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## Limiting voting is un-American

By LYNDON ZAITZ

Every American citizen should be worried anytime there is a movement to add restrictions to voting procedures in the nation. Currently numerous state legislatures across the country have seen bills introduced to make voting difficult. This is about as un-American as you can get.



Some may dismiss the proposed restrictions as 'just politics,' but it goes far beyond that.

The United States was founded on the tenet of self determination. Voting is as sacrosanct as freedom of speech and freedom of worship. When those rights are under attack, the people need to stand up and say they won't stand for their fellow citizen's ability to vote be diminished.

Many of the proposed pieces of legislation in other states are a response to stories about stolen and fraudulent elections. Reports of widespread election fraud have been debunked, including by the previous administration's Justice Department.

There are few incidences of actual voting irregularities. Some say that

vote-by-mail is rife with corruption. We know that is not true, especially in Oregon, which has been voting by mail for two decades.

Those who decry the incremental encroachment of government in citizen's lives should not be natural allies of those who seek to suppress voting by any demographic. What is the purpose of limiting the number of polling places that could force voters to travel miles to a vote? There should be more polling stations, not less.

What is the purpose of outlawing providing food and water to those waiting in line to vote? There can be no good purpose. Neither one's socioeconomic status nor one's demographic background can be an impediment to being part of the democratic process.

Just because a political party in control of legislation can pass bills that restrict voting does not mean they should. The Oregon election system has benefited from vote-by-mail, increasing turnout from the outset; most can agree that elections in our state have been fair and honest. Citizens should be confident that their vote will be counted, but that only works if everyone who wants to vote has a convenient way to do so.

It is the American way. All attempts to suppress voting by anyone needs to be nipped in the bud.

(Lyndon Zaitz is publisher of the Keizertimes.)

## An Easter week reflection

By JOSH GRAVES

*Why are you troubled?  
And why do questions arise in your hearts?*

—Luke 24:38

The verse above has been on my heart and my mind frequently over this past year. For many of us, it has been a year full of troubles: a global pandemic that has changed even routine aspects of our daily lives, rampant wildfires, and a rare, devastating ice storm.

I know all this has created questions for me. A dear friend's brother is a Jesuit priest, and I asked him if it was okay that I sometimes questioned the infinite wisdom of God. He responded, "Oh, heck yeah. Asking questions is a solid indication that you believe. There is no reason to ask a question if you don't believe." He also said you may have to wait awhile for the answer and trust in your faith along the way.

Here at Catholic Community Services our work is rooted in our core values of love, justice, truth and freedom. Just as you walk alongside CCS and support us in promoting the common good, we walk alongside the people we serve, supporting them to do everything they can for



themselves. When they stumble or make a turn in an unhealthy direction, we strive to make their path clear and ease their burdens in alignment with these four core values.

During this Easter week, as we remember the strength of the spirit of Jesus, we are reminded of the strength and courage we witness in the people we serve. While Jesus had doubts, His strength in our Father overcame His doubts. During His time on the cross, He was not alone. The people we serve are not alone, as you and I are there to walk alongside them. I pray that you are strengthened by our common purpose of providing help and hope to our neighbors in need, and in knowing that even in our darkest hour, none of us walks alone.

Easter blessings to you and your loved ones.

(Josh Graves is CEO of Catholic Community Services.)

## Former vaccine critics now say it's reckless not to take it

By LARRY ELDER

Dr. Anthony Fauci wants former President Donald Trump to tell his supporters to take the COVID-19 vaccine. It is true that a March 2021 NPR/PBS NewsHour/Marist poll found that 47% of Trump 2020 supporters said they would not get vaccinated. It is also true that Trump has urged Americans to take the vaccine. He called it safe and said that he and Melania have been vaccinated.

But after attacking Trump as a lying incompetent who makes outlandish statements, why should anyone on the left be surprised by skepticism about the vaccine?

On May 15, then-President Trump announced Operation Warp Speed, a \$10 billion program with a goal of producing 300 million vaccine doses to administer to Americans by January. But three days earlier, Fauci testified before Congress and said, "There's no guarantee that the vaccine is actually going to be effective." Two days after that, Rick Bright, the former head of the federal government's Biomedical Advanced Research and Development Authority, testified: "Normally, it takes up to 10 years to make a vaccine. ... A lot of optimism is swirling around a 12- to 18-month time frame, if everything goes perfectly. We have never seen everything go perfectly."

In September, Fauci gave an interview in which he said he "never liked" the program's name because it "suggests, incorrectly ... that you're prematurely putting something out there that isn't entirely safe." Fauci earlier cautioned that the name "subliminally" implies "reckless speed." And he wonders why some might be reluctant to take the vaccine?

Immediately after Trump's announcement of Operation Warp Speed, CNN analyst Jessica Huseman tweeted, "Go ahead and flag this tweet for when we do not have that vaccine by the end of the year." Joe Lockhart, former Bill Clinton White House press secretary, tweeted: "There is not an objective scientist on TV right now that believe anything that was said at the press conference who believes anything like this can be done by the end of the year. Caveat, I'm not watching Fox." Then-Sen. Kamala Harris, in September, said: "There is very little that we can trust that comes out of Donald Trump's mouth." Later that same month Joe Biden said: "I trust vaccines. I trust scientists. But I don't



trust Donald Trump. And at this point, the American people can't, either."

Remember this debate exchange between Harris and then-Vice President Mike Pence? "If the public health professionals, if Dr. (Anthony) Fauci, if the doctors tell us that we should take (the COVID-19 vaccine), I'll be the first in line to take it, absolutely," Harris said. "But if Donald Trump tells us that we should take it, I'm not taking it."

In response, Pence said: "We're going to have a vaccine in record time -- in unheard-of time -- in less than a year. We have five companies in Phase 3 clinical trials. And we're right now producing tens of millions of doses. So the fact that you continue to undermine public confidence in a vaccine, if the vaccine emerges during the Trump administration, I think is unconscionable. And Senator, I just ask you: Stop playing politics with people's lives."

For decades, Democrats have complained about governmental systemic racism against Blacks. Actor Will Smith once claimed, "AIDS was created as a result of biological-warfare testing." Comedian/activist Dick Gregory said that AIDS "was not passed from chimpanzees to mankind, but was probably knowingly developed by doctors and scientists working for the U.S. government."

Perhaps this explains why LeBron James, when asked about taking the coronavirus vaccine, said: "That's a conversation that my family and I will have. Pretty much keep that to a private thing." James also said: "Obviously I saw (NBA commissioner Adam Silver) had his comments about the vaccination. But things like that, when you decide to do something, that's a conversation between you and your family and not for everybody. I'll keep it that way."

To my knowledge, neither James, Smith or Gregory voted for Trump.

Had Trump not, for four years, been described as clueless, reckless and incompetent—and had vote-seeking Democrats not described government as overtly, covertly, foundationally, endemically or systemically racist—maybe we'd have fewer vaccine skeptics.

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