

EDITORIAL

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Opinion Article

SENATOR JOHN LIM

The recent, well-publicized acts of violence in our schools in places like Littleton and Springfield have caused many parents to be concerned about the safety of their children. There is no quick fix solution, but I do believe that there are some commonsense things parents, schools, and school districts can do to cut down on violence and bring order back to our classrooms. One of those things is to provide local school districts with the option to use school uniforms.

The use of school uniforms to bring order, discipline, and promote an atmosphere of learning in classrooms is not a new idea. Most of the industrialized nations use school uniforms recently have had enormous success in public schools in states across the nation.

In Long Beach, California, the third largest school district in California with 58,500 elementary and middle school students, the school district has had a phenomenal decrease in acts of violence and property theft since their implementation of a district-wide school uniform policy. In a one-year period after implementing the policy in 1994, overall school crime in Long Beach decreased 36 percent, fights decreased 51 percent, sex offenses decreased 74 percent, weapons offenses decreased 50 percent, assault and battery offenses decreased 34 percent, and vandalism decreased 18 percent.

Since that time, school crime has decreased another 55 percent in Long Beach and the atmosphere for learning has improved. As Long Beach Police Chief William Ellis said, "Schools have fewer reasons to call the police. There's less conflict between students. Students concentrate more on education, not on who's wearing the \$100 shoes or gang attire." The success that Long beach has

had is not uncommon and support of school uniforms is broad. In a recent poll of elementary school principals, 75 percent said that uniforms influence classroom behavior, 80 percent said uniforms make students safer, 81 percent said uniforms reduce negative peer pressure, 76 percent said uniforms increase parent participation, 52 percent said uniforms improve school spirit, and 86 percent said uniforms improve the image of the school.

I believe that a safe and disciplined learning environment is the first requirement of a good school. School uniforms would improve safety, prevent gang members from wearing gang colors, promote discipline, reduce negative peer pressure, improve students' concentration on school work, help school officials identify intruders on school grounds, and in most cases, reduce the cost of school wardrobes.

Although I don't believe that school uniforms are a "cure all" for school violence, I do believe that they are an important tool in the hands of parents and school boards to keep children safe and improve academic performance. I have sponsored SB 751, the School Uniform Bill, which just recently passed the House. Now that SB 751 has passed, I am optimistic that individual schools and school districts will look closely at the possibility of having a school uniform policy in their school. If just one tragedy is prevented such as the one that happened in Springfield, then the implementation of school uniforms will have been worth it.

Letter to the Editor

The Branch & Woods family would like to thank the community for their prayers, cards, food, flowers, and other acts of kindness during

Flag Day Came Without Our Right To Protect "Old Glory"

By BUTCH MILLER

June 14 was Flag Day. It's The day our nation sets aside to pay special honor to the American flag and its role in our country's history.

I have been fortunate to travel extensively in the past nine months. My travels have taken me across our nation and to several foreign lands. No matter where I find myself, I can look out of a window and somewhere in my field of view will be an American flag. That makes me proud and always brings me a sense of well being.

Two weeks ago I was in Indianapolis for the dedication of the only memorial in our nation to recipients of the Medal of Honor. During the impressive ceremony, the backdrop was a panorama of American flags held proudly by veterans, Scouts, members of the military and other patriotic organizations. During the

dedication ceremony, the president of the Medal of Honor Society, Paul Bucha, told a crowd of thousands that the American flag was much more than a mere piece of cloth. Our flag is the hope of the world and the solemn cover that drapes the caskets of the nation's fallen heroes.

I find it ironic that for 10 consecutive Flag Days the American people have joined together to celebrate the lessons of "Old Glory" while simultaneously toiling to return to us the right to protect the American flag from physical desecration. That protection was stolen from us by a 1989 Supreme Court decision.

The American people, Congress and the President quickly reacted to that decision and passed a law - a simple statute - to protect the American flag. The simple statute would not work and the only way to return protection to the American flag was

through a constitutional amendment.

Today, a decade later, we are still fighting to regain the people's right to protect the American flag. Polling over the decade has remained constant: nearly 80 percent of Americans favor an amendment. Forty-nine state legislatures have passed resolutions petitioning Congress to pass the amendment and send it to the states for ratification.

Why then are we still fighting for this right? Why has the House twice overwhelmingly passed the amendment only to have it defeated by a few votes in the U.S. Senate? Why do some Senators continue to propose a statute when they know it won't work?

The answer seems simple to me: We the People are not holding our elected officials accountable for their actions. We believe we elect our lawmakers to represent the majority

of their constituents, but they don't. That's the real tragedy.

Remember the grade school lessons reinforced by the number of stars and stripes. Remember the story of Francis Scott Key and the writing of "The Star-Spangled Banner." Recall the scene of "Old Glory" being raised on Mount Surabachi. And take pride in the lump in your throat that comes with the realization that our American flag is much more than a symbol or a piece of cloth.

This Flag Day has past but we can still call our senators and urge them to do the right thing and vote for a constitutional amendment to return to us the right to protect our flag. I don't believe that's too much to ask of every citizen.

