

Politicians should stay on the job

By Lucy McLean

I am extremely disappointed with Sen. Chuck Thomsen, who has walked off the job in Salem so many times, most recently in February, because he was mad about some legislation or proposal. It's shameful and there must be accountability for lawmakers who fail to show up and do their jobs. There have been a lot of scary moments over the last year for myself and my friends and neighbors in Hood River. A frightening pandemic, smoke from massive wildfires, as well as small businesses worried about if they will be able to survive extended closures and unemployed Oregonians worried how they will be able to pay the bills. This is on top of how the pandemic has made hunger and homelessness more dire in our

community. We need our senator to show up for us, not turn his back on us.

When politicians walk off the job and refuse to negotiate on policies, it shows they are unfit for office. It doesn't matter what the issue is that he doesn't like. We didn't elect Thomsen to go on vacation when the going gets tough. That is why I support proposals that would bring consequences to lawmakers who violate their oath of office and skip out on work. One proposal on the table says that if lawmakers don't show up when they are supposed to, they won't get paid and will face fines. I support that. No work? No pay. And the bill prohibits the kind of fundraising that can occur from big political donors to pay the fines or make up lost wages. They

can't turn to their drug company, corporate timber industry, and other corporate donors to reward them for walking out. I also strongly support the proposal that would ban any lawmaker from running for office who has had 10 unexcused absences. Regular people have to show up, go to work and do their entire job, not just parts of their jobs. If they don't they get penalized or fired. The same should be true for the people we send to Salem.

I grew up here in Hood River, and I now work in health care administration. Every day in my work our customers and coworkers rely on me, as do my friends and family. I take seriously all of my obligations and duties, and I frankly find it stunning that Sen. Thomsen and the other GOP Senators who claim

to be our leaders and ask for our votes don't do the same.

Working in the health care field, I see the sacrifices our front-line health care workers are making every day. Under immense stress, they still do their jobs because they keep their promises and take their oaths seriously. They deserve to know that every single day, no matter what, every single lawmaker is showing up for them. When these Legislators refuse to do their jobs, they are delaying our communities' access to desperately needed housing assistance, resources our schools urgently need to safely fully reopen, legislation to lower pharmaceutical drug prices and other assistance Oregonians need. Perhaps even more infuriatingly we the taxpayers, who are hurting most right now,

have to pay for the costs of the walkouts. Last year these costs came to almost half a million dollars.

Hood River, and communities across Oregon, can't allow these walkouts to continue. A strong bipartisan majority of Oregonians support policies that would make walking out on the job hurt for lawmakers. As more and more Oregonians get fed up with GOP gridlock they are joining together with teachers and other community organizations to demand change. Please check out NoMoreCostlyWalkouts.com to learn how you can get involved. We as a state cannot allow our government to continue to be shut down in these scary times.

Lucy McLean lives in Hood River.

YOUR VOICE CONTINUED

business, solving complex legal issues, and creating and advocating for good public policy is exactly the expertise we need right now. Please join me in supporting Marcus Swift for

May 2021 election.

Sincerely,

Hunter Johnstead
The Dalles

Fair taxation

I wish we could all agree that paying your fair share of

taxes is patriotic. Obviously we all need the dollars we work hard to earn, but not contributing to our country's infrastructure, which almost everybody uses daily, is like not maintaining your car, or your family or your place of

residence.

Why then are entities and people who avoid taxes considered smart? Like Trump proudly boasted, they wear their avoidance to help pay for the defense of this nation, for the roads on which our commerce travels, or the airports and seaports that import or export goods and services as a badge of honor, or simply as shrewd business practice?

Last year, more than 50 of the largest U.S. companies paid no federal income taxes at all. Many haven't for years.

Yet they wave the flag on the fourth, and incorporate it into their product packaging, even as they lobby to pay

even less than they do.

Meanwhile bridges are crumbling, broadband penetration is third rate, and the American Society of Civil Engineers gave the state of our infrastructure a C-. Barely passing.

Yet [some large companies] had a total effective tax rate of zero or less for the last three years, even though they are profitable.

In addition, many companies locate over seas in tax havens to avoid U.S. taxes.

I pay my taxes. I think these fortune 500 companies that make use of our roads, airports, defense and other infrastructure should pay too. Their avoidance should

be deemed unpatriotic, not lauded as "smart."

Jennifer Ouzounian
Hood River

COVID kills

COVID-19 vaccinations are rapidly coming available to all. Yet, there are people in Oregon not wanting to be vaccinated for various reasons.

To those who have a reason not to get vaccinated, talk to the 500,000 families who lost love ones. Explain your reason to them.

Take the vaccine. COVID kills!

Lee Huckins

Want to write a letter?

COLUMBIA GORGE NEWS ENCOURAGES readers to submit letters to the editor for the weekly opinion page. Letters on all topics are welcome.

Writers must include their name and hometown (for publication) and daytime phone number (for verification, not for publication). Letters from an agency or group must be credited to the author or a contact person.

Anonymous or "name withheld by request" letters are not accepted.

Letters must be 350 words or fewer; generally, the briefer the message, the better. Opinion pieces longer than 350 words may be published as a guest commentary at the discretion of the editor.

Letters are published as space allows, and efforts are made each week to provide as much space as possible.

Deadline for letters is noon on the Friday prior to publication.

We reserve the right to edit all letters:

Letters must be civil.
Vulgar or inappropriate language will not be considered, nor malicious, false or

misleading statements.

Letters attacking an individual, rather than an opinion, are not acceptable.

Letters criticizing a particular business over a particular complaint or grievance will not be considered.

The opinions expressed in letters are "Your Voice," and do not necessarily reflect the opinions of the *Columbia Gorge News*, its staff, publisher or advertisers.

Letters may be submitted online at www.ColumbiaGorgeNews.com: Scroll to the bottom of the page and select "Submission Forms," then select "Letter to the Editor."

Letters also may be sent via email to Mark Gibson at markg@gorgenews.com.

Or mail your letter "attention editor" to any of the Post Office boxes listed at bottom of page 4.




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