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PUBLISHER’S NOTEBOOK

Endorsements provide food for thought



The general election is Nov. 3.

Hailey Hoffman/The Astorian

The Astorian plans to publish editorial endorsements for the 2020 general election over the next few weeks, starting with the endorsement for president on Saturday.

In a column in March, I explained our approach to candidate endorsements as being similar to interviewing a job prospect. Do we think that they are the best candidate for the job? Experience, work history and project leadership are all important. However, the most important quality should be effectiveness.

Despite political diversity, we think Clatsop County residents can agree on core values: maintaining the livability of our area, good stewardship of our environment, respect for our history and heritage, careful planning for growth with a long-term vision for our future, wise investment of public dollars and last, but not least, accountability.

Our endorsements of national and statewide candidates are made with these local priorities in mind. Candidates for office on the larger stage should reflect the qualities and values we expect from local candidates. Can they comprehend all facets of complex issues? Craft solutions? Create consensus and take responsibility?

During the past few weeks, editor Derrick DePledge and I met — virtually or in person — with most candidates for local elected office. We were looking for a sense from the

candidates of why they were running, their grasp of community priorities and ultimately the ability to be an effective representative for you.

You’ll read our opinions about who we think will represent the county’s best interests in our endorsements. You may not agree with our choices, but hopefully the information will give you food for thought.

We’re interested in your thoughts, as well.

Letters to the editor are published on the Opinion page, a venue for readers to share their views on election topics. Letters should be original to The Astorian, fewer than 250 words and must include the writer’s name, address and phone number so that we can confirm authorship.

Our goal is to print every letter submitted. You might have noticed that we have carved out some extra space in the paper recently to publish all the letters we are receiving in a timely manner. We may ask you to edit your letter — or we will edit your letter — for grammar, spelling, accuracy or publication standards.

Our company mission statement says it well: We are “committed to reporting and distributing local news and information because a well-informed public keeps our communities strong.”

Ultimately, you have the last word by casting your ballot by Nov. 3.

Kari Borgen is publisher of The Astorian.



KARI BORGEN

GUEST COLUMN

Protect our gun rights

What does the Constitution mean to you? Does it mean our freedoms, granted to us by our Founding Fathers, and our father in heaven? I say “yes.”

The Constitution, and the Bill of Rights, are the driving force behind the freedoms we enjoy today. If you take away one of our rights, we lose all of our rights. The Second Amendment was granted to us so we could protect our rights against a tyrannical government, and for people who threaten our families.

The safest places in America are the cities and states that have the fewest and least restrictions on owning weapons. The most violent cities are the ones that have the strictest gun laws.

Let’s take a look at Chicago. They have some of the strictest gun laws in America. Every year, more people are murdered in Chicago than Americans killed in Iraq and Afghanistan. Let that sink in for a minute. More people are killed in an American city than two different wars. That should scare you — it does me.

In the course of human history, the abuse of authority by men through the arm of the state is not an uncommon event. In America, we have safeties that help prevent this. Ben Franklin said, “Those who would give up essential liberty to purchase a little temporary safety, deserve neither liberty nor safety.”

Ballot Measure 4-205 would give us back some of our liberties that have been taken away by prohibiting county resources from being used to enforce any local, state and federal law or regulation that restricts the right to keep and bear firearms, accessories or ammunition. Every year, the supermajority in Salem keeps chipping away at our basic rights.

The Second Amendment states, “A well-regulated militia, being necessary to the security of a free state, the right of the people to keep and bear arms, shall not be infringed.” The amendment protects the individual right to keep and bear arms. It was ratified on Dec. 15, 1791, along with nine other articles of the Bill of Rights.

In District of Columbia v. Heller, the U.S. Supreme Court affirmed for the first time that the right belongs to individuals, for self-defense in the home, while also ruling that the right is not unlimited and does not preclude the existence of certain long-standing prohibitions, such as those forbidding the possession of firearms by felons and the mentally ill.



JIM HOFFMAN

I believe our Founding Fathers gave us four realms of government: Self government, family government, church government and civil government. Each has its own role. When one invades another jurisdiction, we find chaos and tyranny.

That’s what’s happening every day in Salem. Our legislators know they are taking away our basic rights, but do they care? That’s a simple answer, they don’t care at all. They’re after power, nothing but pure, unadulterated power. The more they tax us, the more they regulate us, the more power they have over our lives.

George Washington started the revolution over taxes. King George tried to disarm his people because he was afraid of an armed citizenry. Our government in Salem is afraid of an armed citizenry too. We need to stop their power grab before it continues and gets out of control.

According to the federal Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, people use guns for self-defense within a range of 60,000 to 2.5 million times a year. You don’t hear about that from most news sources. Why? Because that doesn’t fit their narrative.

The government will tell you that they are doing this for the safety of the people. That’s code for we will take more of your rights.

I have both a military background with the U.S. Army and as a correctional officer with the state. During my tenure with the Department of Corrections dealing with thousands of inmates, I know of only one person who was arrested with a legally obtained weapon. Other inmates I encountered committed crimes with stolen weapons.

Even if you’re not an avid gun owner like I am, you should stand up and vote “yes” for Measure 4-205. This helps protect all of our rights. The oath that I took doesn’t expire when I retire. Once you take the oath, it stays your responsibility for life. It states, I swear to defend the Constitution against all enemies both foreign and domestic.

Any law enforcement agency that enforces illegal laws is not standing up for the oath. In fact, they are violating that oath. The sheriff of your county is the highest authority of law. If he’s not standing up for your rights, you need to replace him with a constitutional sheriff.

Jim Hoffman, a delegate for the Clatsop County Republican Party, collected signatures for Measure 4-205.



The Oregonian

Gun rights advocates have protested in Salem over restrictions on firearms.