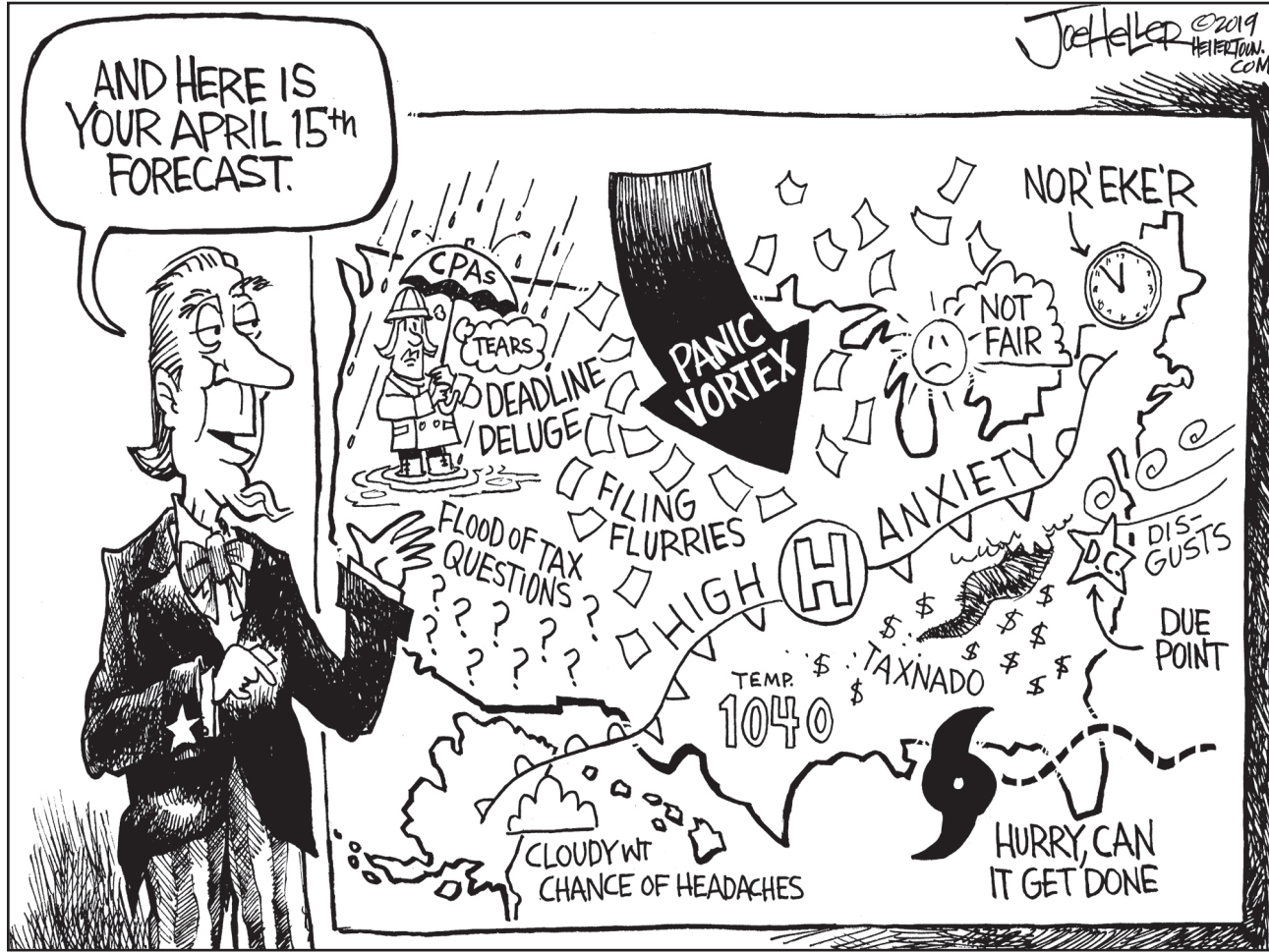


Cottage Grove Sentinel  
116 N. Sixth St.  
Cottage Grove, Ore. 97424

# 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)



## LETTERS

### THANKS TO OUR CITY FOR BRUSH SITE

A big thank you to the City of Cottage Grove for allowing us to dispose of our brush on its site.

Can you imagine how terrible the smoke would have been if all this debris had been burned in our yards?

Perhaps part of the trash problem could be solved if a few dumpsters and Buck toilets were available to the homeless.

Might save the city some clean up time.

—Pat Couturier  
Cottage Grove

### A POEM FOR CHILDREN OF ABUSE

In darkened bedrooms late at night  
He yells at her and then they fight  
I just lay there with no light  
And dream of days that were so bright

We are children so confused  
Our bodies battered, souls abused  
We reach for love and then get bruised

Yet in the end, we all lose  
It must not be, so many children just like me

I only wish they would talk with me

Hold my hand and walk with me  
Say the things I long to hear  
"We really love you and we want you here"

Why can't it be?  
We're children runnin' scared  
Just because no one cared  
We never tough, we never dared  
This love inside, we never shared

It must not be  
So many children, so many women, there's  
So many people, just like me.  
It must not be.

—Ron O'Keefe  
Cottage Grove

**Editor's Note:** As part of our month-long collaborative with community newspapers in Creswell, Florence and Newport on the subject of suicide, we have agreed to share Letters to the Editor submissions on that subject within each of our newspapers. While letters are generally only printed from within our readership areas, we each agreed that letters that result from this collaboration warrant sharing as part of encouraging conversation within our communities on this important subject.)

