

**Siuslaw News**  
**P.O. Box 10**  
**Florence, OR 97439**

# Opinion

## The First Amendment

Congress shall make no law respecting an establishment of religion or prohibiting the free exercise thereof; or abridging the freedom of speech, or of the press, or the right of the people peaceably to assemble, and to petition the Government for a redress of grievances.

### LETTERS

#### RETAIN OUR NURSES

It is no surprise that the major negotiating points between the nurses and PeaceHealth are healthcare benefits, wage and hour issues, recruitment, retention and security.

Those are all key issues in attracting and retaining highly skilled nurses at Peace Harbor Medical Center in Florence.

After three two-day sessions of negotiating, Gary Aguia, Oregon Nurses Association (ONA) negotiator, said, "PeaceHealth negotiators are not budging. They are not moving. They are being tough negotiators. Other than a couple of insignificant things about job title changes, they haven't really moved on anything." (Siuslaw News, Feb. 18)

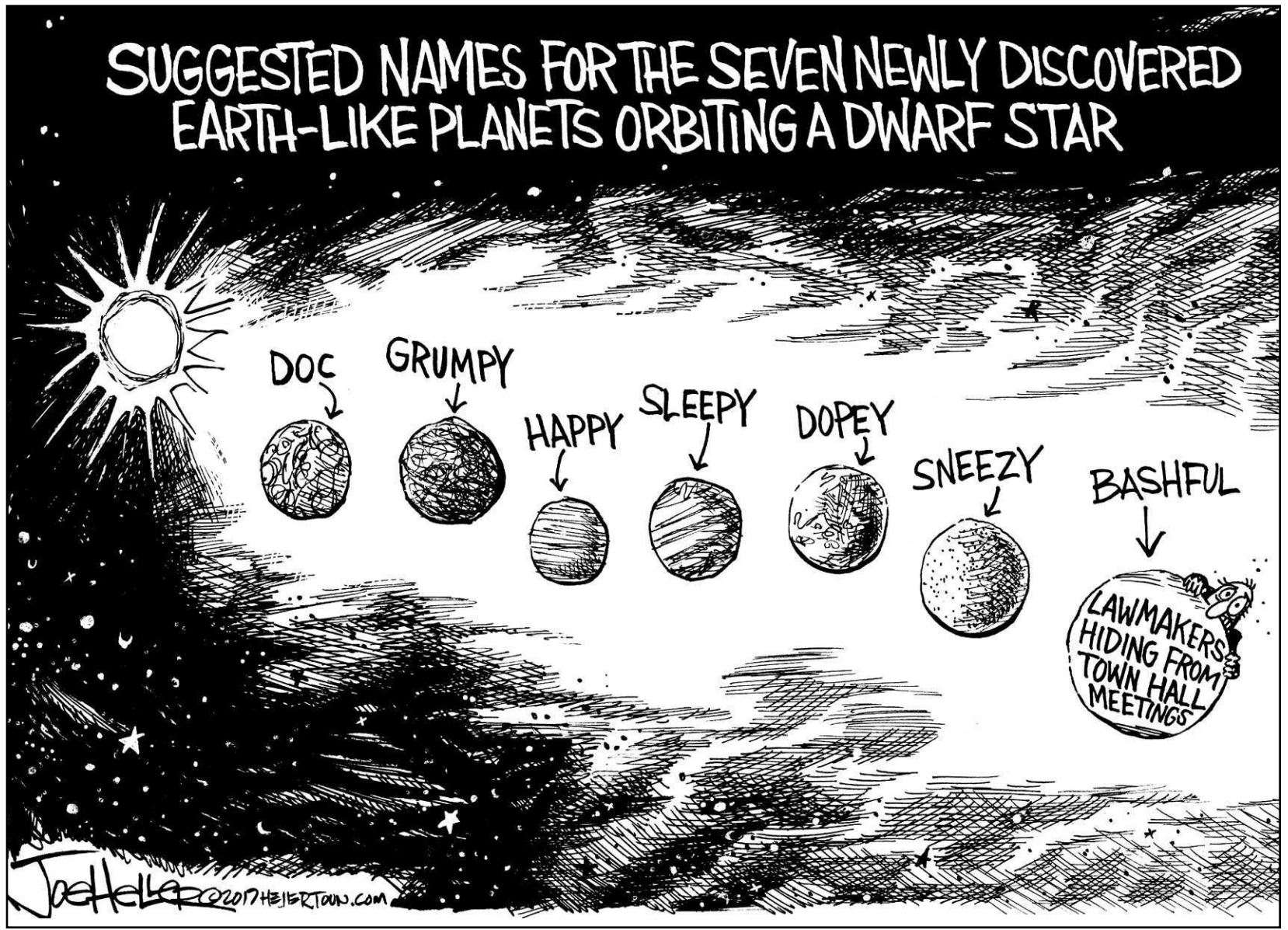
And now, after a seventh day of negotiating, very little has changed.

