

## 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)





It was 100 years ago this past Tuesday, Jan. 14, that Oregon ratified the 19th Amendment in 1920, joining 35 other states in ensuring that the right to vote could not be denied based on gender.

It's important to note that this came some eight years *after* Oregon had already begun permitting women to vote in state elections in 1912.

Ironically, this was the

## Women's voices crucial to defining our democracy

nearly 1-to-1 ratio. In fact, there are only nine states where males make up more than 50 percent of the population: Alaska, Colorado, Hawaii, Idaho, Montana, iway, who utilized her Portland-based suffragist newspaper *The New Northwest* to fuel the debate in favor of securing women the right to vote. In a not-so-subtle

## From the Editor's Desk Ned Hickson

Nevada, North Dakota, Utah and Wyoming. In all the rest, including here in Oregon, women represent the majority of individual voices and perspectives that make up our decisions as a state — and ultimately as a nation.

However, even in Oregon, which was among twist of irony, it was her brother, Harvey Scott, who was her biggest detractor, thundering his opposition in the pages of *The Oregonian*, where he was editor from 1866 to 1872.

Simply looking at the importance of women's perspectives on a personal level, there is no question that the wisdom and insight they offer each day as part of my own life has a profound impact that could never be duplicated by a men-only mentality. Ask any of the male reporters in my newsroom at the Siuslaw News in Florence, and they will openly admit that the cumulative IQ seems to drop considerably without the

influence of our features editor, Chantelle Meyer, around. On the homefront,

my wife Alicia, as well our daughters Elyse and Elizabeth, provide valuable perespective in family discussions and decisionmaking that assure that we don't devolve into an old episode of "King of the Hill."

I say all of this to illustrate how, on just an individual level, the value and importance of women's perspectives impacts my own life every single day — and why I can't imagine not having those influences and perspectives as part of our national discus sion. What an incredible loss it would have been if not for the determination of those like Abigail Scott Duniway to assure that we as a state — and eventually a nation benefit from the voices of women in the discussions that define our democracy.

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### **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

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result of a narrow approval of 52-percent of voters — all of them cast by men — to guarantee the right as part of Oregon's state constitution.

Today, it's hard to imagine our democracy without the crucial representation of women's voices in a nation where, according to the last census, women outnumbered men 161 million to 156.1 million — for a the first to provide that right, it took six ballot attempts — in 1884, 1900, 1906, 1908, 1910 and finally 1912 (more times than in any other state) — before women's voices became part of the discussion in state decisionmaking.

It was a campaign that began as early as 1870 as part of the Oregon suffrage movement led by Abigail Scott Dun-

# LETTERS

#### WATER BILL INCREASE A SHOCKER

It was a shock for us when we received our last month's water bill with a whopping \$34 increase.

At first, we thought it must be a mistake. Soon we discovered that all of our neighbors — mostly senior citizens — had also seen an increase (on average of \$32).

We understand that some water plant improvements are in order, but this huge increase is just unbelievable. Just for the sake of argument, our son's family living in Eugene pays only about \$75 a month for water service —much lower than our water bill of \$143 each month.

Judging from reaction on social media, there are a lot of unhappy Grovers.

Anytime there is a request for water rate increase by the Public Works Department, it appears to us that city councilors happily "rubber stamp" the increase without any opposition, suggestions to come with an alternative plan or less costly solution.

That's a shame.

While we are on the subject of city water, lots of folks lately noticed the recent issues of brown water coming out of their faucets.

It's no wonder when City Public Works neglected — by its own admission — the required annual water hydrants flushing.

From what I understand, they basically flushed the hydrants after three years instead of doing this preventative maintenance every year as required.

Seems to me that Public Works owe an explanation. The community members/rate payers deserve better.

—George & Susan Zajic Cottage Grove





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