

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)

Why Congress should support community news sources

(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.)

During this coronavirus pandemic, access to accurate and trustworthy information in our communities is as critical to life under quarantine and as sought after as hand sanitizer and face masks.

Your local newspaper provides the news and information unique to your community. Where are testing sites and who's eligible? Which businesses are open? What is the local online unemployment benefit application process? What is the plan for local education? And much more.

But your access to local news and information is gravely threatened by the economic carnage COVID-19 has wrought.

While local newspapers continue to field reporters and bring news and advice from public health authorities in print and online — at the same cost — their revenues have all but disappeared as the businesses that were their most important advertisers have been reduced or even shuttered. That's why America's Newspapers and other organizations representing local news providers are asking Congress to take urgent action to ensure communities don't lose their vital sources of timely and trustworthy information.

First, we're asking that Congress expand and clarify the Payroll Protection Program to ensure it covers all local newspapers and news broadcasters.

While some of these outlets may be owned by larger organizations, they must survive on their own. It's only fair that they should be included in any expansion of the program.

These loans will keep the news-

GUEST VIEWPOINT By Dean Ridings America's Newspapers CEO

paper employees — your neighbors — on their payrolls and help get the news to you in print as well as online. We appreciate the bipartisan letter of April 19 from U.S. Senators Maria Cantwell (D-WA), John Kennedy (R-LA), Amy Klobuchar (D-MN) and John Boozman (R-AR) that requested waiving the Small Business Administration's (SBA) affiliation rule to allow local media outlets to access funding, pointing to the critical role these outlets play in keeping communities healthy and informed.

Second, we are asking that the Trump Administration direct current federal government advertising funds to local news and media outlets. These public service and informative ads could be similar to the ones running right now about the U.S. Census.

They could carry critical government information about data from the CDC, access to small business loans, medical resources for families and other important topics. We're asking for a commitment that would be spent in an equitable manner across all local news providers.

We also believe that there should

be an immediate relief package that is based on total newsroom employees. Some local news organizations won't survive without some type of immediate grant or infusion that is tied to the organization's employees who directly work in the newsroom.

This is not a demand for an industry bailout by local news providers. Instead, these measures recognize that local news publishers are on the information frontline of the coronavirus pandemic, providing a public service vital to keeping our communities safe, secure and sustained during this unprecedented public health crisis.

We encourage community members who wish to support their local news sources to contact the offices of their senators and representatives in the U.S. Congress (bottom right of this page) and tell them you support expanding the Payroll Protection Program to include your local news source and that the federal government should use your local newspapers or news broadcaster to convey important information through public service ads.

And finally, let them know that a grant based on newsroom employees is critical at this time. Visit www.usa.gov/elected-officials for their contact information.

Consider taking this action to ensure that your access to local information doesn't become another victim to the COVID-19 pandemic.

Thank you and may you and your family remain safe and informed during this difficult time.

LETTERS

KEEP COVID IN PERSPECTIVE

We are all concerned about the current COVID-19 Pandemic. Current knowledge about this virus leaves us with many questions about transmission and just how lethal this threat is.

These unknowns have created an atmosphere of panic, as there is nothing more terrifying than the unknown. Perhaps we should look about us for some reality.

For many years, we have faced an annual epidemic of Flu (H1N1). Putting health issues in perspective, the number of flu-related deaths in the United States for 2017-18 was about 80,000. Worldwide, the Flu kills on average 646,000 people each year.

The 2018-19 flu claimed "only" 61,200 American lives.

I clearly remember the 2017-18 epidemic; I was in ER with a heart attack that February. The ER doctor found the last hospital bed within 150 miles in Coos Bay — the rest were filled with flu patients.

Do you remember that epidemic?

Do you remember the name of anyone who died then?

COVID-19 has become a personalized media event with daily updates of tragic stories and predictions of further disasters.

I ask only that we settle down and confront the problem rationally.

I will however, continue to follow the mandatory guidelines.

—Keith R. Kraft
Florence

PROTECTING EACH OTHER IS THE LEAST WE CAN DO

So far, Florence has not experienced a positive Coronavirus infection (that we know about) but *all of us* must adhere to the required safety measures to keep us safe.

Social distancing and wearing a mask should be done by *everyone* in town, which includes store employees and shoppers.

