

# Our humanity the greatest defense against tyranny

Since Friday, Jan. 27, when President Donald Trump signed an executive order to stop all refugees from entering the United States, outrage has steamrolled through our community.

The president's order is not just misguided, it is racist. It is intended to incite further hatred and violence, to divide and conquer.

It's the lure of fear, the casting of "the other", that for racists and bigots becomes a siren song that beckons to take down the whole ship.

For all its liberal leanings, Portland and our surrounding communities are not in a bubble on this. People in our own community are being directly

threatened in the name of this Republican administration.

Just recently, Latino men and women gathered at St. Peter's Catholic Church on Southeast 87th Avenue were harassed by people shouting epithets and trying to provoke violence. In Clackamas County, a 15-year-old student found notes that said "go back to Africa (n-word)." Her mother reporter to KOIN News that they were hearing about a lot more hate crimes than they were only a few months ago. And with the president's tacit endorsement of the Ku Klux Klan, the racial violence against all communities of color will continue ratcheting up. The incidents are disgusting and we won't give them any breathing room here.

More recently The Oregonian and other media have reported that officers with ICE, the Bureau of Immigration and Customs Enforcement, are roaming the halls of the Multnomah County Courthouse, stalking people they believe to be immigrants and taking them into custody – all undercover, without coming clean that they were federal agents.

If federal officials continue to harass people when they seek safety and rightful legal protections, people will no longer seek safety. If a woman is abused by her partner, but cannot feel safe going to the police in times of peril, she will stay in peril.

Portland and Multnomah County law enforcement have recognized this and have refused to neglect their obligation to public safety and civil liberties by becoming an extension of federal immigration policies. In fact, state law prohibits local resources from being used to enforce those policies. But the more sweeping, underlying problem with ICE officials in our courthouses is laid out by David Rogers, executive director of ACLU of Oregon. "There

is a trust in our system that needs to be in place for a society to work and for everyone to be safe," he said. "Trump is trying to destroy that and we can't allow it to happen."

So what do we do about it?

**Find and give strength:** We stand in solidarity with our community. We call out injustice when we see it, in person and through social media. On a more personal level, we need to be supportive of the people in the crosshairs of this administrative dehumanization, because there are real, dire consequences if it is allowed to continue without opposition. Our friends and neighbors who are intended to be beaten down, need to be propped up, with compassion and understanding on a daily basis.

**Know the facts:** The journeys that immigrants and refugees have taken to become Oregonians and Portlanders can be treacherous, and the contribution they make to our city is immeasurable. Our Planet Portland series has highlighted just a few of these amazing men and women, people who have beaten tremendous odds to come to America and start a new life. Chaos, distrust and division are the enemies here, not the diverse humanity that enriches our community, and frankly neither are the people from the seven countries this administration has singled out for the immigration ban. There isn't a single case of stateside terrorism from any of their emigrants in at least the past two decades. Even our own Department of Homeland Security recognizes that we have far more to fear from the homegrown extremists and hate groups that are pushing these kinds of terrible policies in the first place.

**Get organized.** Know what's happening with your neighborhood association. There are many groups working to educate people on what's at stake and what can be done. And support the groups doing that good work, from the ACLU on down to local organizations. This week, the ACLU of Oregon, Immigrant Law Group PC and Unite Oregon filed a lawsuit against the Trump administration on the grounds that the ban unconstitutional. They do so joining other states with

similar suits, including Washington. They can't do that without the support of hundreds of thousands of people in Oregon and beyond who stand with them.

We also need to remember that we can – we will – win. Because this isn't a single battle, it is an ongoing defense of our civil and human rights. There will be more battles ahead, but together we shall overcome.

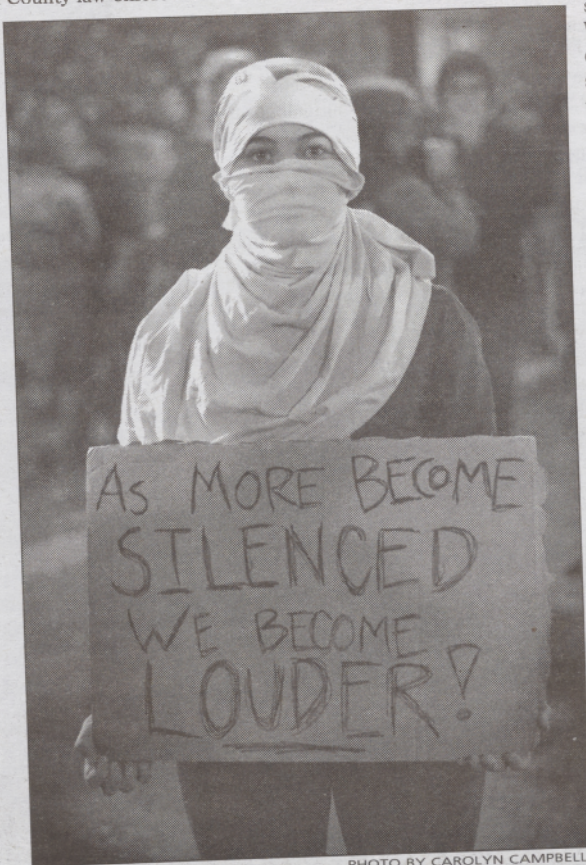
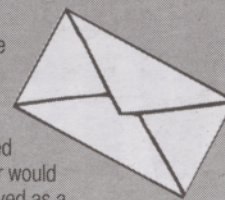


PHOTO BY CAROLYN CAMPBELL

Portland protester.

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## EDITORIAL