

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)



LETTERS

TOUGH TIMES CALL FOR TOUGH MEASURES

We need to eliminate football as an expense that the schools simply cannot afford. Even if maintenance, teaching salaries, extracurricular activities, etc., are apples and oranges budget wise, this sends a huge message.

If we can't afford a new school to keep the kids warm, dry and safe, or give our kids educations that prepare them for our 21st century, then we sure can't afford football.

I know football is just as much for the community's enjoyment as it is

for the kids. But oh, well, sorry.

Tough times call for tough measures.

—Cris Reep
Florence

FAILURE OF BOND MEASURE LEAVES MORE CONCERNS

I'm disappointed that the school bond measure failed. I understand that there may have been some confusion regarding the cost of the bond versus property tax increase, and that future attempts will be made for smaller requests.

It is still concerning me, however, that in the meantime our precious

students are being subjected to potential hazards associated with an earthquake.

I have seen, firsthand, building damage and collapse due to liquification of sand and resulting differential settlement of foundations. It's true there may be minor stop-gap seismic retrofit measures that could reduce some of the destruction potential.

If so, I hope these can be evaluated and addressed to make the next bond proposal more palatable for taxpayers.

—Bill Craig
Florence

Who *really* profits from the Death With Dignity movement?

(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.)

As someone who has spent thousands of his own dollars promoting expanding Oregon's end-of-life choices, the question of who stands to profit from the Death With Dignity movement is one I have have been curious about.

I have reached out to Compassion & Choices, which is the original group that helped get Oregon's Death With Dignity law passed. It is a well-financed organization that receives lots of donations for promoting Oregon's Death With Dignity law in other states.

Like many, I believe this law is restrictive and could be much more compassionate. Compassion & Choices has stated twice in the media — in the *Washington Post* and *Siuslaw News*, that it opposes my work through End Choices to make Oregon's law more compassionate. It will not even communicate with me by telephone, email or Facebook.

I have to wonder how it can, in good conscience, accept donations while calling itself Compassion & Choices but not actually supporting compassion? This is one question I have asked and have not been given an answer to.

Myself being very passionate about the issue cannot understand any group or individual that professes to support

Death With Dignity but does not want to help Oregonions make the current law more compassionate.

Another well-financed nonprofit organization that opposes my work

GUEST VIEWPOINT By Bruce Yelle End Choices

through End Choices is Right to Life. Given that the organization has quite a few religious-minded supporters who rely on their faith to guide them, I can understand.

However, what bothers me is how Right to Life seems to misrepresent what is being asked for in expanding Oregon's end-of-life choices to assure an individual's advance directive is honored, even when they become victims of dementia.

In the past three years, a bill was in front of the Oregon legislature to rewrite the state's 25-year-old advance directive laws. And every year, Right to Life fought this bill with lots of money.

Last year, during the House of Representative hearings for the bill, I was one of three people testifying to support the bill. Common sense asks, *Why not rewrite a 25-year-old law?*

What I heard from some of the 200 people who had signed up to oppose it — most from Right to Life — was that rewriting Oregon's decades-old law would take rights *away* from those suf-

fering from dementia. Those of us who are educated on this subject through personal experience know the exact opposite is true.

Today in Oregon, an individual's advance directive may or may *not* be followed in the event of dementia.

Once that happens, an individual's right to choose is given to someone else — and *they* get to decide your end-of-life options. One can only hope this person and your health care providers can agree on what your advance directive says, and whether you would have chosen to continue living with your dementia.

In my opinion, there is too much money being made on keeping people alive and living in a quality of life that would be unacceptable to them if were they still considered mentally competent.

End Choices has been working hard the last year and a half to try and get this changed.

In the upcoming 2019 Oregon legislative session, there will be a bill that will protect the rights of seniors and citizens with incurable conditions and unbearable suffering.

An advanced directive filled out when someone is mentally competent should be a contract for an individual should they someday be considered mentally incompetent to choose for themselves. Oregonians need to educate themselves on the restrictions of the current Oregon Death With Dignity law and the rules regarding advance directives.

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 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 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.

Email letters to:
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WHERE TO WRITE

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