

# Opinion

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## GUEST EDITORIAL

# Voters should decide on death penalty

Editorial from *The (Bend) Bulletin*:

When then-Gov. John Kitzhaber declared a moratorium on use of the death penalty in November 2011, he did not simply commute the sentences of everyone on death row. His reasoning is something Oregon lawmakers should pay close attention to in the months ahead.

Kitzhaber declined to commute sentences, he said at the time, because “the policy of this state on capital punishment is not mine alone to decide. It is a matter for all Oregonians to decide.”

State Sen. Floyd Prozanski, D-Eugene, and Rep. Mitch Greenlick, D-Portland, apparently have missed the message. They’re discussing the possibility of rewriting the state’s aggravated murder law so that it applies only to those who are convicted of domestic or international terrorism. Everything else would become a degree of murder not eligible for the death penalty.

The change would effectively nullify Article I, Sect. 40 of the Oregon Bill of Rights, which allows the death penalty for aggravated murder. The constitutional amendment was adopted by voters by a nearly 600,000 vote margin in 1984.

Both Greenlick and Prozanski were in the Legislature when Kitzhaber declared his moratorium. They were there when Gov. Kate Brown extended it. While Greenlick has tried at least twice to refer a repeal of the amendment to voters, the effort has gone nowhere.

He and Prozanski should continue that effort, not attempt the end-run around voters that changing the aggravated murder statute would be. That scheme ignores Kitzhaber’s tacit acknowledgment that because voters added the death penalty to the Constitution, those same voters should be allowed to decide if it’s time to take it away.

## Letters to the editor

- We welcome letters on any issue of public interest. Customer complaints about specific businesses will not be printed.
- The Baker City Herald will not knowingly print false or misleading claims. However, we cannot verify the accuracy of all statements in letters to the editor.
- Letters are limited to 350 words; longer letters will be edited for length. Writers are limited to one letter every 15 days.
- The writer must sign the letter and include an address and phone number (for verification only). Letters that do not include this information cannot be published.
- Letters will be edited for brevity, grammar, taste and legal reasons.

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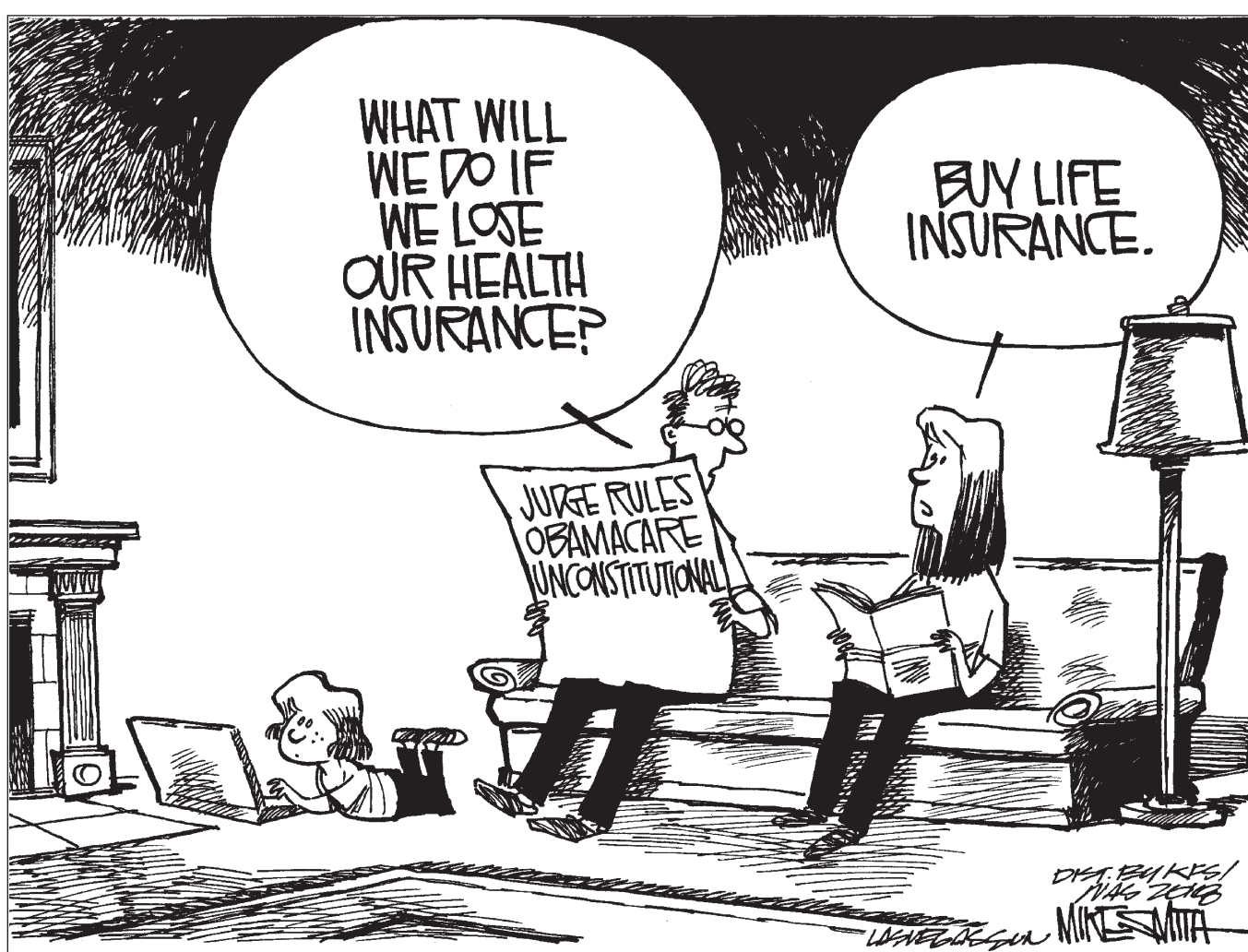
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# Why the NRA remains valuable

