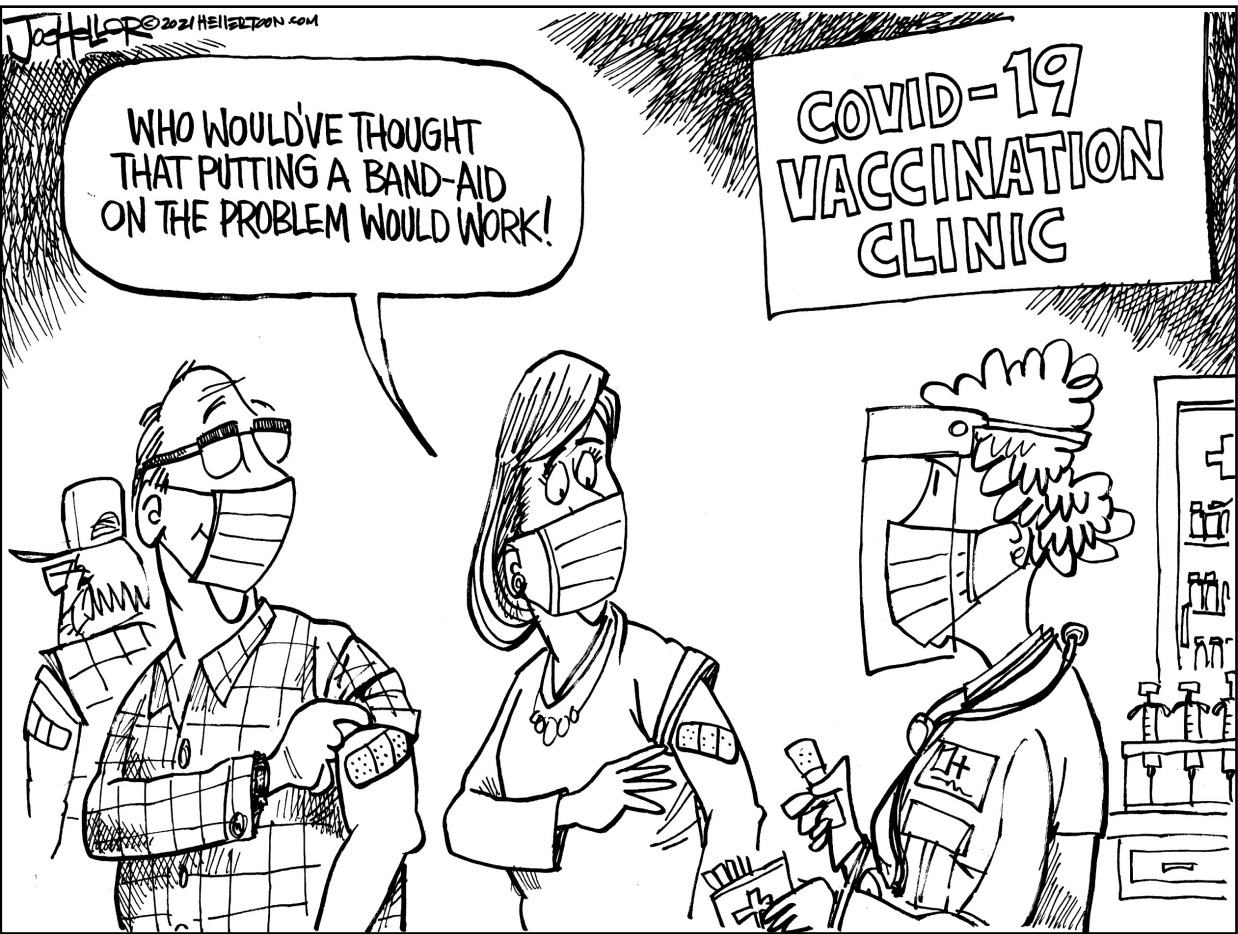


**Siuslaw News**  
 P.O. Box 10  
 Florence, OR 97439

# 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)



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## Siuslaw News

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Jenna Bartlett  
 Ned Hickson  
 Cathy Dietz  
 Ron Annis  
 For Advertising: ext. 318

Publisher, ext. 318  
 Editor, ext. 313  
 Office Supervisor, ext. 312  
 Production Supervisor  
 For Classifieds: ext. 320

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## Siuslaw News

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### LETTERS

**THANKFUL FOR VACCINATION CLINIC**

I received my first vaccination on March 3 at the Florence Events Center at 6 p.m. The event was efficiently organized and implemented by cheerful, helpful and focused volunteers.

Doctors, parking assistants and search and rescue personnel were all wonderful. The ambiance was confidence inspiring.

I am grateful and thankful for their participation.

—Tarno Greene  
 Florence

**LEARN MORE ABOUT HALLMARKS OF TYRANNY**

For any readers who wish to learn more about the hallmarks of tyranny, I highly recommend a book by Yale historian, Dr. Timothy Snyder: "On Tyranny — Twenty Lessons from the Twentieth Century."

It's short, concise and filled with recent historical examples as well as solid advice on preserving democracy.

The audio book, which I checked out online from the Siuslaw Library, was so engaging that I later bought the hard-copy book.

—Jill Thomas  
 Florence

**VACCINATION CLINIC WELL DONE**

Kudos to our local CERT team volunteers and those from Lane County Search and Rescue and Mountain Rescue who did a stellar job of organizing and conducting the first mass-vax clinic on March 3.

Having read accounts from friends in other areas, some of

whom waited in lines for well over an hour, we are very fortunate to have such an event here with friendly, competent people.