I would suggest to Aguia that the PeaceHealth negotiators aren't being "tough negotiators." Negotiating is actively working to find common ground and that can't happen by sitting and refusing to budge.

My personal experience was sitting at the negotiations table during my education career, first as an administrator and later as president of the teachers' association. Having "been there, done that," I am not surprised, but disappointed rather, at the unwillingness of PeaceHealth to jump right in with meaningful negotiations.

Our nurses receive up to 5 percent less in salary than other Oregon hospitals and have been offered a whopping 1 percent raise. (Siuslaw News, Feb. 18)

We know that rural hospitals have more



difficulty recruiting and retaining nurses than urban hospitals. Does PeaceHealth think it is providing Peace Harbor Medical Center (and Florence residents) with the means to attract and retain highly-skilled nurses by negotiating and maintaining inferior salaries?

If PeaceHealth really cared about our hospital care in Florence, nurses would receive a 5 percent premium for coming here — instead of 5 percent less in pay.

From Kevin Snyder, PeaceHealth Assistant Vice-President of Strategic Communications, we learn, "PeaceHealth has, and continues to, negotiate in good faith. We have responded to most, if not all, proposals from the union." (Siuslaw News, Feb. 18)

I find that comment very insulting. Not only to the negotiators at the table and their union members, but to the entire Florence community. A "response" means nothing at all.

Marcy Marshall, Director of Strategic Communications and Engagement for PeaceHealth in Vancouver said, "We are currently engaged in contract negotiations with the Oregon Nurses Association and we are committed to bargaining in good faith and reaching an agreement on a contract that supports our skilled and dedicated registered nurses." (Siuslaw News, Feb. 18)

I say to Marshall and Snyder that the actions of their negotiators will show PeaceHealth's intent much more than their "Strategic Communications" personnel.

To ONA negotiators: Your success at the negotiating table will make a difference in Peace Harbor Medical Center's ability to attract and retain the skilled and dedicated nurses that Marshall was talking about.

I stand solidly with our Peace Harbor nurses in these negotiations. You are negotiating not only benefits for yourselves and future nurses, but hospital care for every resident within the Peace Harbor Medical Center region.

Bob Horney  
 Florence

#### MORE MONEY WON'T FIX SCHOOLS

In response to Mr. Robert Orr's letter (Feb. 25): Like everything else, there are great, good, mediocre, poor and awful teachers. The many teachers I had from kindergarten to university all fell on the Bell Curve.

I count a considerable number of teachers among my friends. Many instruct and vote "the way the union tells us."

They are not leaders.

As new Secretary of Education Betsy DeVos suggested, they need to be led or "...told what they have to do..."

Spending \$40 million on a new school will not improve academic performance. Schools are failing because they expect nothing of the students — and that is what the students deliver.

The building will be a monument to mediocrity.

For the past half century, lockstep with declining class sizes, school performance scores are falling. America spends the most per capita on schooling and has the least to show for it.

We put men on the moon, invented super computing, color television, the 21st century world. Many of those responsible attended very rudimentary schools with 40-plus students per class. They knew that obtaining an education was a privilege and they were determined to make the most of it.