Please consider joining the NRA. While misunderstood in today’s climate, the NRA was formed after the Civil War to help protect the freed slaves in the southern states from violence. It has helped raise awareness of safe gun handling and skill levels for shooters, new and experienced, across the nation ever since. In both world wars Americans have proven their skill as riflemen. Our rural families relied on their skills to protect their stock and crops and to bring home meat for the pot. More than any other nation, our skill with firearms was an integral part of our national make up.

Violence is an aspect of the human condition, primarily the product of a small of segment of any society. Reasonable folks recognize the dangers created by those persons and refuse to allow their loved ones to be victimized. Thus the need for personal defense — enshrined in the Second Amendment as a God-given right. Also inherent in the “right to bear arms” is the need of the people to defend against a tyrannical government.

Consider the times at the writing of the Bill of Rights. America was becoming



R.G. RIENKS

a free nation, extricating itself from the dominion of the British king, the same king who enslaved the people of Wales, Ireland and Scotland. Further, consider the extent of the British Empire. The expression, “The sun never sets on the British Empire” was based on the fact of their globe-spanning hold over other countries.

We have this dichotomy: people wanting peace and freedom and others who will use any means to dominate and control. A safe, peaceful society is maintained by the understanding that the force of arms is available — Peace Through Strength. Some bemoan the concept but we all know that is the one deterrent. During the Cold War we had MAD — Mutually Assured Destruction, as our balance. Russia and the U.S. had enough nukes to destroy each other and most of humanity. That balance of power served to keep the world safe. No one

wanted to strike the first blow as retaliation was assured.

On a personal level, the ability to defend is important, the right to keep and bear arms is essential, the complete awareness of how to respond to a threat is most essential. Major metros have a diverse character. This means they house criminals of all stripes, scuttling around the fringes while most people are just going about their peaceful business. If an event occurs it can develop in seconds. A knowledgeable person, well-practiced and carrying legally, has often been all there is available to prevent a disaster. We are a free people but our right to freedom from criminality is infringed when we can not reasonably defend our families, our lives and our property.

