

# 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 their Government for a redress of grievances.



### Letters to the Editor Policy

The Sentinel 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anonymous, libelous, argumentative, sarcastic or contain accusations that are unsourced or without documentation will not be published.

Letters containing poetry or from outside The Sentinel 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.

### Send letters to:

nhickson@cgsentinel.com or cmay@cgsentinel.com

## 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 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 Oregonians make the current law more compassionate. Another well-financed nonprofit organization that opposes my work through End Choices is Right to Life.

### GUEST VIEWPOINT By Bruce Yelle End Choices

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 suffering 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.

## Cottage Grove HS recognizes local veterans with annual luncheon

**(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.)**

Cottage Grove High School (CGHS) hosted its annual Veterans Day lunch on Friday to honor local veterans for their service to our country. Students and staff served lunch and dessert to the veterans while the CGHS Music Department performed music for everyone.

CGHS Counselor Vicki Evans, who has been helping to put the lunch on for the last 10 years, said that it is inspiring to the students and an honor to host the veterans every year.

"We have been able to honor our veterans in the community with a simple lunch but it is so meaningful to see them come together and all of their

years of service. It has been an inspiration to our students and we are just so honored to have them on our campus," said Evans.

Dylan Graves, a senior at CGHS, served lunch to the veterans said that

### GUEST VIEWPOINT By Garrett Bridgens Cottage Grove High School

speaking to and shaking the hand of a veteran helps him appreciate the sacrifice they made for the United States.

"It really helps give me a whole new outlook on life. These people gave up their life to be able to serve so that we are free," said Graves.

Jerry Brandsness, a Navy Veteran who served from 1959 to 1962, said that

what he enjoys most about the lunch each year is the camaraderie with his fellow veterans.

"To be able to spend time with these wonderful veterans who have been through a variety of events in their life from World War II right to the present, I feel honored to be here," said Brandsness. "Just being here with these (veterans) and hearing their stories, I think is more important than anything else on a day like this."

Toward the end of lunch the veterans were asked to share when they served and what branch they were a part of. Navy World War II Veteran Ward Gross, who served in the Pacific, shared a bracelet that was made from scraps of metal from a Japanese Zero war plane his battalion shot down.

He said he made the bracelet as a way to remember his mom and dad.

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