

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

Thanks, Cottage Grove!

After the “snowstorm of ‘19,” I determined that my wife and I were short on staples and decided to make an “emergency run” to Safeway. I cobbled together a makeshift sled and asked a couple neighbors if they were also running short of necessary supplies. During this trip, at least a half dozen people asked if I wanted a ride or if they could help! I was delighted by all these offers. And although I declined the offers, I thought that I would express my gratitude.

What a great little town (I’m a newcomer)! I should admit that my sled fell apart on my return trip once the cardboard box got soggy. One woman offered a plastic carrier, which would have done very well, itself, as a sled. I accepted it and used it to carry the groceries. In a car right behind her were three more nice ladies who took me, my dilapidated makeshift sled and my groceries home! Thank you, one and all! I hope you are representative of this wonderful town!

—Daniel Gilman
Cottage Grove

Use common sense when clearing streets

Why is it when people have their driveway cleared out enough so they can get to an appointment did the City shove another 3 1/2 feet of snow back into driveways? Many of us are seniors and some of the people who live around us are disabled. Our street was good enough for people to drive through, but we had to spend another day digging out frozen snow after we had

already cleared our driveways. There are a lot of people I talked with who had the same problem. If it’s not broke, don’t fix it. I just wonder if they did the same to their own driveways? Where is the common sense? I believe there is a lever to lift up the blade and put it down, so please use it. I feel better now that I’ve gotten that off my chest for myself and a lot of others. — Diane Zavich
Cottage Grove



Our future depends on a generation that is anything but silent

In a time when our teenagers are often labeled as addicted to the digital world and unwilling to engage beyond the confines of social media, I find it inspiring and hopeful to see the contrary as our students take it upon themselves to get involved in civic responsibility. At the same time, I find it disheartening to see so many who are willing to criticize students for doing so, with much of this criticism taking place on social media and spewed from the same fingertips of those who routinely bemoan how the “younger generation” is too busy texting and tweeting to do anything productive. Whether you support tougher gun legislation or see it as a threat to the Second Amendment; whether you believe it’s their First Amendment right as students to voice their opinion or merely see it as a political

ploy urged on by a liberal agenda: Discouraging our youth from exercising their civic duty fosters the kind of apathy and disengagement that led us to where we are in the first place. The common denominator among the majority

From the Managing Editor’s Desk

Ned Hickson

of Americans regardless of political affiliation, right or left, or racist or humanitarian, is a frustration with Congressional leaders and their apparent inability to govern beyond special interests and self-preservation. Since 1972, according to a study by the Bipartisan Policy Center, voter participation went from nearly 61 percent in 1968, to hovering around an average of 53 percent, including a low of just 49 percent in 1996 — the lowest since records began being kept in 1828. Without Americans willing to voice their opinions

on issues, and then vote on those issues as well as for those who they believe will best represent them, means we have no one but ourselves to blame for the current state of government — because saying nothing says it all: We are willing to let those elect-

ed to represent us operate unchecked. Back in 2008, my wife and I took our four children to a small, family-friendly political rally in our community. Our oldest was 12. As they made finger-printed signs and headed toward the sidewalk overlooking the highway, I was proud of them for participating in a fundamental right established centuries ago by our forefathers through the U.S. Constitution. I was glad to know that we were doing what we could, as parents, to raise our children to be aware of their

responsibility, as citizens, to engage in civic dialogue that ensures everyone has a voice in our democracy. I will never forget the looks on their faces as they stood there, excitedly waving their signs — and then watching that excitement fade as passers-by began yelling disparaging remarks and obscenities from their cars. These children, along with dozens of others, were 8 to 10 years away from voting. Yet the individuals passing by that day felt it was more important to squelch the enthusiasm of these young Americans than it was to foster the notion of being engaged in one of our country’s most important rights. As we begin the long and what expect to be an arduous approach to the 2020 elections, I hope we will remember, as Americans, that disparaging the next generation into silence would be a tragedy for our nation’s future.

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 unourced 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.

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Periodicals postage paid at Cottage Grove, Oregon.
Postmaster: Send address changes to P.O. Box 35, Cottage Grove, OR 97424.

Local Mail Service:

If you don’t receive your Cottage Grove Sentinel on the Wednesday of publication, please let us know.
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