

**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.

"I never considered a difference of opinion in politics, in religion, in philosophy, as cause for withdrawing from a friend." —Thomas Jefferson (1800)

## Building inspections need to remain in local hands

**(Editor's Note: Viewpoint submissions on this and other topics are always welcome as part of our goal to encourage community discussion and exchange of perspectives.)**

I may not have all the facts, but from what I see, I think the Oregon Building Codes Division may be running amuck. I recently moved to Dunes City and have volunteered to serve on the Budget Committee. A recent ruling by the Codes Division is likely going to increase our City budget by about at least \$135,000 a year — and likely much more.

If Dunes City does not comply, residents will have to turn over the building Codes process to the county, state, or set up partnerships with other small cities.

These new requirements were drafted without public input by Mark Long of the Oregon Building Codes Division.

Mark Long is the current administrator for the Oregon Building Codes Division. The same person who sued the state for \$1 million — and won — several years back, when he was interim director for the Oregon Department of Energy.

Long is an empire builder who is driving up costs for small city building departments. It is my understanding that since

he became administrator for the Oregon Building Codes Division, it has grown from about 20 people to more than 200.

A recent opinion requested by his department from the Department of Justice (DOJ) has essentially outlawed small cities from outsourcing building inspections from private companies (a practice that has existed

### GUEST VIEWPOINT

**By Rory Hammond**  
Dunes City resident

for decades).

Oregon BCD is requiring city inspectors to be government employees. Some suggest this is to help fund the PERS shortfall. Others suggest this is a union issue.

Among the concerns over this decision are loss of local control and extending the time to build, thus increasing costs and decreasing affordability.

Building code enforcement is to be paid by user fees that do not exceed the cost of the process. This sounds like a very good rule ... except the Building Codes Division sets the rates. So small cities will not be able to raise enforcement fees to pay for the increased cost of PERS-funded employees.

The last legislative session was supposed to address this issue, but nothing hap-

pened. After the legislative session ended, the BCD issued new rules that I believe are over-reaching and Draconian.

Our governor could step in and stop the implementation of the rules until the legislature can fix the problem, but apparently she won't.

Meanwhile, Dunes City has been give until July 1 to comply.

As I mentioned, I do not speak from authority. My background is in IT Operations. I have been involved in many projects that built warehouses for logistic companies and with the installation of automated computer inventory management systems.

As a private citizen, I have been involved with the permitting process for building. When I was young, I pre-wired homes, apartments and offices for the phone company. Over the years I have seen fist hand many building inspectors and even had to go through the process of appealing decisions. In my experience, local-level control is the easiest way to deal with issues.

Some processes are enhanced and streamlined with Centralized Control. But local building issues are best dealt with by a decentralized process.

This move really sounds like bureaucratic bullying by the Oregon Building Codes Division.

## LETTERS

### IGNORANCE ISN'T PATRIOTISM

As a liberal, I look with dismay at the kind of appeal the self-proclaimed "Patriot Place" is making to the Florence community.

I have no problem with the far right having a place of its own, though it is a pretense to say its views — represented by the president of the U.S. in his dozens of angry tweets every day — are somehow being diminished by liberals. My concern is that Patriot Place seeks to appropriate patriotism on the wholly un-American notion that only those on the far right are "true" patriots.

A group that supposedly welcomes "all things American" evidently does not. Let's be clear: We're all Americans, we all love our country and we're all patriots.

Please consider this: When a group in society insists that its political view is the only acceptable one, and that all others are evil, false or even treasonous, that society is on its way to self-destruction.

It appears some people at Patriot Place are drawn to absurd conspiracy theories — baseless nonsense presented as unchallengeable fact. Recently, one of its volunteers told a friend who visited that Congressman DeFazio "belongs to the Illuminati," that Jews as a group "either follow Christ or Satan" and that "Zionists control the banks."

Ignorant stuff to be sure, but also hate speech — which should have no place in Florence or anywhere else.

Siuslaw News editor Ned Hickson re-

plied in a comment on Facebook that the lengthy article "Patriot Place Opens with Candidate Forum" (May 2) on Patriot Place merely intended to inform readers of what it is "about."

Well, it doesn't appear to be about patriotism at all. In fact, what that place really seems to be about is how to undermine traditional American values of tolerance, community and goodwill.

—Dr. Mel Gurto

Professor Emeritus of Political Science,  
Portland State University  
Deadwood

### FAR LEFT IS DEBASING GOOD AMERICANS

It never ceases to amaze me how we always need "one more thing" to achieve nirvana. Previously we've banned school prayer, any display of Christian symbols on public buildings, permitted disrespecting and burning the flag, and all but banned school discipline.

We've encouraged entitlement, uncontrolled immigration, masculine toxification, family destruction through divorce, out-of-wedlock births, abortion on demand, ever-decreasing morality and ever increasing violence in entertainment — none of which leftists seem to maintain have any effect.

According to statistics I've seen, shooters are over represented by fatherless boys. First- and second-generation immigrants have committed more than 40 percent of

all mass [4+ victims] shootings since 2000, far above their percentage of the population.

Solving those two problems would do far more than banning the AR-15. More people were beaten to death with no weapon than were killed with a rifle in 2017, yet marchers would be happy banning "just" the AR-15.

From a fatality perspective, it makes almost no sense. In Canada, which has some of the strictest firearm regulations, some cities are seeing triple digit percentage increases in firearm violence.

Banning does not work. People are losing their perspective. The hatred toward and vilification of the NRA has an unsettling parallel to Jews in 1930s Germany. If one visits German Great War cemeteries, Jews are well represented.

There was no evidence that Jews were anything but loyal German citizens. The corrupt media parroted a madman's ravings, even though they knew better.

The same is happening in America today. NRA members are among the most loyal, law abiding citizens in America. We love this country and its history in spite of its flaws. The left's debasing of solid and good Americans, and great Americans who lived a quarter-millennia ago, all the while ignoring the very real corruptions of our revolving door political class borders on the pathological.

—Ian Eales  
Florence

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## Siuslaw News

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## 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.

Letters that are anonymous, libelous, argumentative, sarcastic or contain accusations that are unsourced or documented will not be published.

Letters containing poetry or from outside the Siuslaw News 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 partisan-ship 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 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 letter that doesn't follow the above criteria.

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