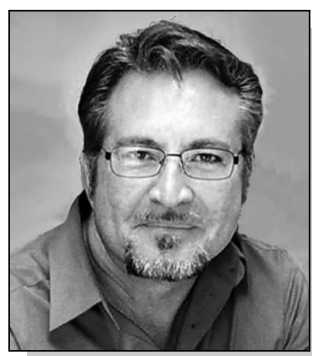


Siuslaw News
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Opinion

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.



Biggest problem with 'sanctuary' is its lack of clarity

Cities of Refuge" where perpetrators of unintentional harm could claim asylum.

This continued in 392 A.D., when Christian Roman Emperor Theodosius set up sanctuaries under church control — a proclamation that lasted until 1621 A.D., when the general right of sanctuary for churches in England was abolished.

Now, more than 300 years later, it's a term that has resurfaced within our national dialogue as communities across the nation debate its meaning within the constructs of local, state and federal government as it relates to protecting the rights of those living illegally within the U.S.

This includes our own Florence City Council, where the proposal of a city ordinance defining its stance on the protection of individuals, similar to an ordinance recent-

ly passed by the Eugene City Council, polarized Florence counselors during a March 22 work session.

Since then, it's become a topic that hints at a divide within our own community as we argue the merits of a term which, ironically, has no offi-

ciated former New York City mayor Rudi Giuliani of running a sanctuary city, to which Giuliani accused Romney of running a sanctuary governor's mansion.

Or put another way: "I know you are, but what am I?"

Yet, the following day, Clinton told reporters that she believed "...sanctuary cities further public safety and has defended those policies for many years."

The debate and posturing continues today with little reason to believe we'll get any clear definition from our nation's capitol anytime soon.

Which is maybe the way it's supposed to be?

The one thing all levels of government agree on is that immigration enforcement is a federal responsibility. That means state and local law enforcement officials reserve the right to decide to what extent they are willing to cooperate with the federal government on immigration enforcement.

In 1987, the message from Oregon was pretty clear when it passed Oregon Revised Statute (ORS) 181.850, which

"prohibits law enforcement officers at the state, county or municipal level from enforcing federal immigration laws that target people based on race or ethnic origin, as long as those individuals are not suspected of any criminal activities."

The argument from Washington, D.C., of course, is that being here illegally constitutes "criminal activity."

The question we need to ask ourselves is whether we are willing to define anyone living in our community without proper documentation as being criminal.

Or, decide against being that neighborhood kid who gives away others' "hiding" spot in what could become a real-life hide and seek that is anything but fun and games.

Write to Ned Hickson at editor@thesiuslawnews.com

From the Editor's Desk

NED HICKSON

cial definition within our federal government.

It doesn't help that even those in our nation's capitol don't seem to have a clear idea of what defines a sanctuary city, regardless of which side of the aisle they're on.

During the 2008 GOP race for the presidential nomination, former Massachusetts governor Mitt Romney

Seven years later in self-proclaimed sanctuary city San Francisco, following the tragic shooting death of 32-year-old Kathryn Steinle by illegal immigrant and repeat felon Juan Lopez-Sanchez, then Democratic presidential nominee Hillary Clinton told CNN that she "had absolutely no support for a city that ignores deportation rules."

LETTERS

FLIES IN THE FACE OF TRANSPARENCY

The press release issued by Chief Turner (Feb. 3) regarding law enforcement agencies in Oregon being prohibited from "apprehending persons whose only violation of law is that they are persons of foreign citizenship present in the United States in violation of federal immigration laws" is unquestioned and welcome.

These immigrants have neither been accused nor found guilty of any felony. However, it was

stated in the City Council work session on March 22 that ORS 181A.820 places the same onus on city employees.

I believe this is mistaken.

City employees are not state or local law enforcement officers. Therefore, my request for a draft ordinance covering all city employees is not a replication of what is already in place.

Additionally, ORS 181A.820 prohibits local law enforcement officials from collecting information about the religious, political or social views of any individual by the police unless that information directly relates to criminal activity.

This should also be incumbent on city employees. The proposal I made specifically stated that it was not asking Florence to be declared a sanctuary city, but rather that the ordinance be accepted as "protection of individuals."

Yes, this is a politically charged situation. But several cities in Oregon have debated the issue and have passed ordinances to include city employees in protecting individuals from federal immigration enforcement.

