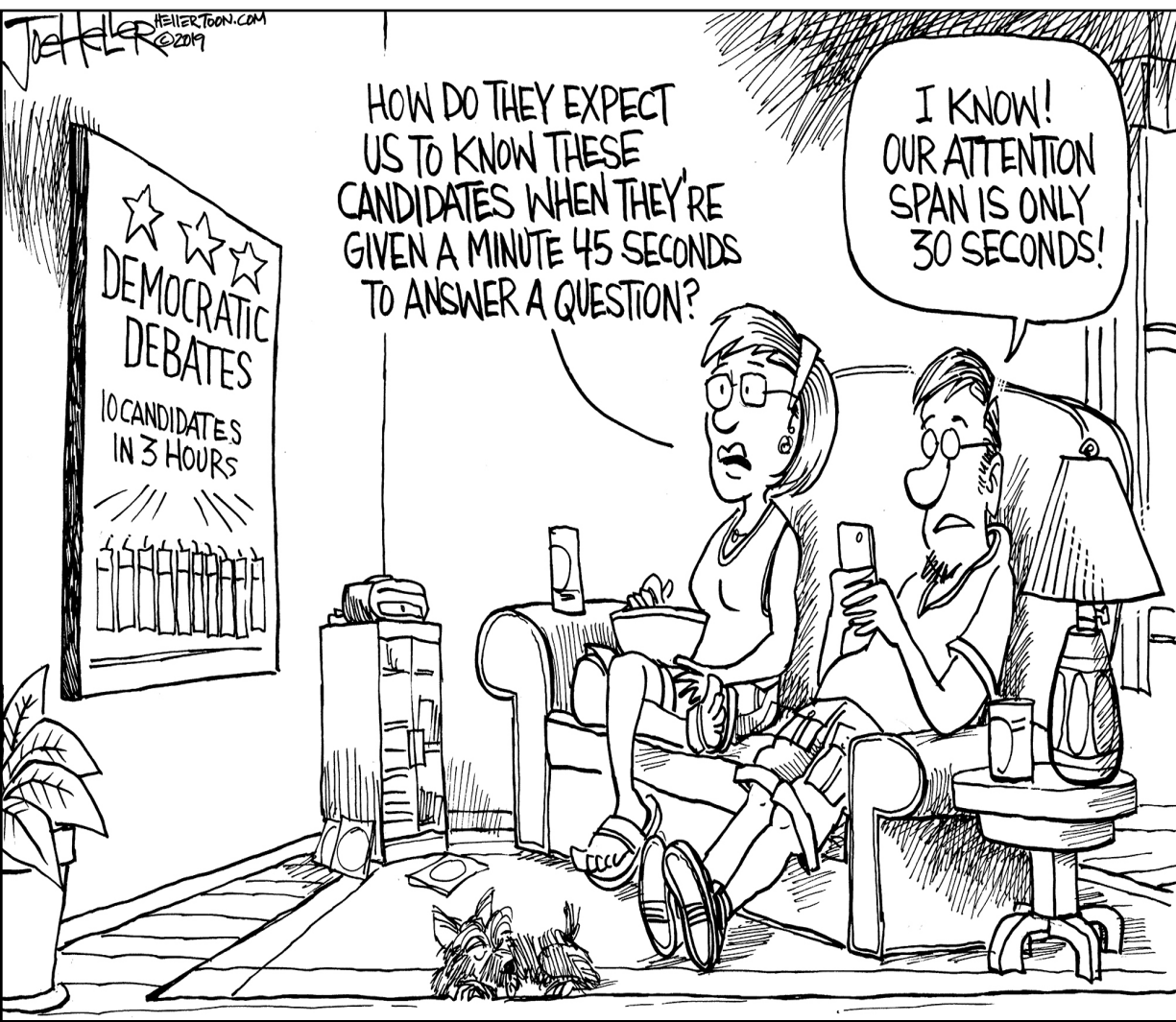


Siuslaw News
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Opinion

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.

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



LETTERS

SOME NICE PEOPLE IN OUR TOWN

On Sept. 6, I was [transporting] packaged food items with my truck donated by Fred Meyer for the Backpack Ministry at Cross Road Church. As I took off from a stop at 35th and Highway 101, I heard a crashing sound.

