd Dist. Rep. Cliff Bentz joins dissident GOP members in voting against certifying election results from Pennsylvania.

In a public statement on his web site, Bentz said, "My goal was to protect the integrity of our elections and to prompt all states to uphold election laws as determined by their state legislatures."

The thing is, Pennsylvania's Supreme Court threw out a lower court's order preventing the state from certifying election results. The Supreme Court said the lawsuit challenging ballots had been filed long after the deadline for challenge to the state's mail-in voting law (bit.ly/3s6gLvO).

So, does Mr. Bentz believe deadlines don't matter? Or does he believe post-election complaints about mail-in voting should be permitted — if, and only if, they prevent his preferred candidate from winning?

If Bentz doesn't like mail-in ballots, maybe he would like to forfeit his own victory on Nov. 3, because Oregon's mail-in ballots helped his supporters elect him?

It sounds like Mr. Bentz entered Congress at the wrong time — when a tide of illogic rallied to the defense

of a seditious insurrectionist. I'll cut Mr. Bentz some slack. He's new. Still trying to figure out what size big boy pants he needs. Or if he qualifies.

Throwing out legitimately cast (or mailed) ballots just because you don't like the results is about as undemocratic as can be.

After the riot at the capitol, Bentz told *The Oregonian* that he didn't know if "stolen" was the right way to think about the election, or "whether it's constitutional." Here's a question for Bentz: If Biden's victory was stolen from Trump, maybe Bentz's victory was stolen from Alex Spenser? I don't think so.

I voted for Spenser. But I also think Bentz won, fair and square (with mail-in ballots). So did Biden. Please, Mr. Bentz, get a spine and get to work for all of us in Dist. 2.

Stu Watson
Hood River

Ashamed of Bentz

Representative Bentz introduced himself on the national stage in the worst possible manner by supporting the unfounded objections to certifying the votes cast by almost 7 million Pennsylvanians.

While clouding his decision in language around changes to voting procedures, this farce is just part of a misguided attempt to overturn the free and fair elections for one reason only: Trump's desire to stay in power.

In supporting this, Mr. Bentz must be held accountable for spreading misinformation and answer for his role in legitimizing the attacks on the U.S. Capitol. We witnessed this week that violent extremists attacked the Capitol, resulting in the death of five individuals. These violent acts were based on the provenly false narratives around the election results and the last-minute efforts to prevent the certification of votes. I am ashamed of such representation. Instead, we should have a representative — Republican or Democrat — who understands the values and ideals of democracy and the freedoms that come with those.

Patrick Hiller
Hood River

Fitting fate

Proudly floating below the I-95 bridge on the River Charles in Boston harbor sits a ship nicknamed "Old Ironsides", the USS Constitution, the world's oldest commissioned war ship is a three-masted heavy frigate.

She has strong yardarms and stands ready to do her duty once again ever since 1797. A fitting fate for those convicted of insurrection, sedition and treason in the takeover of our political holy of holies, the U.S. Capitol building.

Robert Brostoff
Cascade Locks

God bless America

My first instinct was to write a letter to the editor in anger over what is happening in our country; crime and violence is up, our government is imploding from within, we are literally coming apart at the seams, we blame our political parties, federal and state leaders.

But we have no one to blame but ourselves! We, the people, have allowed this to happen.

Over the years we've become so lax in our faith and moral standards and become a society where anything and everything goes, our leaders were able to remove God from our schools, businesses, courts, government declaring separation of church and state. Some churches have turned their backs on God for the same reasons.

A Democrat opened a session with prayer to every God as listed by each culture then ended it with an Amen and a woman. Does he not realize that Amen is not a pronoun but the words, "Let it be so?" In finding ourselves to be politically correct, we've lowered our identity to pronouns. Our morals are fleeing the scene and God has been replaced by political correctness, secularism and multiculturalism. We have been told that God is dead and His teachings do not count for so long, society is beginning to believe it!

Civility has turned to attacks and hatred, which the media and leaders on both sides support. We appoint leaders who believe in killing the unborn and call it choice. Our identity to the Almighty Creator has been lost, which therefore makes us no different from any other country or belief. Crime, violence, redirected morals, is lost because we've made everything about us! God is out!