Butch Miller is the National Commander of The American Legion, the nation's largest wartime veterans organization.

Guest Opinion

It's Worth A Shot

By DR. GRANT HIGGINSON, MD, MPH,
STATE HEALTH OFFICER AND DEPUTY ADMINISTRATOR OF THE OREGON HEALTH DIVISION

An important new senior health education campaign for senior citizens is being rolled out in Oregon, and it can save lives.

Over the recent decades, we have seen monumental progress made toward eliminating and preventing deadly diseases. For example, smallpox has been eradicated from the planet, polio has been wiped out of the Western Hemisphere, and measles transmission now occurs very rarely. These successes can all be traced to the development of effective vaccines.

Most of our efforts in recent decades to reduce vaccine-preventable diseases has focused on protecting our children through immunization. Many of us forget that adults, too, are at risk of dying from infectious diseases that can be prevented. Pneumococcal disease is one of these, and it kills 40,000 Americans every year. Yet there is a safe, effective and inexpensive vaccine that will prevent these deaths. The real tragedy is that right here in Oregon, even though Medicare pays for the vaccine, about 46% of our senior citizens remain unvaccinated.

Because of this, a new statewide effort aimed at educating consumers about pneumococcal disease is underway. "It's Worth a Shot" is the name of the campaign and it was launched on May 25, Senior Health and Fitness Day. "It's Worth a shot"

Letter To The Editor

It has come to our attention that members of our community are being solicited outside retail stores to support "Meals On Wheels". We're afraid that many will assume their money will go to support the work of local Meals-On-Wheels program associated with Loaves and Fishes. It will not.

The group collecting in the name of "Meals On Wheels" is a church group from California and is not associated with us in any way.

At Loaves and Fishes, we rely on the work of nearly 7000 volunteers, individuals and companies alike to accomplish our work of providing hot meals and companionship to almost 4000 seniors daily.

Please be aware that we are not objecting to the church's charitable work, only the confusing use of our name. We do, from time to time, solicit contributions by a mail campaign on our official letterhead bearing our logo. In addition, we occasionally request donations by placing coin canisters in local businesses. However, we never solicit outside of stores.

If anyone has questions, please call Loaves and Fishes at 736-6325.

encourages the elderly and those with chronic illnesses to get vaccinated. Educational messages are being spread across Oregon through distribution of posters, brochures and other materials to physicians, other health-care providers health departments, senior centers, and nursing homes.

The campaign wants seniors to know six important things:

- pneumococcal disease can be life-threatening,
- there is a safe and effective vaccine,
- it can be given at any time of the year,
- the vaccine is usually a once-in-a-lifetime shot,
- the vaccine is covered 100% under Medicare part B, and
- if in doubt about whether you've received it, get vaccinated and document it.

Each year in the United States, pneumococcal disease accounts for an estimated 3,000 cases of meningitis (infection of the lining around the brain and spinal cord), 50,000 cases of bacteremia (bloodstream infection), and 500,000 cases of pneumonia. Any of these can be lethal.

An ounce of prevention is worth a pound of cure. This is especially true when we consider the fact that bacteria, including the one that causes pneumococcal disease, are becoming increasingly resistant to antibiotics. Vaccination is one of the best weapons we have in our arsenal against fighting communicable diseases. That is why physi-

cians and public health officials strongly recommend the vaccine for adults aged 65 or older, and for all 2- to 64-year-olds who have a chronic illness.

If you are 65 or older, celebrate Senior Health and Fitness by contacting your doctor or health care provider to find out if you should be vaccinated with the pneumococcal vaccine. If you're not yet 65 but know a senior Oregonian, please share this information with them.

To find out more about the "It's Worth a Shot" campaign, or pneumococcal disease and vaccination, contact the Oregon Health Division's immunization Program at 503-731-4020.

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TRI - MET NEWS

Tri-Met Offers Youth Summertime Bargain

Youth can again enjoy unlimited travel at a bargain price this summertime on Tri-Met. "The Pass," which goes on sale Thursday, May 20, also offers discounts at local merchants.

With "The Pass," youth 18 and under can ride Tri-Met's buses and MAX light rail trains all June, July and August for just \$43. That's half the regular price of three monthly youth passes. The special pass is available at participating schools, and Tri-Met sales outlets including Fred Meyer, Safeway and most Albertson's stores in the Portland metropolitan area.

Pass holders qualify for these special discounts:
McDonald's: Free dessert with purchase of an Extra Value Meal. Offer excludes McFlurry dessert.

Ice Chalet at Lloyd Center & Clackamas Town Center: \$1 off general admission.

OMSI: \$1 off general admission.

North Clackamas Aquatic Park: \$1 off general admission.

"We're really pleased to bring back this affordable way of helping youth meet their summertime travel needs," said Fred Hansen, Tri-Met General Manager. "We expect The Pass to continue to be a big hit."

More information about The Pass and Tri-Met is available by calling 238-RIDE.



TRI-MET
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our time of Griefvement in the loss of Byron Branch Sr. "Dirty B". May God forever bless you.

The Branch & Woods Family