

Cottage Grove Sentinel

1498 E. Main St., STE 104
 Cottage Grove, Ore. 97424

Opinion

The First Amendment
 Congress shall make no law respect-
 ing 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 Govern-
 ment 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)

Democrats in Oregon are in charge and need to govern to stop the string of failures

(Editor’s Note: Viewpoint sub-
 missions on this and other topics are
 always welcome as part of our goal to
 encourage community discussion and
 exchange of perspectives.)

At the Capitol, Portland City
 Hall and elsewhere, progressives
 are jeopardizing their ability
 to advance Oregon causes.

It used to be that progres-
 sives were criticized for try-
 ing to do too much or move
 too fast. Now, the criticisms I
 hear are all about not getting things
 done or responding too slowly to
 the demands of the moment.

I’m not thinking of the Biden
 administration, still in its first year,
 but of the challenges that progres-
 sive Democrats in control of the
 Oregon Legislature, the governor’s
 office and our largest city have cre-
 ated for themselves over the past
 several years.

No matter who’s is in charge of
 government at any level, missteps
 make headlines, while corrections
 go largely unnoticed. But what
 we’re seeing now goes deeper than
 headlines. Failures have multiplied,
 with little acknowledgement from
 those in charge that fixes are over-
 due.

Some of these failures affect the
 basic responsibilities of govern-
 ment, from the routine (like keep-
 ing our streets safe) to the urgent
 (like getting relief checks out on
 time). Others are more about mov-
 ing an agenda. Turning a “To Do”
 list into a “Done” list is the key to
 advancing progressive change.

But, at the state level, a new fam-
 ily leave program enacted in 2019
 is struggling to get off the ground
 by late 2023 – an extended gesta-
 tion period that The Oregonian
 calculates will cost young families
 close to half a billion dollars in the
 interim.

News of this delay followed last
 year’s long-running failure to deliv-
 er unemployment benefits to those
 who lost their jobs at the onset of

the pandemic and more recent
 problems with landlord and renter
 relief. Help delayed hurts not only
 those who wait in frustration for
 what they’ve been promised but
 everyone on the front lines of pub-
 lic service, whose reputations suf-
 fer when their managers dither and

GUEST VIEWPOINT
 By Tim Nesbitt
 Oregon Capital Chronicle

fail to deliver.

Note to the Legislature after this
 week’s special session: You’re get-
 ting kudos for passing more relief
 budgets. Please make sure that the
 money you approved is delivered
 quickly and spent well. Audits will
 help, but they’ll tell you what went
 wrong in the past. Someone needs
 to make sure you’re getting it right
 this time.

Then, there’s Portland, where
 examples range from the trou-
 bling to the tragic. A year-old voter
 mandate to establish a new police
 oversight board is being shuffled
 through a maze of committees.
 Homelessness worsens while the
 city, county and Metro struggle to
 deploy one of the richest per capita
 budgets in the country for tackling
 that problem.

We can’t blame hyper-partisan-
 ship for these failures. The state
 programs and goals I cited above
 were supported by Democrats and
 Republicans alike. And Portland
 has become a nominal one-party
 city, although it has its own set of
 challenges managing 50 shades of
 blue.

Even more concerning is that
 when problems arise, those in
 charge haven’t handled them well.
 The governor’s office responded
 only belatedly to the delay of the
 family leave program – with plans
 for a monthly oversight commit-
 tee. On the same issue, a legislative
 leader didn’t so much as pass the
 buck as toss it aside: “We pass the

laws and then we turn it over to the
 agencies to implement.” But there
 was no mention of the governor’s
 responsibility for getting the agen-
 cies to do their job.

And there was this response
 from Portland’s mayor, when asked
 to explain the year-long delay in
 standing up the new police
 oversight board: “We only
 have one chance to do this
 right.” No, you’ll have many
 chances to do it and redo it
 as needed, but you have to
 start somewhere.

Whatever the causes of the fail-
 ures and delays, the effects are pre-
 dictable.

One is a diminishing confidence
 in progressive agendas. If all we
 hear about are dollar amounts,
 whether the billions in pandem-
 ic relief secured last year or the
 millions approved for renters and
 landlords in this week’s special
 session, voters will become in-
 creasingly cynical if they don’t see
 timely results in their own lives and
 communities.

Another is the outsourcing of
 sensible politics to privately-or-
 ganized groups, like People for
 Portland. Their advocacy, although
 criticized as the product of a “dark
 money” cabal, is focused on doing
 things that most Portlanders want
 done.

Still another effect will play out
 in next year’s gubernatorial elec-
 tion. I can’t imagine that any of the
 candidates will campaign on the
 competence of the current admin-
 istration, even in the Democratic
 primary.

Among the Democrats, this
 could be a defining issue. We won’t
 see much difference in their policy
 agendas. But we should be watch-
 ing for signs of who is willing to
 acknowledge past failures and can
 offer plausible plans for getting
 things done.

In the end, progressives will only
 do better by governing better.
 oregoncapitalchronicle.com

work, resulting in the death of
 the patients. Why? Because in-
 surance companies pay more for
 certain treatments. It’s a business.

The powers that be want us
 divided. They want you to be-
 lieve that those who oppose their
 agenda fit into a particular box:
 gun-toting, right wing, religious
 patriots. And yet, I fit into none
 of those.

People from all walks are stand-
 ing up because they are bearing
 witness to the atrocities of not
 only people losing their jobs be-
 cause they don’t want the injec-
 tion, but many have friends or
 family members who have died
 from this shot.

Demonstrators don’t just be-
 lieve all of this is “unfair” as S.H
 states or the real motive is to “sow
 distrust in vaccines.” Their eyes
 are open to the truth, and it hor-
 rifies them.

And now, the children are tar-
 geted. And children are dying
 from this injection. So, in re-
 sponse to Carmen Dowell’s let-
 ter from Nov. 18 requesting pro-
 testers to put down their posters
 “before it escalates,” I say this: the
 question is not why haven’t they
 put down their signs, but why hav-
 en’t you picked up yours?

—Johanna Zee
 Cottage Grove

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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