Today's education system is a bloated bureaucracy. Teachers unions overwhelmingly contribute to the Democratic party; the same party responsible for failing inner cities within Chicago, Baltimore, Detroit, Washington, D.C., et al.

Throwing more money at the problem will not solve it. It is time for a change. When parents have a choice, the teachers must perform.

When excellence is expected, the students may just surprise us and deliver.

Ian Eales  
 Florence

#### HOPEFUL FOR NURSE AGREEMENT

I read with much interest the article about PeaceHealth Peace Harbor Medical Center and the concerns of the nursing staff at this location. (Siuslaw News, Feb. 18)

I am a volunteer in the Same Day Surgery/Short Stay area. I see how much effort they put forth to assure our well being and safety, while in their care.

I hope that something can be accomplished so that those precious members of our community get whatever they need to stay here in Florence. Thoughts about how to encourage other professionals in the medical field to relocate and settle here should also be addressed.

I know I don't have the answer, but am hopeful that those who make these decisions will come to an agreement. Soon.

Thanks to the entire staff at PHPMC. We may not know all your names, but your dedication to our citizens is invaluable.

Sandi Hennig  
 Florence

#### NATION OF LAWS

Two recent "Letters to the Editor" beg questions.

First, one suggests "schools need more money," but fails to indicate how much more money or for what programs. That letter also neglected to indicate how the amount of funds we spend on K-12 education compares to other developed nations.

The second letter appears to suggest long-standing laws on immigration be ignored for compassionate reasons.

It has long been believed our democracy's strength lies in the fact ours is a nation of laws which all must obey.

"Just sayin,'" as the expression goes.

Al Pearn  
 Florence

## LETTERS TO THE EDITOR POLICY

The Siuslaw News welcomes letters to the editor as part of a community discussion of issues on the local, state and national level.

Emailed letters are preferred. Handwritten or typed letters must be signed. All letters need to include full name, address and phone number; only name and city will be printed. Letters should be limited to about 300 words. Letters are subject to editing for length, grammar and clarity. Publication of any letter is not guaranteed and depends on space available and the volume of letters received.

Libelous, argumentative and anonymous letters or poetry will not be published.

#### POLITICAL/ELECTION LETTERS:

Election-related letters must address pertinent or timely issues of interest to our readers at-large. The newspaper does not publish partisan letters that promote or endorse local political candidates based solely on their record, reputation and qualifications; this constitutes paid political advertising.

Candidates themselves may not use the letters to the editor column to outline their views and platforms or to ask for votes. This also constitutes paid political advertising.

As with all letters and advertising content, the newspaper, at the sole discretion of the publisher, general manager and editor, reserves the right to reject any such letter.

The newspaper is particularly sensitive to organized "letter-writing campaigns." The newspaper reserves the right to reject any such letter.

Write to: editor@thesiuslawnews.com

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## Siuslaw News

Published every Wednesday and Saturday at 148 Maple St. in Florence, Lane County, Oregon. A member of the National Newspaper Association and Oregon Newspaper Publishers Association. Periodicals postage paid at Florence, Ore. Postmaster, send address changes to: Siuslaw News, P.O. Box 10, Florence, OR 97439; phone 541-997-3441; fax 541-997-7979. All press releases may be sent to PressReleases@TheSiuslawNews.com.

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 Saturday Issue—General news, Thursday noon; Budgets, two days prior to publication; Regular classified ads, Thursday 1 p.m.; Display ads, Thursday noon; Boxed and display classified ads, Wednesday 5 p.m. Soundings, Tuesday 5 p.m.

#### NEWSPAPER SUBSCRIPTION RATES:

In Lane County — 1-year subscription, \$71; 10-weeks subscription, \$18; Out of Lane County — 1-year subscription, \$94; 10-weeks subscription, \$24; Out of State — 1-year subscription, \$120; Out of United States — 1-year subscription, \$200; E-Edition Online Only (Anywhere) — 1-year subscription, \$65.

Mail subscription includes E-Edition.  
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