My load had fallen, covering a lane of traffic. Before I could get out of my truck, I saw the red and blue flashing lights — and two of our first responders out picking up the food items.

We quickly realized these loose items were not going to fit back into my truck and I thought, “Now what?”

That’s when a truck from the City of Florence came to the rescue and we recovered everything in short order.

I asked the officer if I was going to be ticketed for a load that was not secure. He just smiled and said “I hope you have a better day.”

I just want to say we have some nice people in our town that are here to help.

—Leland Fowler
Florence

**SOMETIMES, GOVERNMENT
DOES THE RIGHT THING**
Once in a while we do get an

opportunity to see government do the right thing. Such was the case when, at a meeting of the Lane County Board of Commissioners, Collard Lake Road was accepted into the county-maintained road system.

And it only took 43 years to get it done!

It was in 1976 when the county commissioners approved, by unanimous vote, taking in the road; and then failed to see the resolution acted on. Over the years since, the residents dependent on the road made repeated efforts to correct the wrong, only to be rebuffed by the county time and again.

This time around, through the concerted efforts of concerned citizens, the arguments in favor of the county stepping up to its responsibilities found the receptive ear of Commissioner Jay Bozievich. His hard work in determining the sound basis for this action was clearly responsible for bringing the other commissioners on board, and he is to be commended.

—Jimmie Zinn
Florence

THANK YOU, REEDSPORT
On behalf of Post 3232 VFW Florence, I would like to thank Fred Wahl Construction, the Dollar Store and McKay’s Market in

Reedsport for their continued support of our veterans.

—Fred Burns, Commander
Post 3232 VFW Florence

**PROMOTION OF JORDAN
COVE IS A ‘BOONDOGGLE’**
Three earthquakes off Coos Bay in less than a week, including one at 5.9 and one at 3.8. A third quake was recorded on Aug. 29, at a 6.3.

All three were in the same general area, as were several others this year. What’s troubling is that the Coos County Commissioners voted to allow the Canadian LNG project on the sand spit at Jordan Cove, east of North Bend, to continue.

Are they crazy?

True, the quakes emanated from a new fault line west of the Cascadia Fault, which is predicted to cause a major earthquake in the near future. Nonetheless, placing a highly volatile LNG facility at Jordan Cove on sand is a questionable venture in itself.

With the current spate of earthquakes, the safety of Bay Area residents is at stake. It’s time to stop this latest “boondoggle” that the sightless leaders of Coos County and others who are promoting this safety hazard.

—Dennis Baker
Florence

When a governor undermines her own transparency

(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.)

Open, accessible and accountable government with freedom to public information without interference from governing bodies — or elected officials — is essential to our democratic republic.

But that fundamental value may be at stake in Oregon, where the newly appointed Office of the Public Records Advocate under the Oregon Public Records Advisory Council, Ginger McCall, resigned under duress this week, claiming pressure and interference from Gov. Kate Brown’s senior staff.

What is happening in Oregon is particularly alarming. A handful of states have offices of “open government,” intended to act as mediators of public record disputes. These government agencies are diverse in the services they provide and the powers they possess. Many are established to operate as independent

bodies unobstructed by the executive branch and legislature. We’re now seeing in Oregon that the wall may only exist in the enabling legislation — not in practice.

Oregon’s legislation to create McCall’s office was largely modeled after Connecticut legislation that created the Connecticut Freedom of Information Commission. In Connecticut, the FOI Commission is housed within the executive branch, but not under the office of the executive (governor).

Its director reports to the commission’s board of directors to avoid conflict and interference and to keep it an independent agency. But Oregon deviated from the Connecticut model in the placement of its open government office. Instead, it is under the office of the governor with oversight from her and from

her staff, creating an environment for possible political, personal and legal conflict — diminishing its ability to ensure transparency and accountability.

The National Freedom of Information Coalition, a national network of state open government groups, believes these offices for open government ombudspersons are critically important for ensuring accountability and responsive practices in state and local governments.

Yet their effectiveness as transparency advocates relies on their ability to remain independent and without interference from the public agencies and the public officials they work alongside.

In light of these developments, will leaders in Oregon make the Office of Public Records Advocate truly independent, enabling unfettered mediation of public records disputes, or will they choose secrecy and politicization of transparency?

That’s yet to be seen.

But we’ll be watching.

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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