

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

EDITORIAL VIOLATES ITS OWN MAXIM

Our esteemed editor, Ned Hickson, recently wrote a fine article calling for Americans to avoid oppositional personality disorder where people reflexively oppose an idea just because it comes from someone of an opposing party.

Good idea, Mr. Hickson.

But our editor violated his own maxim when he said that Betsy DeVos was confirmed to head the U.S. Dept of Education "without any real qualifications thanks to divisiveness and the mindset of settling old scores."

Just for the record, Ms DeVos grew up in family wealth, taking her degree in business economics to campaign for Pres. Gerald Ford. She chaired county and state Republican parties in Michigan, and served on the board of Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts for six years — all while working to allow parents to choose their own children's schools, fostering school choice and charter schools.

She founded All Children Matter to promote charter schools. Instead of a country-club life, she gave real hope and choice to some of the poorest neighborhoods with the worst schools in America, seeding the advances with her own money and her personal wit.

When President Trump made the promise to make America's schools great again, he chose a proven fighter for families. She is

serving tirelessly, recently employing the 4,000 staffers at Dept. of Education, "...In everything you do, please put students first — always."

Mr. Hickson, can we agree with that?

—Larry Bottemiller
 Cottage Grove

I WILL TAKE THE VACCINE

The last few weeks I have been asked several times if I were going to take a vaccination for COVID.

My answer is yes.

The reasoning behind that is more complex. Throughout the years, I have lived through several epidemics including emergency inoculations in 1947 for smallpox.

In the 5th and 6th grades, the polio virus was raging. In those days, music and gym were sometimes taught as a single class called social dancing — the old fashioned dances. Two of my 5th and 6th grade dance partners came down with polio. Both survived quite well.

The virus did affect several family members.

So when the polio vaccine was developed in the early 1960s, there was no question that I would protect my family and my neighbors against the polio virus. When I say "protect my neighbors" — if my family is protected, they will not transmit it to friends and neighbors.

Ninety percent of our government leaders have termed the virus as a war. The war has already dis-

rupted and taken many, many lives.

The virus shows no signs of letting up.

So, we who think about taking or not taking the vaccine are the troops with a very good chance of defeating the enemy, the COVID virus.

In the last 100 years, this country has been involved in many wars and conflicts. This war is worldwide, and the world has a common enemy with this virus. The decision of taking the vaccine, or not, is not an issue of why or where it started.

We must deal with the information that we have today, and not become involved in conspiracy theories — and look only to the betterment and security of our families and nations.

—Donald Williams
 Cottage Grove

SORE LOSER IS NO SURPRISE

Well, when you have defeated and fired a guy who spends his days whining about how unfairly he's being treated; and who seems compelled to lie and then continues to lie even though he knows that you know he is lying; and who often behaves like he has the emotional maturity of a 4th grade schoolyard bully — nobody should be surprised when he behaves just like a sore loser.

—Roger C. Kahane
 Cottae Grove

Data shows fitness facilities can safely open

(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.)

Those of us in the health and fitness industry have spent our entire lives focused on science, data and proven methods to improve the overall wellness of our clients. Everything we do is based on facts and data.

So, it is frustrating to see that the arbitrary decision by the governor to close all health and fitness facilities is contrary to all existing data.

In the current framework for re-opening Oregon, gyms and indoor fitness facilities remain closed in 29 counties — yet not a single COVID outbreak has been reported at a gym or fitness facility. In fact, the University of Oregon's Oregon Consulting Group recently released the results of a study that found no correlation between fitness facilities and positive COVID-19 cases, based on a case study in Colorado.

Similarly, a recent contact tracing study in New York found that of 46,000 COVID cases, only 0.06 percent could be traced back to a gym. And at our two Emerald Fitness Club facilities, we have had nearly 40,000 check-ins since reopening in

June and have not had a single case of COVID traced back to either of our facilities.

Gyms and fitness facilities have taken the necessary precautions to ensure the safety of our members when they visit.

GUEST VIEWPOINT By Shane & Sara May Emerald Fitness Club Creswell

We have increased ventilation, required all guests to wear masks, ensured social distancing and implemented strict sanitization requirements. We know we can operate safely, and the proof is in the data.

We also know that we are just beginning to see the long-term impacts that denying access to fitness facilities is having on Oregonians. Our members use our fitness facilities for a variety of reasons.

We know young parents who exercise to maintain their mental health, elderly members who use our machines to maintain their mobility and veterans who manage their PTSD with regular exercise.

These are vital health needs that cannot go unaddressed for extended periods of time. We must allow

Oregonians to return to their fitness routines in order to maintain their long-term health and wellness.

We recognize the need to implement precautions to slow the spread of the virus — and those precautions are working. What we cannot fail to recognize is the long-term impact that these state-mandated closures will have on the social, emotional and physical wellbeing of our communities.

We know this has been a challenging year for all of us and we know that we have all found different ways to cope. Our goal is the same as it always has been: To help our members achieve the health and wellness goals they need to maintain a healthy lifestyle.

We will continue to advocate for our members until they are allowed to access the services they need to maintain their physical and emotional health.

The data has not only shown that fitness facilities can operate safely, it has also shown the devastating, lasting impact that restricting access to these services and facilities can have.

Please join us in asking Governor Brown to stop prohibiting access to the vital wellness services that Oregonians need to maintain their long-term health.

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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.

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