

ANDREW CUTLER  
Publisher/Editor

KATHRYN B. BROWN  
Owner

ERICK PETERSON  
Hermiston Editor/Senior Reporter

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## OUR VIEW

# We can never forget

There's a lot about Anneke Bloomfield's story that is heart-wrenching but what remains an enduring theme is a simple motto: We can never forget.

Bloomfield, an outreach speaker for the Oregon Jewish Museum and Holocaust Education Center, talked this week at the Pendleton Public Library about her experience during World War II. Her Jewish family suffered under the Nazi regime of Adolf Hitler when German army occupied her home country of the Netherlands in 1940.

Bloomfield recounted to a packed house unwarranted searches by Nazi soldiers, food shortages and sacrifice made by her mother and father as the family struggled to hide its Jewish heritage.

Bloomfield's parents sent her away from their home three times in an effort to keep her safe and her father eventually became a member of the Dutch underground resistance movement.

Bloomfield's experience as a young child trying to survive under the Nazi regime is a rich and poignant tale of courage and perseverance but it is even more important for the lessons it conveys.

The war, and the Nazi persecution, made a deep impact on Bloomfield and her siblings.

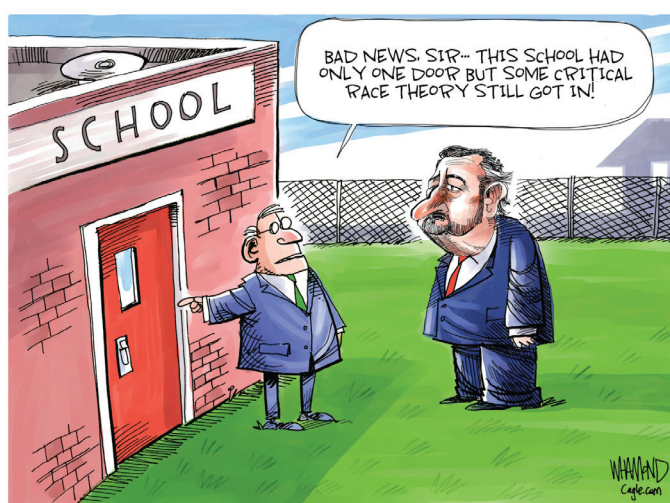
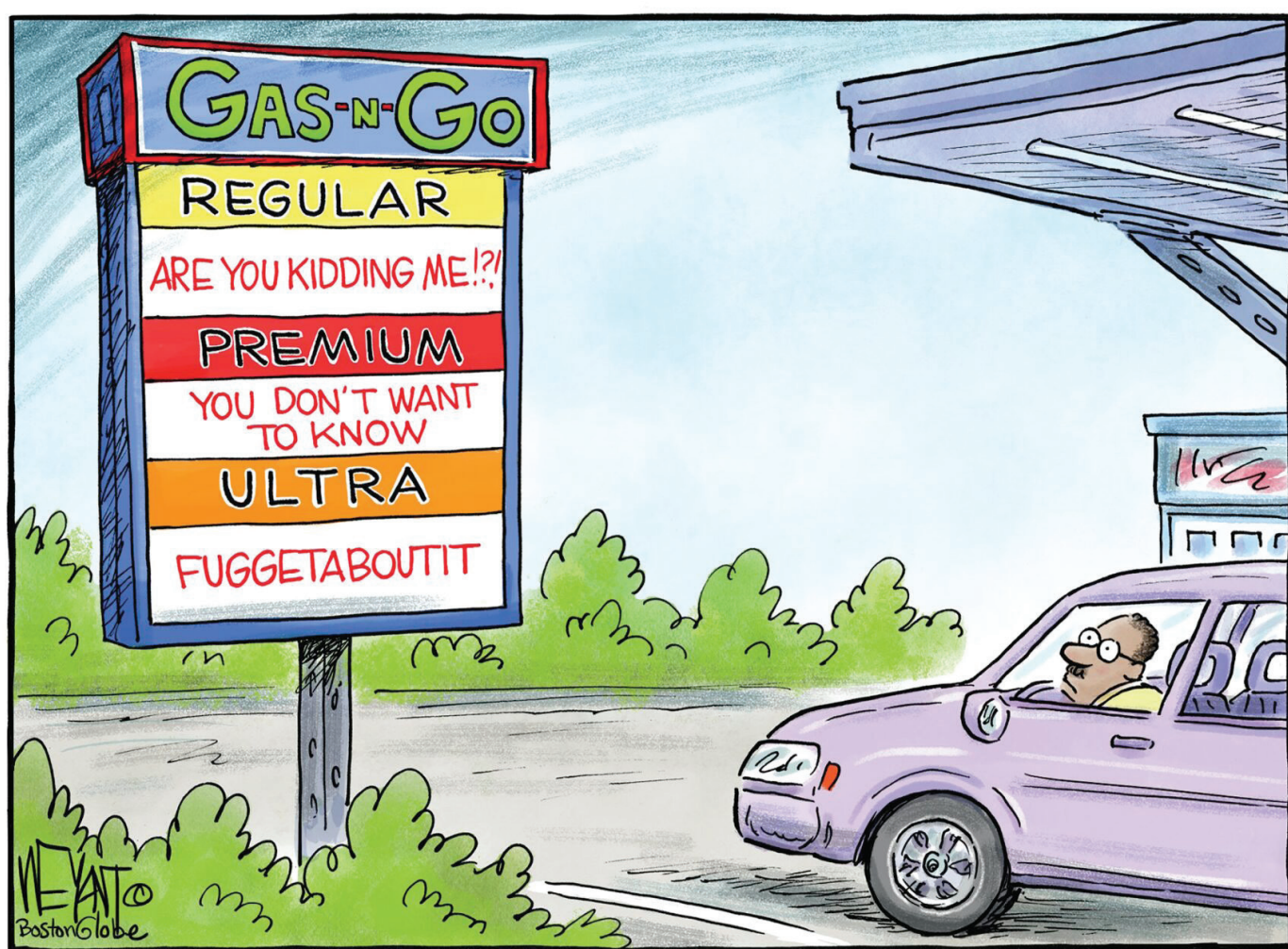
Bloomfield's story is unique in the sense her persecution by the Nazi's didn't occur in one of the Hitler regimes death camps. Yet her tale of oppression should resonate, no matter where and how it occurred.