In 1956 Russia's Communist leader Nikita Khrushchev said, "We will take America without firing a shot. We do not have to invade the U.S. We will destroy you from within

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There is a gap in Oregon between the haves and the have nots

■ By **Todd Carpenter**
Owner, Last Stop Saloon

On the front of our building is a very large American flag. When I see it and think about what it represents to me, I get emotional. It is haggard but it is there and has been there since March 2020. The beliefs that guide me are to treat people the way I want to be treated, mutual respect, honest communication, and helping others in my community. I do not always live up to these values, but I try my best. Anyone who knows me knows that they can call me out when they do not see me exemplifying those values.

I do not claim to know everything about our government; I do not claim to know the constitution well. I just work hard and keep pushing to provide for my family, friends, and community. It is what my mom and dad taught me.

They also taught me that we have the right of freedom of speech and expression; we have a right to gather to exchange ideas and create community and we have a responsibility to help others if we can. They taught me that those ideas and core values combined are what makes the United States stand out among other countries. It is why people from all over the

world come to American to live and thrive freely.

I believe that those rights and values are being threatened. Our government has throttled business unfairly and created a double standard that they have applied across different business sectors based on a set of criteria in the name of health and safety. Even though the Centers for Disease Control has outlined safe practices for all businesses, our government has not allowed us to apply them equally regardless of the type of business. It was just recently reported in Washington that a Costco in Yakima Valley had 150 COVID-19 cases but remained open because they complied with uniform best practices established by the CDC.

We talked with our employees after this last two-week freeze. When we opened back up for takeout and patio service, we asked them how things were going. What we heard was they were struggling at best and/or couch surfing or homeless at worst. Some are severely depressed or anxious, some are angry, some are just waiting to see what happens next and shrugging it off like they are used to being kicked in the gut so much it is just better to roll with it. I am painting an ugly picture here, but it is

the truth. There is a gap in the world between the haves and the have nots. There is a gap between those that make the decisions and those that are victims of those decisions. These consequences may be unintentional, but they are there, and we need to recognize them and here in Oregon, specifically in The Dalles, we need to do something about it. We do not have to wait for the government to come up with a plan. As small business owners, entrepreneurs, free thinkers, and problem solvers, we can come together and make things happen.

I can tell you this about our employees, we feel they are family and we want to do everything we can for them. Also, regardless of who they feel about the situation they put on their best face and they work. They want to work. They want the same opportunities as the people making the decisions the "haves" have gotten. They want to be free to work and provide for their families the only way they know how.

Some of these people are single parents who work

two jobs, both usually for minimum wage to make ends meet. When you take away one of those jobs, they simply cannot make it.

We could roll up our doors and we did. We thought we were giving all our employees the best chance for aid when we laid them off, all 45 of them across three businesses in March. When we heard they were struggling, we decided to open back up. After all, we would be paying most of the overhead anyway if we wanted to open again when things get back to normal in a couple months.

We are not doing any of this for political reasons. We are not doing this for money. You can ask any open small business how much money they have made this last year and you will hear loud, sarcastic laughter. We are open from the heart, following CDC guidelines protecting the health and safety of our employees and our customers by sanitizing everything, constant hand washing, and wearing masks. We do this because of our core values and because this is small town USA where anything is

possible and taking care of your family and neighbor is the best thing that anyone can do.

The Wasco County Business Alliance was created with these core values and, dare I say, radical ideas in mind. Our goal is to first focus on the economic vitality of Wasco County. Our intention is to share information, foster communication and strategize on how to work with other entities to build a strong economy and community in Wasco County.

Short term, we are doing what we can to understand options available for all businesses regardless of business sector to open and stay open safely for our customers and employees during the pandemic. We are also gathering information on how other businesses are doing the same across Oregon to build both short term and long-term strategies to message

government agencies, understand our rights and responsibilities, and help our local community.

Business owners are scared; every single one of them is in a different situation and some have made different decisions than we have, but they are not doing so lightly. They all have the same concerns we have. Concerns for their family, friends, teams, and the community. They see not only the end to their life's work, but the community they created with employees and customers disappear.

It is time to apply the same careful CDC rules across all businesses so that our communities can live and thrive. It is simply time to Open Oregon. Let's do this #TheDalles.

Dr. Cullen's Student of the week

Benjamin Kramer
as the Algebra 1 Student of the Week:
Regardless of the struggles present in the distance learning format, Benjamin has shown resilience and determination in his math studies. Thank you Ben for all your hard work and excellent communication!

Congratulations

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Victor Cullen, DDS

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