To bring this important issue up at a City Council work session when the council had not even seen the request prior to the meeting, and when there was not a full council present, flies in the face of transparency.

Ron Preisler,
 Florence City Councilor

DON'T INFLAME POLITICAL DIVISION

So it appears the Florence City Council will not hear a request for a city ordinance declaring the town to be a sanctuary city as requested by Councilor Ron Preisler. The article (Siuslaw News, March 25) states a reason Mr. Preisler gave for proposing the ordinance was that local Latinos reported ICE had been in the area and they were worried.

The fact is, if INS agents come to Florence nobody can stop them.

Declaring Florence a sanctuary city does nothing to enhance existing state law and would only inflame political division.

Can an INS agent walk into city hall? Of course. Are they prohibited from entering the police department and having a cup of coffee? I don't think so. If they have cause can they stop a person in Florence for questioning or make an arrest? Yes.

If they request back up from the Florence Police because an INS agent is in trouble will the police say no? I doubt it.

But Councilor George Lyddon (see correction, page A2) did ask a very important question noted in the Siuslaw News article. He asked Mr. Preisler if ignoring a portion of law is anarchy?

Mr. Preisler was quoted as replying that answering that question was above his pay grade.

In my opinion, it is not above Mr. Preisler's pay grade. Yes, it can lead to anarchy and even civil war in the extreme.

If we can ignore immigration law (and I'm not talking only about law enforcement) simply because we disagree with it or find it immoral, then where does that stop?

I disagree with many federal, state and local laws. So does that make it OK for me to ignore paying my property or income tax?

If Mr. Preisler believes immigration law is immoral and possibly criminal in itself, I wouldn't worry about the loss of federal monies. We have far worse problems for which he should be in our federal legislators' office demanding change.

That's how it's done in a democracy.

Dave Peck
 Florence

WOULD RATHER SEE COOPERATION

I keep wondering when the Democratic National Party higher-ups, the National News media (TV, radio and print) will get over the thunder and lightning bolt that struck in the wee hours those many weeks ago on Nov. 9.

Hillary Clinton and the Democratic Party took a beating nationwide and they, as well as many of our state and local citizens, still can't seem to get past it.

Four years from now — and I hope it will be eight years from now — they will still be scratching their heads as to how Donald J. Trump got to sit in the Oval Office instead of Hillary. I remember back during the campaign hearing many of the so-called Hollywood elite, as well as many national radio and TV anchors, all predicting how Donald Trump would never be president of the United States.

But it happened.

When will they get past it?

Though I am prepared to sit back and listen to it, I would rather see and hear some cooperation between the two parties for the good of our great country. However, if the last 20 or weeks is any indication of what we can expect, I don't hold much faith that cooperation will happen.

Ironically, I remember back during the Obama administration how both Republican

Speakers of the House darn near gave him everything he wanted.

God Bless our military and America.

Tony Cavarno
 Florence

NEEDED REASSURANCE

I feel compelled to respond to the article "Council declines agenda proposal" (Siuslaw News, March 25).

I do not wish to be characterized as potentially being part of a "huge backlash" or as someone who "will go ballistic" if the Florence City Council produces a proclamation which, according to Police Chief Tom Turner, merely restates a policy already in place which prohibits Oregon police officers from acting as immigration enforcement officers.

Such a proclamation would serve to give needed reassurance to our friends and neighbors who are feeling vulnerable and frightened.

Barbara Holler
 Florence

MAKING AMERICA "GREAT" FOR SOME

Between the allegations of possible collusion of major Trump campaign officials with Russian operatives, attempts at voter suppression and dark money buying candidates due in part to the Citizens United Supreme Court ruling, it doesn't feel much like a democracy to me.

It certainly doesn't feel like a government by the people, for the people; instead, I fear it is becoming a government by the very wealthy, for the very wealthy.

The dismantling of our government is taking place and, in doing so, is stripping protections for the already disenfranchised — be it the poor, the disabled, people of color, non-Christians and those who want clean air and water, need affordable housing, healthcare or education.

But there are plenty of tax cuts in the plans for the super rich, demonstrating that the Trump administration has little regard for those less fortunate. In fact, it often feels like the administration stokes hatred and violence towards them.

What saddens me most is how this administration is encapsulating the values of this country with the almighty dollar while dismissing the notion of equality as an American ideal.

I guess it remains to be seen just how "great" America will become — at least for some.

Julie MacFarlane
 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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