

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.

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



LETTERS

HOW WILL HISTORY JUDGE OUR ACTIONS TODAY?

There are those who make a lot of noise about the word "illegal." We all know what it means: unlawful.

Let's explore the legal definition of the word "genocide" according to the UN convention in 1948: Article Two of the convention defines genocide as: "... Any of the following acts committed with the intent to destroy, in whole or in part, a national, ethnic, racial or religious group; killing members of the group, causing serious bodily or mental harm to members of the group."

Regardless of the nuances of immigration law, and whether or not those seeking asylum (because their lives are in danger) must be deported, is something for the justice system to decide.

But to take children and babies and lock them in cages is unconscionable. To take children and youth who have done nothing but follow their parents to a land where they hoped to find sanctuary, and make them stand handcuffed, nude and shivering — as was recently reported regarding a Virginia detention center — is not only illegal but a crime against humanity, i.e. qualifying as genocide.

President Trump's recent Executive Order concerning separation of children and babies from families does not address the 2,300 already taken from their parents with no plan for reunification and who will remain incarcerated.

What psychological and physical trauma have those children already experienced at the hands of the US govern-

ment? What Trump's EO does is authorize the indefinite detention of families. Instead of children in cages we have families in cages. Indefinitely.

When our government can commit crimes against humanity with the approval of its citizens, what does it say about us as human beings? As Americans? Do we want historians to equate our actions to the crimes committed by the Nazis? Or is there a humane way to treat those seeking our help while still observing our immigration laws?

And what about those laws? Are they just?

Remember that at one time slavery was legal. Segregation was legal. And to Germans in the 1930s, the holocaust was legal.

—Linda Olsen
 Florence

SEEKING ASYLUM IS NOT A CRIME. YET.

The separating of children from their parents was created by the Trump/Sessions "zero tolerance" policy. Previous administrations kept children with their families. The majority of the children in detention right now were not travelling alone until the Trump Administration separated them from their parents.

This is immoral, indecent and un-American.

The majority of the people coming to the borders now are seeking asylum.

One way to apply for asylum is to go the embassy in your home country. The other way is to present yourself at a point of entry along the border and request asylum.

If a person illegally crosses the border to gain entry, it is a misdemeanor.

People have fled their home countries with few possessions and little money to seek safety from atrocities and danger. They are fleeing intolerable conditions or fear for their lives to undertake such an arduous trip into the unknown.

To them, America represents hope, safety and opportunity. Just as it did to many of our parents, grandparents or great-grandparents.

Today's refugees get to our borders and are traumatized again. The border patrol estimates that adults traveling with children who are not their own represent 1 percent or less of the people coming to our country.

The majority are not criminals; they are simply people who seek a better, safer life.

The big question, now that President Trump has signed his Executive Order to keep the families together, is how do we reunite the children (approximately 2,300) already taken from their parents?

Many of these children have already been sent to other living situations as far away as Illinois, Florida, and Michigan. How can parents who have nothing have any hope of traveling across the country to be reunited with their children?

—Marybeth Marengo
 Florence



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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 partisanism 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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