

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)

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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anonymous, libelous, argumentative, sarcastic or contain accusations that are unsourced or without documentation will not be published.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@cg sentinel.com



Why Congress should support community news sources

(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.)

During this coronavirus pandemic, access to accurate and trustworthy information in our communities is as critical to life under quarantine and as sought-after as hand sanitizer and face masks.

Your local newspaper provides the news and information unique to your community. Where are testing sites and who's eligible? Which businesses are open? What is the local online unemployment benefit application process? What is the plan for local education? And much more.

But your access to local news and information is gravely threatened by the economic carnage COVID-19 has wrought.

While local newspapers continue to field reporters and bring news and advice from public health authorities in print and online — at the same cost — their revenues have all but disappeared as the businesses that were their most important advertisers have been reduced or even shuttered. That's why America's Newspapers and other organizations representing local news providers are asking Congress to take urgent action to ensure communities don't lose their vital sources of timely and trustworthy information.

First, we're asking that Congress expand and clarify the Payroll Protection Program to ensure it covers all local newspapers and news broadcasters.

While some of these outlets may be owned by larger organizations, they must survive on their own. It's only fair that they should be included in any expansion of the program. These loans will keep the news-

GUEST VIEWPOINT By Dean Ridings America's Newspapers CEO

paper employees — your neighbors — on their payrolls and help get the news to you in print as well as online. We appreciate the bipartisan letter of April 19 from U.S. Senators Maria Cantwell (D-WA), John Kennedy (R-LA), Amy Klobuchar (D-MN) and John Boozman (R-AR) that requested waiving the Small Business Administration's (SBA) affiliation rule to allow local media outlets to access funding, pointing to the critical role these outlets play in keeping communities healthy and informed.

Second, we are asking that the Trump Administration direct current federal government advertising funds to local news and media outlets. These public service and informative ads could be similar to the ones running right now about the U.S. Census.

They could carry critical government information about data from the CDC, access to small business loans, medical resources for families and other important topics. We're asking for a commitment that would be spent in an equitable manner across all local news providers.

We also believe that there should

be an immediate relief package that is based on total newsroom employees. Some local news organizations won't survive without some type of immediate grant or infusion that is tied to the organization's employees who directly work in the newsroom.

This is not a demand for an industry bailout by local news providers. Instead, these measures recognize that local news publishers are on the information frontline of the coronavirus pandemic, providing a public service vital to keeping our communities safe, secure and sustained during this unprecedented public health crisis.

We encourage community members who wish to support their local news sources to contact the offices of their senators and representatives in the U.S. Congress (bottom right of this page) and tell them you support expanding the Payroll Protection Program to include your local news source and that the federal government should use your local newspapers or news broadcaster to convey important information through public service ads.

And finally, let them know that a grant based on newsroom employees is critical at this time. Visit www.usa.gov/elected-officials for their contact information.

Consider taking this action to ensure that your access to local information doesn't become another victim to the COVID-19 pandemic.

Thank you and may you and your family remain safe and informed during this difficult time.

Invest now in LCC for long-term economic recovery

(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.)

Rebuilding our local economy and investing now is what is needed for the long-term economic recovery as students return to LCC to retool, retrain and re-enter the workforce

Lane Community College is the community's college.

From Nursing to Medical Office Assistance to Public Safety, LCC is the starting point for many of our local healthcare workers and emergency first responders. We stand united with all Lane County residents in thanking our healthcare heroes and essential medical personnel working to keep our community healthy and safe.

The LCC Board of Education understands the fear and economic uncertainty we face as a community, together, and we have

great empathy for community members who have been recently furloughed or laid off from work.

We too have had to lay off workers as the landscape shifted to on-

GUEST VIEWPOINT By Mike Eyster Board Chair, LCC Matt Keating Board Vice Chair, LCC

line and distance learning.

As the premiere education partner squarely focused on training the workforce that will rebuild the local economy after this planetary pandemic, LCC is the foundation for local career and technical education (CTE) programs, for two-year transfer education, and for workers in need of retooling.

Lane County residents who have lost employment due to this pandemic may need re-training. Local

employers — not just healthcare employers but many others as well — will need qualified applicants as businesses restart, reopen and re-establish themselves.

But LCC needs vital investments to continue to train and educate local community members returning to sharpen their skills. As we prepare for a potential influx of recently laid off students of all ages — of all walks of life — we ask for voters' support.

Now, more than ever, investments in LCC's workforce development programs, public safety, technology, and healthcare facilities are desperately needed. With voters' help, LCC will be there for those who are seeking to return to the workforce; with voters' help LCC will be a support network for our struggling small businesses.

We urge a "yes" vote on Measure 20-306, "yes" for the LCC Bond and the future workforce of Lane County.

HOW TO CONTACT YOUR REPS

Oregon state representatives

• **Sen. Floyd Prozanski**
 District 4 State Senator
 PO Box 11511
 Eugene, Ore. 97440
 Phone: 541-342-2447
 Email: sen.floydprozanski@state.or.us

• **Rep. Cedric Hayden**
 Republican District 7 State Representative
 900 Court St. NE
 Salem, Ore. 97301
 Phone: 503-986-1407
 Website: www.leg.state.or.us/hayden
 Email: rep.cedrichayden@state.or.us

Oregon federal representatives

• **Rep. Peter DeFazio**
 (House of Representatives)
 405 East 8th Ave.
 #2030
 Eugene, Ore. 97401
 Email: defazio.house.gov/contact/email-peter
 Phone: 541-465-6732

• **Sen. Ron Wyden**
 405 East 8th Ave., Suite 2020
 Eugene, Ore. 97401
 Email: wyden.senate.gov
 Phone: (541) 431-0229

• **Sen. Jeff Merkley**
 Email: merkley.senate.gov
 Phone: 541-465-6750

Cottage Grove Sentinel

541-942-3325

Administration

Jenna Bartlett, Group Publisher

Gary Manly, General Manager... Ext. 1207
gmanly@cg sentinel.com

Gerald Santana, Multi-Media Sales Consultant... Ext. 1216
gsantana@cg sentinel.com
 Veronica Brinkley, Multi-Media Sales Consultant... Ext. 1205
vbrinkley@cg sentinel.com
 Carla Skeel, Inside Multi-Media Sales Consultant... Ext. 1203
csommers@cg sentinel.com

Editorial

Ned Hickson, Managing Editor... 541-902-3520
nhickson@cg sentinel.com
 Damien Sherwood, Lead Reporter... Ext. 1212
dsherwood@cg sentinel.com
 Nick Snyder, Sports/Community News Reporter... Ext. 1204
nsnyder@cg sentinel.com

Customer Service

Meg Fringer, Office Manager, Legals, Classifieds... Ext. 1200
mfringer@cg sentinel.com

Production

Ron Annis, Production Supervisor... Ext.1215
graphics@cg sentinel.com

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