

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)



Housing codes could help establish new level of livability



more than half of Oregon's homeless families (60.5 percent) are without shelter, either living on the street, in cars or in tents within that "scenic beauty" I

and fathers, sons and daughters. They are students, cooks, part-time employees, unemployed veterans and senior citizens faced with deciding between medica-

From the Editor's Desk
Ned Hickson

There are a lot of things we're proud of as Oregonians, such as the scenic beauty we are constantly surrounded by.

And our generally progressive thinking on important issues.

Yet, amid all the things about Oregon that make us proud, there's one thing I find it hard to admit about my beloved state. While homelessness has declined around the nation, Oregon continues to have the highest percentage of homeless families with children.

Between 2017 and 2018, the number of homeless families decreased in 41 states across America while, here in Oregon, we experienced a 2.5 percent increase — the fifth highest in the nation, right after California.

According to a report released last November by the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD),

mentioned earlier.

As much as we want to tell ourselves that most of the homeless are drug addicts, criminals or suffering from mental disorders, the fact is that more than half of the homeless living without shelter in Oregon — more than 7,000 — are either school-aged or displaced veterans.

Before we can truly address the issue of homelessness, we must be willing to understand that the majority of those who are living their lives without a home *aren't* those on the street whose faces we often avoid or don't recognize.

In truth, more often than not they are those whose faces we *do* recognize each day — but who never say a word about their homelessness.

They are mothers

tion, food or shelter.

By stereotyping the homeless as addicts or criminals, we insulate ourselves from the true reality of homelessness, and how close we all are from a life without shelter.

Nearly half of Americans live less than two paychecks away from the kind of financial crisis that could lead to homelessness.

That's not the kind of stereotype we want to think about, but one we must be willing to accept in order to affect that will, in turn, change the lives of so many of our homeless in Oregon.

While the bigger solution to solving homelessness in Oregon will require more than donations of food and clothing, our willingness to acknowledge the homeless in our community by offering

support is an important step toward achieving something else we can all be proud of as Oregonians.

Here in Florence, the city is taking steps to address a fundamentally important aspect of homelessness through housing code changes that will allow a broader definition of home building standards and regulations.

The final recommendations regarding those changes, such as auxiliary dwelling units (ADUs) and multi-use developments combining commercial and residential space, will be unveiled this Monday, Nov. 18, at Florence City Hall, beginning at 5:30 p.m., in a joint meeting between the city council and planning commission.

Packets are available online at the City of Florence website (www.ci.florence.or.us)

Recognizing the changing needs and financial struggles related to housing in our community is a discussion to which we can all contribute — and eventually establish a level of livability we can all be proud of.

LETTERS

NO EXPLANATION FOR HIGH HEALTH COSTS

After five years, I recently had my second cataract surgery so both eyes are working like a young man's. I am on Medicare and fortunate that I have supplemental insurance coverage.

I just received my bill for the procedure and was blown away by the costs of things outlined below:

- Pre-op, I was given two eyedrops and then a sedative. During surgery one must be awake to answer muted questions and to look at a flashing light display. Cost of what is called Pharmacy-General Classification was: \$1,131.
- For the 10-minute procedure, we have Operating Room

Services-General. I assume this included the hour spent in recovery.

Cost: \$2,539.

- Medical/Surgical Supplies and Devices: \$283.
- Pharmacy-Extension Of025x. I assume this was for eyedrops that are required after surgery.

Cost: \$96.

There is no real explanation of what these costs really entail. I am fortunate that I only had to pay \$327.

I wonder what individuals without supplemental insurance would have to pay?

And why so much?

—Win Jolley
Florence

BETTER PARKING FOR DISABLED VETERANS

Being new residents to Florence, my husband and I wanted to check out the Veteran's Day parade. Unfortunately, we could not do this.

My husband is a veteran and in a wheel chair. We were quite surprised to learn that there was practically no parking available in the Old Town area for the disabled. We were at the parade 30 minutes early, and the only parking available was in a dirt lot or up a hill.

I would think a parade that honors those who served would recognize the disabled and provide appropriate parking.

—Cindy Kiely
Florence

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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 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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