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Founded in 1873

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OUR VIEW

Vote ‘no’ on Second Amendment sanctuary

The Second Amendment protects one of our most fundamental rights. Gun ownership, whether for self-defense at home or as the last gasp against tyranny, is an essential liberty. On the North Coast, where hunting is a tradition for many families, guns are also a staple of our culture.

The U.S. Supreme Court, in District of Columbia v. Heller in 2008, ruled that the Second Amendment protects an individual right to possess firearms. The decision settled the legal question over whether the right to bear arms was connected to service in a militia.

But the court also held that the Second Amendment is not unlimited.

Licensing, regulations on concealed weapons, restrictions on possession by felons and the mentally ill, limits on carrying guns in sensitive places like schools and government buildings, conditions on commercial sales and prohibitions on dangerous or unusual weapons are all legal.

We have argued for more safeguards to prevent gun violence.

The federal Centers for Disease Control and Prevention reported 39,740 firearm-related deaths in 2018 — or about 109 deaths every day. Six out of 10 were suicides, the CDC found, while 3 out of 10 were homicides.

School shootings in the United States are disturbingly common. On Oct. 1, Oregon marked the five-year anniversary of the mass shooting at Umpqua Community College near Roseburg that left 10 people dead.

Our hyperpartisan politics — in Washington, D.C., and in Salem — makes gun control difficult. Rather than work together toward sensible protections, many prefer to either fetishize guns or demonize them.

Measure 4-205

Enter Measure 4-205 on the November ballot in Clatsop County.

Sponsored by gun rights activists, the measure would prohibit county resources from being used to enforce any local, state or federal law or regulation that restricts the right to keep and bear firearms, accessories or ammunition.

That means Sheriff Matt Phillips could not enforce background checks, tracking requirements, confiscation orders, limits on semi-automatic fire-



Rich Pedroncelli/AP Photo

People gathered for a candlelight vigil after a shooting at Umpqua Community College in Roseburg in 2015.

arms or accessories and restrictions on open or concealed carry. The fines for violating the measure would be up to \$2,000.

District Attorney Ron Brown believes the measure is unconstitutional. Under the supremacy clause of the Constitution, federal laws generally take precedence over state laws.

If the measure is approved by voters, the county could file legal action in court to block it from taking effect.

But the Second Amendment sanctuary — also on the ballot in Columbia, Coos and Umatilla counties — is more about symbolism than constitutional law.

“We the people are the last line of defense against anarchy and lawlessness,” one of the backers wrote in a blog post. “We must be willing to defend our cities and counties from criminals, looters, rioters and unethical politicians with the protections and values enumerated in the U.S. Constitution.”

Rooted in the grievances and paranoia of the far right, the movement twists an essential liberty into another slogan of the culture war.

Vote “no.”

Measure 4-206

The Seaside School District is asking voters to renew a five-year local option tax for operations.

The tax rate — unchanged at 52 cents per \$1,000 of assessed property value — would raise about \$8.1 million over five years. A resident with a \$200,000 property, for example, would pay \$104 a year.

Without the tax money, the school district explains, the district could have to reduce staff and services.

Voters made a substantial investment in bonds to finance the new Seaside campus and move schools out of the tsunami inundation zone. It would be unwise to undercut the school district on operations.

We recommend a “yes” vote.

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LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Red flags

At a time when so many politicians seek to divide us, I appreciate the fact that people in our community generally respect one another, even when we disagree. That’s because, despite any differences, we value each other and life on the Oregon Coast.

When I see candidates aiming to divide communities, those are red flags that these are candidates I can’t support. Suzanne Weber seems to want to make us fear each other during a time when we really need each other — not further division.

It’s time to come together to elect leaders like Debbie Boothe-Schmidt, who will be there for us, and stand up for kindness, integrity and community values. With Boothe-Schmidt, Oregon will truly be better together.

EM ADAMS
Astoria

Absurd

Apparently, living in a country where guns are, and will always be, readily available isn’t good enough for Jim Hoffman, a Clatsop County Republican leader.

In a wide-ranging guest column on guns (The Astorian, Oct. 1), he laid bare all his fears. Fear of a tyrannical government, fear of bad guys lurking around every corner and fear of being inconvenienced when buying and owning a gun. He backs a ballot measure to severely restrict if not eliminate all types of gun regulations.

