

Siuslaw News
 P.O. Box 10
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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.



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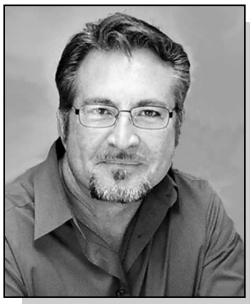
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Measure 101 is about deciding on the kind of Oregon we want to be



2019. Last year, the state Legislature passed a 1.5 percent tax on premiums collect-

opposing views on whether repealing HB 2391 with a “no” vote would jeopardize the health care of approximately

Backers of the repeal say it’s unfair to tax health insurers.

Maybe it is, although we would be joining 48 other states with similar “provider tax” funding for state health-care programs.

But at least for the short term, as the full effects of changes in the Affordable Care Act and other federal funding remains in question, we should consider how much responsibility we’re willing to take in being the kind of Oregon we want to be for those among us with the most to lose.

Write Siuslaw News editor Ned Hickson at nhickson@thesiuslawnews.com or P.O. Box 10, Florence, Ore. 97439.

From the Editor’s Desk

NED HICKSON

According to the latest voter return numbers, chances are you haven’t turned in your ballot for this Tuesday’s Special Election on Measure 101.

The measure has not only sparked much debate, but has also confused a lot of voters in terms of what a “yes” and “no” vote means.

To put it simply, a “no” vote repeals House Bill 2391, which helps fund the Oregon Health Plan.

A “yes” vote keeps the funding in place through June

ed by health insurers, along with a 0.7 percent increase on the tax rate collected from some hospitals. The bills’ objective is to raise approximately \$550 million from July 2017 to June 2019 to help fund part of the Oregon Health Plan’s \$14 billion budget for that two-year period. The debate stems from

350,000 Oregonians — including 40,000 residents in Lane County.

Regardless of which side you’re on, both sides agree on the question that is at the core of Measure 101:

How willing are we, as Oregonians, to help provide health care for those who can least afford it?

LETTERS

NRA’S LONG ARM REACHES BEYOND MEMBERSHIP

I’m writing in response to Stan Easter’s letter (“Inaccuracies Portray NRS in Bad Light,” Jan. 17).

Mr. Easter’s statement that the NRA “is no different from groups such as the Sierra Club, Trout Unlimited, The VFW, the Amercia Legion and Planed Parenthood” doesn’t ring true.

While the NRA is a membership organization, it is also funded by gun manufacturers via direct contributions and advertisement. For example, Ruger (arguably the top-selling gun manufacturer in the U.S.) launched a program that donated a dollar for every sale of one of its guns (which amounted to in excess of a \$1.25 million contribution) going directly to the NRA Institute for Legislative Action — the lobbying arm of the NRA.

So to characterize the NRA as “simply an organized group of like-minded individuals” is disingenuous at best.

Furthermore, the NRA has deviated far from its original purpose of advancing rifle marksmanship. It has become a top lobbying organization in Washington, D.C. whose agenda includes: attacking laws that make it easier for untrained individuals to carry concealed weapons; deregulating gun silencers; opposing the strengthening of background check laws; and ending gun-free school zones — to name just a few issues.

Its influence is brought to bear through campaign contributions and millions of dollars in off-the-books spending on issue ads. According to the nonpartisan, independent and nonprofit Center for Responsive Politics, the NRA’s lobbying efforts alone exceeded \$4.1 million in 2016 as it tried to influence a multitude of government agencies including members of Congress, the Departments of Agriculture, Interior and Justice as well as the U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service, the Bureau of Land Management, the Forest Service and the National Park Service.

So, if we are going to analyze tactics, let’s be clear: The NRA’s long arm reaches beyond its membership and into the lives

of every American.

It is not just a bunch of folks trying to protect their Second Amendment rights.