I recently had to go Peace Harbor to confer with my primary doctor. On arrival, my temperature was taken before I sat down in the waiting room where every other two



chairs were turned towards the wall so no one could sit next to you.

Of course, I had a mask on, as did the check-in person, with my chair six feet away. And instead of signing my name on a pad, I gave an "OK."

Needless to say, the nurse and doctor also had masks on.

What made it a bit funny is that communication through the mask was a bit difficult, so the volume of the spoken word was raised.

I think it should be mandatory that everyone wears a mask when in contact with others. The virus is not going away in a month or so, and will likely be with us for months.

What we can do in the meantime is protect each other and our community.

—Win Jolley
Florence

THESE TIMES WERE

PROPHESIED 2,630 YEARS AGO
With virus fears hanging on and life moving slowly forward, I'm compelled to write. Knowing I will receive criticism as a fool beckons actually reassures me.

The pandemic and its inducement of states' restrictive control of Americans has been a trial run of the Antichrist's spirit being alive on Earth. This spirit persuades millions of people worldwide that worries, suspicions, problems and hatreds will dissolve with one leader and his religion within his global government.

It is said that seductive talk of social justice, peace and prosperity will captivate the majority of Earth's population, and that a sign of goodwill and loyalty will be needed; a mark.

For buying and selling, traveling, locating someone, and proof of vaccination, this mark will be vital. Along those lines, Bill Gates has recently been speaking of a microchip with those capabilities.

Those of us refusing the mark will be vilified, criminalized, ostracized; when we have been taken up, the world will celebrate.

Daniel, in his book, prophesied these events some 2,630 years ago.

Jesus foretold of these times in the books of Matthew and Revelation.

—John Griffin
Florence

THANKS FOR SUPPORT OF LOCAL VETS, SENIORS

We want to thank Fred Meyer, Safeway and Bi-Mart for all they have done — and continue to do — for Florence's veterans and seniors.

We think their employees are the real heroes. Showing up for work every day, keeping the shelves stocked with what is available, cleaning, sanitizing — and always with a smile.

We thank you all for your service to our community.

Stay safe and may God bless you all.

—Jim and Lillian Swant
Florence

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DEADLINES:

Wednesday Issue—General news, Monday noon; Budgets, four days prior to publication; Regular classified ads, Monday 1 p.m.; Display ads, Monday noon; Display classified ads, Friday 5 p.m.

Saturday Issue—General news, Thursday noon; Budgets, two days prior to publication; Regular classified ads, Thursday 1 p.m.; Display ads, Thursday noon; Display classified ads, Wednesday 5 p.m. Soundings, Tuesday 5 p.m.

NEWSPAPER SUBSCRIPTION RATES:

In Lane County — 1-year subscription, \$79; 6-month in-county, \$56; 10-week subscription, \$25; Out of Lane County — 1-year subscription, \$102; 6-month out-of-county, \$69; 10-week subscription, \$35; Out of State — 1-year subscription, \$134; E-Edition Online Only (Anywhere) — 1-year subscription, \$65.

Mail subscription includes E-Edition.
Website and E-Edition: TheSiuslawNews.com

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:

nhickson@thesiuslawnews.com

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
OREGON GOV. KATE BROWN 160 State Capitol 900 Court St. Salem, Ore. 97301-4047 Governor's Citizens' Rep. Message Line: 503-378-4582 www.oregon.gov/gov	STATE SEN. ARNIE ROBLAN (DIST. 5) 900 Court St. NE - S-417 Salem, OR 97301 503-986-1705 FAX: 503-986-1080 Email: Sen.ArnieRoblan@oregonlegislature.gov
U.S. SEN. RON WYDEN 221 Dirksen Senate Office Bldg Washington, DC 20510 202-224-5244 541-431-0229 www.wyden.senate.gov	STATE REP. CADDY MCKEOWN (DIST. 9) 900 Court St. NE Salem, OR 97301 503-986-1409 Email: rep.caddyckeown@oregonlegislature.gov
U.S. SEN. JEFF MERKLEY 313 Hart Senate Office Bldg Washington, DC 20510 202-224-3753 FAX: 202-228-3997 541-465-6750 www.merkley.senate.gov	WEST LANE COUNTY COMMISSIONER JAY BOZIEVICH 125 E. Eighth St. Eugene, OR 97401 541-682-4203 FAX: 541-682-4616 Email: Jay.Bozievich@co.lane.or.us