The NRA actually stands in the forefront by protecting our Constitutionally acknowledged rights as individuals. Please consider joining us as we move forward, facing a troubling future in our country.

*R.G. Rienks is a Baker City resident.*

## Your views

### Troubled by two stops by Baker City Police

Remember when policemen were here to help and protect the people? Nowadays it seems like a case of just enforcing all the laws.

About a year ago someone knocked at our door. I opened the door and a young couple were selling vacuum cleaners. I said we have a vacuum but come in, the boss just made cinnamon rolls and coffee and we can lie to each other while we have a roll. The lady went next door and the man told us that he would vacuum the whole apartment and also shampoo one room as they were paid for the demo

regardless of sale. He finished a nice job a while later and we had more coffee while waiting for his partner. He said that sales were slow but they had an odd experience. As they were walking on the sidewalk, a city police car followed them and asked what they were doing. After questions answered they went on. I was a little shocked but brushed it off to save a stroke.

A couple of weeks later I was reading the Herald and there was a note to the editor from Stanford Lee of Corvallis who had spent a few days in Baker searching for old family history. Stanford is a grandson of J. Roscoe Lee and Myrtle Lee of Baker.

J. Roscoe was a prominent businessman and Myrtle was a school teacher here for years. Stanford was followed, stopped and questioned by the city police while walking to a motel. I was amazed that this happened twice. What the devil is going on here in the big city? I have seen a lot of strange things in Baker over my 86 years but treating people like this is gestapo horse manure. Here I have been thinking that this is still the USA, a free country. Maybe this is the extra protection we pay for on our water bill every month.

**Grover Mann**  
Baker City

## GUEST EDITORIAL

Editorial from *The Seattle Times*:

Paul Allen continues to give gifts benefiting Seattle and the rest of the world.

This month, two months after the Microsoft co-founder’s death from cancer, the Allen Institute for Immunology was launched in Seattle’s South Lake Union neighborhood. This expands what’s already a strong cluster of biomedical research expertise in Seattle.

The institute’s mission is to increase understanding of how healthy immune systems work and of system failures that enable disease to occur. Like Allen’s institutes for brain and cell science, it will produce a knowledge base that will be shared with researchers, helping them diagnose and develop treatments for immune-related diseases.

The Allen Institute for Immunology will work in partnership with the Fred Hutchinson Cancer Research Center, Benaroya Research Institute at Virginia Mason and the universities of Pennsylvania, Colorado and California San Diego. They’ll draw on medical infor-

mation provided by research subjects, including healthy ones and people suffering from cancer, rheumatoid arthritis and inflammatory bowel disease.

The field is poised for such an undertaking, according to Leroy Hood, a pioneer in genomics and systems biology.

“I think it’s exactly the right time,” said Hood, who was lured to Seattle by Allen’s friend and Microsoft co-founder, Bill Gates, in the early 1990s.

Allen was working to launch this institute before he died of complications from non-Hodgkin lymphoma at age 65. He provided \$125 million for the institute’s launch and first five years of operation. It will include 60 to 70 workers at the Allen Institute building along Mercer Street in Seattle.

That’s likely just the beginning. “Paul always said the institute is going to be around for a long, long time, so there will be lots of interesting things to come,” said Allan Jones, president and chief executive officer of the Allen Institute.

Jones noted that the first Allen research institute, for brain science, started 15 years ago with \$100 million. That’s grown to more than \$600 million since, and the overall institute now has multiple specialty divisions.

Over the last two years Allen also broadened the reach of the institute, establishing “discovery centers” at Stanford University, Tufts University, Harvard Medical School and UW Medicine. He also created the Paul G. Allen Frontiers Group, which funds pioneering bioscience researchers elsewhere in the world.

“The big investments, where we build these foundational tools, we share them with everybody, that’s all Seattle based and goes out to the world,” Jones explained. “And then we have the frontiers group, which funds out in the world, to bring ideas back.”

Put another way, Seattle benefits as Allen’s intentions continue to fund research that benefits mankind. What a wonderful legacy.