And, while Mr. Charles Pennington’s facts (“Learn the Art of Compromise,” Jan. 10) regarding history may not have been spot-on, his contention that the NRA has a major influence on legislation in this country is certainly closer to the truth than some NRA supporters want to acknowledge.

—Dolly Brock
 Florence

PRESIDENTIAL VIEWS ON RACE ARE ANTI-AMERICAN

America is a melting pot of immigrants. America is an all inclusive nation. Since it was founded, it has been a mixture of races and religions.

America is not — and never has been — an all white, all Christian nation.

Native Americans were here long before America was “discovered.” Much of the west coast and Texas was part of Mexico before it was acquired by the U.S.

Black explorers in the 1500s landed in the Gulf of Mexico and settled around the area of the Mississippi River.

Many were Muslims. Many of the slaves kidnapped and brought from Africa were Muslim as well. When the white European settlers finally arrived, it was so they could practice whatever religion they wanted.

Since the beginning of his campaign and continuing to this day, President Trump has promoted, both subtly and blatantly, notions of white supremacy. Prior to running, he was one of the loudest voices in the “birther” movement, which was an attempt to try to delegitimize our first black president.

In his announcement of running for president, he accused Mexicans of being “rapist and drug dealers.”

His defense of the neo-Nazi alt right as “some very fine people” in Charlottesville was blatantly supportive of racism and bigotry.

He has abandoned the mostly black

Americans of Flint, Mich., (still waiting years later for potable water); the majority Hispanic residents of Puerto Rico (American citizens), who since September are still in need of basic necessities, have seemingly been abandoned; his travel ban applies only to brown-skinned travelers and Muslims; his border wall is meant to keep Hispanics out of this country; his reversal of DACA affects mostly brown-skinned people; and he has discontinued protected status in the U.S. for Haitian refugees and Salvadoran refugees.

Most recently, there has been the news of the president referring to Haiti, El Salvador and several African nations as “shithole” countries during a discussion that included both democratic and republican leaders.

He went on to lament the fact that we didn’t get more immigrants from Norway. In other words, white people.

This president’s views on race are anti-American. As Americans, we need to stand together and reject his bigotry.

Remaining silent is complicity.

— Marybeth Marenco
 Florence

VERIFY BEFORE YOU VILLIFY THE PRESIDENT

I think the hysteria about what President Trump said or didn’t say in a private meeting is beyond ludicrous.

No one reading this paper heard what was said. Not one of the TV talking heads heard what was said.

The editor of this newspaper did not hear what was said.

In my opinion, all these people are denigrating our president because of a rumor started by an old, washed-up politician.

Why wasn’t anyone called for a test of his mental ability and his hearing?

Actually, what the president says in a private meeting is none of your business. Verify before you villify.

— Martin Cable
 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, or letters from outside our readership area will only be published at the discretion of the editor.

POLITICAL/ELECTION LETTERS:

Election-related letters must address pertinent or timely issues of interest to our readers at-large.

Letters must 1) Not be a part of letter-writing campaigns on behalf of (or by) candidates; 2) Ensure any information about a candidate is accurate, fair and not from second-hand knowledge or hearsay; and 3) explain the reasons to support candidates based on personal experience and perspective rather than partisanship and campaign-style rhetoric.

Candidates themselves may not use the letters to the editor column to outline their views and platforms or to ask for votes; this constitutes 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 letter that doesn’t follow the above criteria.

Send letters to:
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WHERE TO WRITE

Pres. Donald Trump The White House 1600 Pennsylvania Ave. NW Washington, D.C. 20500 Comments: 202-456-1111 Switchboard: 202-456-1414 FAX: 202-456-2461 TTY/TDD Comments: 202-456-6213 www.whitehouse.gov	U.S. Rep. Peter DeFazio (4th Dist.) 2134 Rayburn HOB Washington, DC 20515 202-225-6416 541-269-2609 541-465-6732 www.defazio.house.gov
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See MORE LETTERS 5A