A Second Amendment sanctuary — what a great idea. Why stop there? How about a driving sanctuary? My car is as indispensable to me as guns are to Hoffman.

Stop signs are a real inconvenience. Speed limits are always slowing me down. Seat belts are so uncomfortable. Laws are a burden. Now imagine laws that pertain to an instrument whose only purpose is to extinguish life. How unfair. There ought to be a ballot measure.

Well there is, Measure 4-205, and it is

so ill-conceived and laughably absurd that it makes the war on Christmas seem rational by comparison.

JIM SPURR
Cannon Beach

Stands out

I heartily endorse Tom Brownson for reelection to the Astoria City Council. Tom has been my colleague on the council for four years. He is serious, diligent and professional.

Tom studies every policy issue carefully. He is thoughtful and analytical. He has no personal agenda or ax to grind, except to do what serves the community’s long-term interest. His keen knowledge of the city’s budget process, and his own fiscal constraint will be key in helping guide the city as we emerge from the pandemic in 2021.

At a time when politics are all too often divisive and rancorous, Brownson stands out as a consummate professional: passionate, but always respectful to the public and his colleagues in his language and demeanor, and in the way he listens to all perspectives and all sides in order to make fair, well-reasoned decisions.

He strives to equitably balance the sometimes competing needs of local economic development and the preservation of Astoria’s unique character, livability and quality of life. Tom models the type of behavior we all want to see from our elected officials.

I am grateful Tom is inspired to volunteer to serve Astoria for four more years in this time-consuming and sometimes stressful role. Councilor Brownson has my highest recommendation for reelection to represent Ward 2.

BRUCE JONES
Mayor of Astoria

Solve problems

I admire Debbie Boothe-Schmidt’s positive approach to being a candidate for

state representative. She thinks about the issues, and listens to people’s questions. She wants to solve problems.

Her opponent seems more interested in attacking Debbie and her supporters with lies and misinformation. That bad attitude won’t help us in Salem. If anything, her opponent’s attitude will divide people, and keep legislators from working on productive legislation that would help Oregonians, not just her own supporters.

I’m counting on Debbie to restore civility and respect in Salem. That’s how she treats people now, and we need more of that in the Legislature. I’m voting for Debbie to be our state representative and hope you will, too.

JENNY FELDMAN
Astoria

Level-headed

To me, a good city councilor is one who takes the time to understand an issue and make a decision based on the facts and the law — someone who doesn’t have an ax to grind.

It takes more than having an agenda based on one issue. Guiding a city government doesn’t mean getting one’s way on a single issue. That’s why I support Tom Brownson for reelection to the Astoria City Council.

He has proven his fairness and level-headed decision-making to keep our city running in the best way possible.

DAVID AMBROSE
Astoria

Your voice

I have lived in Astoria 43 years, and Debbie Boothe-Schmidt has lived here nearly 30 years.

She has raised two children as a single mother, and she knows what it’s like to choose between putting food on the table or paying for health care.

I want to see reliable, good-paying jobs in our area. We all want the ability to see a doctor when we get sick, especially during this global pandemic.

I value unity and integrity over division. Working together, we will create a better quality of life for every Oregonian now, and in the future.

Your vote is your voice. Debbie has my vote.

WENDELA HOWIE
Astoria

Gasoline

A recent guest column regarding Measure 4-205 raised some serious red flags.

The writer advocates for approval of the measure while maintaining it will “give us back some of our liberties,” but doesn’t list or define what liberties have been taken away. My family and I own and advocate for gun ownership, and have not experienced any reduction of our rights.

This measure is unconstitutional. It proclaims that the county sheriff shall not enforce any law (local, state and federal) as it relates to guns of any sort. This type of proposal actually takes away law enforcement authority, background checks, concealed carry permits, restraining orders and much more.

In an era where we are becoming increasingly divided, this measure is akin to throwing gasoline on a fire. It does nothing to enhance gun rights. It creates conflict with other agencies.

Carving out their own exemption for extreme purposes will not create a safer county. It’s really un-American to carve out an area where the law applies to others and not to you. It’s divisive and clearly unconstitutional. It’s so poorly written that there doesn’t seem to be a supportive group. Vote “no” on Measure 4-205.

RICHARD MCINTOSH
Astoria