### SUICIDE SERIES CAN OPEN OUR COMMUNITIES TO TALKING

First, I want to thank the *Cottage Grove Sentinel*, *Siuslaw News*, *Creswell Chronicle* and *Newport News-Times* for taking the time to talk about a complex and hard topic: Suicide.

This is an important topic that should be talked about.

My personal touch with suicide happened in sixth grade when my older brother, Ben, who was in the eighth grade, choose to take his life. I wish that I would have known he was in so much pain. I

didn't understand the signs.

I still grieve everyday for his loss and wonder what he would have been like in high school; what kind of career he would have chosen. He'd have been a great dad and I think about the positive things he could have been.

But I also think about how his actions have shaped me and how I have become as a result of it.

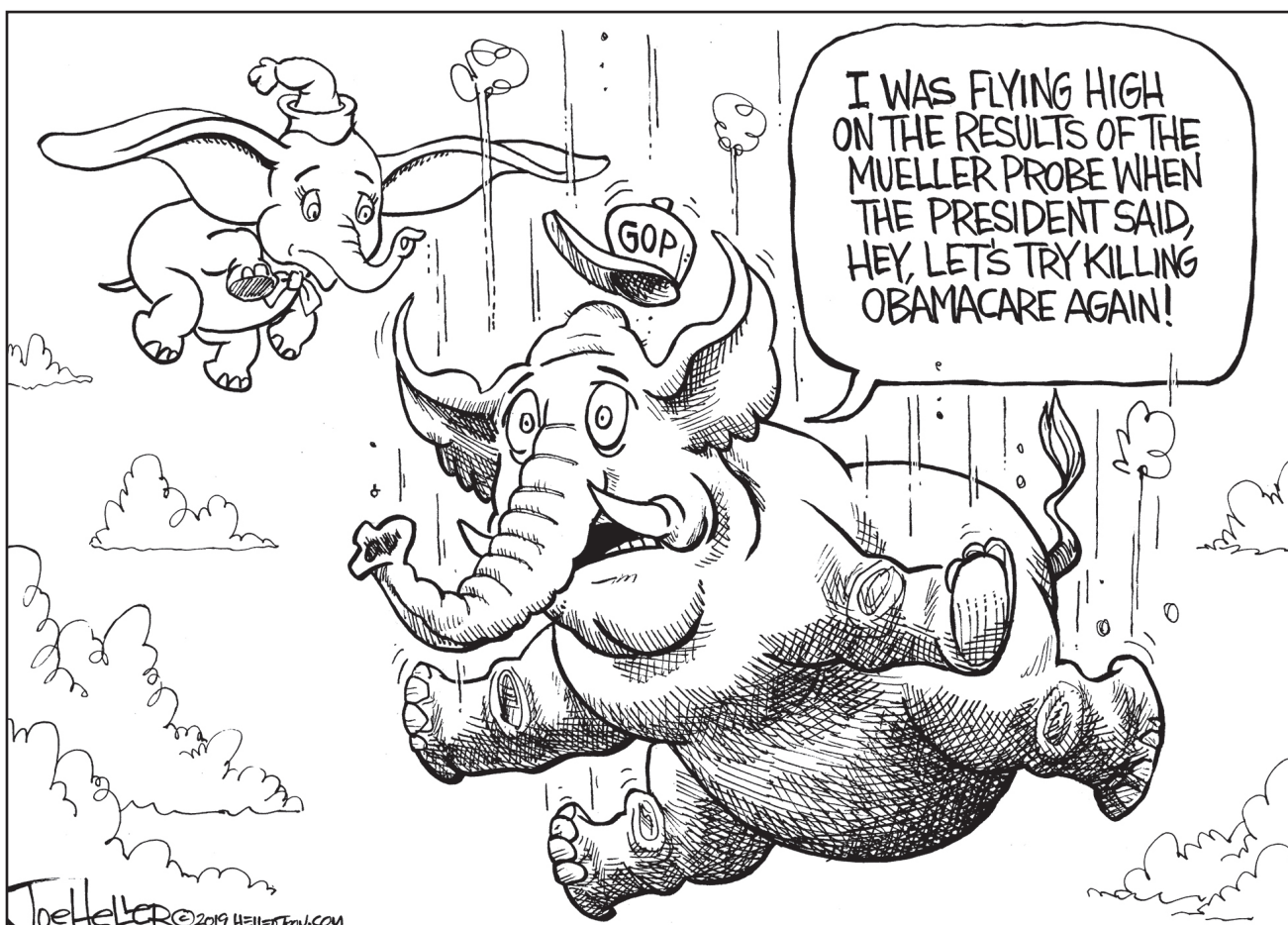
For those who experienced this suicide within your family, friends and community, you're not alone and our stories are unique. Honor that person and remember them. It is ok to grieve in different ways and stages. Do what works for you.

I want everyone to know they are loved, no matter what — even when we disagree. And if you are having a hard time, please talk to someone, make art, write — whatever it takes to express your feelings.

For those who shame people about this topic and say "You're going to hell" for those thoughts, please take another look at this topic and don't judge; you're not in their shoes.

Thank you for the opportunity to share and for opening up our communities to this discussion and in understanding that we are more connected than we think we are.

—Jo Beaudreau  
Florence, Ore.



### 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:  
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