We need, frankly, more tales from individuals like Anneke Bloomfield. We need to remember that discrimination and oppression occur everywhere and if allowed to fester it impacts all of us.

We remain fortunate as a nation that we still understand that to preserve freedom we must make sacrifices that carry a degree of risk. That means sometimes putting our young men and women in harm's way on distant shores. Fighting oppression should never carry an expiration date and we must ensure stories like Bloomfield's are not forgotten nor dismissed.

Her story is a compelling narrative but it remains also a cautionary account about how oppression can bloom even within the most seemingly civilized societies and grow into a cancer that injures all who encounter it.

We must, as a nation, never forget in this critical moment in history we classify memories such as Bloomfield's as tools to help us to fight oppression in the future.



## Bentz needs to back school safety talk with action



LES ZAITZ

OTHER VIEWS

In the hours after the deadly school shooting in Texas, only one member of Oregon's Congressional delegation stayed quiet — U.S. Rep. Cliff Bentz, a Republican from Ontario.

The state's U.S. senators and four other U.S. representatives weighed in, responding to questions or otherwise pushing for action.

In the days after 19 children were gunned down in their classroom, much of the country was asking: "How can this be stopped?"

Bentz provided no answer for days. He issued no press statements. He posted no comments to his Congressional website.

He stayed silent on his official Facebook account.

He didn't respond to questions from the Oregon Capital Chronicle's reporters.

While the rest of Oregon's delegation has advanced gun safety ideas, sometimes for years, the record shows only one gun-related legislation in Congress that Bentz put his name to. That would have allowed a state's concealed weapons permit to be valid in every other state.