Well done, Florence!  
 —Jacquie Beveridge  
 Florence

**FOREFATHERS SAW INEQUITIES OF IMPOSED RELIGION**

In response to Marshall Denton's Guest Viewpoint ("The Danger of Totalitarianism Here In the U.S." Feb. 27), his assertion that the original intent of our founding fathers was "God over man over government," he is incorrect.

The First Amendment to our Constitution specifically states: "Congress shall make no law respecting an establishment of religion, or prohibiting the free expression 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."

The colonies that the founding fathers wanted to integrate into a cohesive nation were a mixed bag of proprietary colonies owned by a person or group, charter colonies with royal contracts and royal colonies that solely functioned to benefit the king.

Some were based solely on trade and profit or mixed in with religious freedom, and one (Georgia) was a penal colony that originally was chartered to outlaw slavery. Some colonies were liberal and some colonies saw religious freedom as their right to impose their religion on others.

When our Constitution was ratified and Washington became president, he was presented with

letters from various groups wanting Washington to confirm that religious freedom and equality actually existed.

In George Washington's Virginia, Catholics had not been allowed to pray in public. In some colonies, Jews were not allowed to vote or hold office.

The list goes on from intolerance to persecution of individuals who did not profess a religion and groups who professed other faiths.

President Washington replied to those letters. Among the replies from Washington was a letter to Moses Seifar, who would become lay leader of Jeshuat Israel in Newport, R.I.: "For happily the government of the U.S. ....gives to bigotry no sanction, to persecution no assistance ..."

Quoting George Washington: "Religious persuasions are always productive of more acrimony and irreconcilable hatreds than those which spring from other cause ..."

This is the basis for the separation of church and state as affirmed by our Constitution. This is the founding fathers' acknowledgment of the inequities imposed by state religions the colonists fled from.

Our elected officials swear allegiance to our Constitution that consists of the executive branch, the courts and our congress specifically set up to police each other from becoming dominant and overriding the rights of the people. We do not swear allegiance to the president and we cannot allow a faction of the dominant religion to impose their personal beliefs and interfere with the laws that govern all the people.

—Karen Mahoney  
 Florence

**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 un-sourced 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](mailto:nhickson@thesiuslawnews.com)

### WHERE TO WRITE

**PRESIDENT JOSEPH BIDEN**

The White House  
 1600 Pennsylvania Ave. NW  
 Washington, D.C. 20500  
 Comments: 202-456-1111  
 Switchboard: 202-456-1414  
 TTY/TDD: 202-456-6213  
[www.whitehouse.gov](http://www.whitehouse.gov)

**STATE SEN. DICK ANDERSON (DIST. 5)**

900 Court St. NE - S-417  
 Salem, OR 97301  
 503-986-1705  
 Email: [Sen.DickAnderson@oregonlegislature.gov](mailto:Sen.DickAnderson@oregonlegislature.gov)

**OREGON GOV. KATE BROWN**

160 State Capitol 900 Court St.  
 Salem, Ore. 97301-4047  
 Message Line:  
 503-378-4582  
[www.oregon.gov/gov](http://www.oregon.gov/gov)

**STATE REP. BOOMER WRIGHT (DIST. 9)**

900 Court St. NE  
 Salem, OR 97301  
 503-986-1409  
 Email: [Rep.BoomerWright@oregonlegislature.gov](mailto:Rep.BoomerWright@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](http://www.wyden.senate.gov)

**LANE COUNTY DIST. 1 COMMISSIONER JAY BOZIEVICH**

125 E. Eighth St.  
 Eugene, OR 97401  
 541-682-4203  
 Email: [Jay.Bozievich@co.lane.or.us](mailto:Jay.Bozievich@co.lane.or.us)

**U.S. SEN. JEFF MERKLEY**

313 Hart Senate Office Bldg  
 Washington, DC 20510  
 202-224-3753 | 541-465-6750  
[www.merkley.senate.gov](http://www.merkley.senate.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](http://www.defazio.house.gov)

**FLORENCE CITY COUNCIL & MAYOR JOE HENRY**

Florence City Hall, 250  
 Highway 101, Florence, 97439  
 541-997-3437  
[ci.florence.or.us](http://ci.florence.or.us)  
 Email comments to Florence City Recorder Kelli Weese at [kelli.weese@ci.florence.or.us](mailto:kelli.weese@ci.florence.or.us)

## Doing what is best for our students and families

(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.)

A year ago this week, Oregonians were watching the advance of the Coronavirus and trying to brace for disruptions that would follow. I don't think anyone thought it would be as disruptive or as long-lasting as it has proven to be.

After nearly a year of Distance Learning, Siuslaw Elementary has just completed two weeks of Hybrid Instruction. About three-quarters of our nearly 500 students are on-campus for partial days twice per week.

This has been a year of adjustments and flexibility for all. Schools have adjusted the number of standards we can instruct in shortened school days; students have adjusted

**GUEST VIEWPOINT**  
 By Mike Harklerode  
 Siuslaw Elementary Principals

the way they learn and complete assignments; families have adjusted their entire routines around work, childcare and schooling.

Most teachers, kids and families have created completely new plans multiple times in the last 12 months.

I cannot stress enough how proud I am of the Siuslaw School District

staff. School staff families have not been immune to the pressures shared by so many other families in the community.

This year has been marked by long hours, uncertainty and fears for health and safety. Through it all, there has been a deep commitment to being all we need to be for kids, parents, and the community during uncertain times.

As Siuslaw Middle and Siuslaw High School prepare to begin Hybrid Instruction, please know that all educators across the district still have the same professional commitment to do what we have done all year.

We will do what is best for kids.