That's not surprising, since he represents vast regions of Oregon where guns are part of life.

In his public service as a state representative, then state senator, and now congressman, Bentz has stood firmly behind gun rights, the Second Amendment and the National Rifle Association.

During his 2020 campaign for U.S. representative, Bentz posted his personal inventory of guns on his campaign website.

"I had and still have my 357 Ruger single six which I bought in 1969. I have a Glock 19 9mm Luger, a Winchester 30-30, a Winchester 22, a rolling block single shot Remington 22 and several other long guns," he said.

He also had a concealed weapons permit, he said.

After the Texas shooting, Bentz told

Medford station KTVL, "One of the things that should be done, I've recommended many times, is that we begin to make sure that our schools are appropriately protected."

That Bentz might want to protect schools isn't surprising, given what's happened since he took his seat in Congress in January 2021.

In 2021, according to Education Week, the country experienced 24 school shootings.

"A shooting on Nov. 30, in which a student killed four people and injured seven at an Oxford, Michigan, high school, was the deadliest school shooting since May 2018," Education Week reported.

And the months this year leading up to the Texas school shooting haven't been any better. A sampling:

**Jan. 19:** One student shoots and wounds another student outside a high school bathroom in Sanford, Florida.

**Feb. 1:** Two students shoot and kill one other student, wound two others at school in Richfield, Minnesota.

**March 15:** A 15-year-old boy shoots another teenager at a high school in Yakima, Washington.

**March 31:** A 12-year-old shoots and kills another 12-year-old at a middle school in Greenville, S.C.

**April 5:** A 14-year-old shoots another student in a high school hallway in Erie, Pennsylvania.

Bentz made his first formal comment on the Texas shooting that I could find when he posted on Friday, May 27, to his Facebook page. He said the Uvalde shooting was "the very definition of evil."

"We must ensure that our schools are provided with necessary resources to protect against attacks such as this," he said. He asked constituents to join him in "acting, immediately, to improve the security of our schools."

He put up a fence around one action being discussed nationwide — gun safety.

"While much must be done to ensure the safety of our citizens, infringing on Constitutional rights is not the answer," he wrote on his Facebook post.

So, what is his solution?

There is no readily available record of the school safety actions that Bentz says he has recommended "many times."

His publicly-paid communications director, Knox McCutchen, didn't respond to emails seeking Bentz's past proposals and what he was proposing now.

The interest in school safety, though, isn't a priority for the congressman, judging from his record and despite one child after another dying in school shootings since he took on the title of U.S. representative.

On his campaign website, Bentz lists 12 issues important to him. Nothing refers to school safety, but that's where he does call out the Second Amendment and offers up his personal weapons inventory.

On his Congressional website, the lead item is: "Afghanistan Resources." The closest his page comes to school matters is his announcement the day before the Texas shooting: "Bentz Announces Winner of 2022 Congressional Art Competition."

His website includes a search function, but nowhere on Bentz's page does the phrase "school safety" appear.

Bentz has a political reality, of course. At this point, a lot of voters in the 2nd Congressional District expect Bentz to do anything he can to defend their gun rights.

Let's give him that, for argument's sake.

So, then, doesn't the congressman owe Oregon something more concrete than "don't touch my guns" to address the school shootings that plague no other country as they do ours?

His claims of being focused on school safety are empty. He hasn't acted. He has, like so many politicians, talked.

That's not good enough.

That's not good enough for 19 children gone to their graves in Texas.

That's not good enough for the people of Oregon, who have endured their own mass shootings and resulting "thoughts and prayers" solutions.

In his Facebook post, he wrote, "There is nothing more important than our children and they must be kept safe."

The time's here for Bentz to act on those words.

Les Zaitz is a veteran editor and investigative reporter, serving Oregon for more than 45 years.

### EDITORIALS

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editor@eastoregonian.com,  
or via mail to Andrew Cutler,  
211 S.E. Byers Ave., Pendleton, OR 97801