

OUR VIEW

# Money is nice, but integrity has no price

Everybody loves getting money in the mail, right? Well, sure. Except sometimes the money comes with strings attached. And that can create problems.

The Blue Mountain Eagle recently received a letter complimenting us on some of our government watchdog coverage and urging us to investigate some goings-on at a certain local government body. So far, so good. We are, we must admit, susceptible to flattery, and we always appreciate a good story tip. What's more, this tip came with some solid, verifiable documentation.

It also came with a tidy sum, in cash, to help defray the costs of our investigative journalism.

And therein lies the problem.

Over the years, American newspapers have carved out a vital niche in our democracy as independent watchdogs of government conduct. The key word there is "independent." Our effectiveness as watchdogs depends on our integrity, and that integrity will quickly be called into question if we are perceived to be picking and choosing the targets of our investigations for financial reasons.

Don't get us wrong. Newspapers these days face significant financial challenges, and an increasing number of news organizations are turning to new business models that include charitable donations. But we must be extremely careful to make sure those donations come with no expectation that we will cover stories in a certain way or cover some stories and not others.

As journalists, we are called to report the news without fear or favor – fairly, accurately and impartially. One of the pillars of the Society of Professional Journalists' code of ethics, which we strive to follow at all times, is to act independently. Among other things, that means we can't accept gifts, favors, fees or special treatment, because to do so could compromise our impartiality and damage our credibility. We can't afford to let that happen — no matter how much we might need the cash.

So, to the generous soul who sent us the money, thank you very much, but we can't accept it. You did not sign your name or put a return address on the envelope, but we're guessing you still have a copy of your letter on your computer. We'd like to ask you to bring a copy of your letter down to our office so we can confirm your identity and return your well-meant donation. And then we can have a face-to-face discussion about the concerns that prompted you to write us, and how best to address them.



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COMMENTARY

## Prosecutors back Measure 114

As law enforcement professionals, we know too well the consequences of devastating and rampant gun violence, and that's why we're speaking out in favor of Measure 114.

We have seen the carnage again and again throughout our careers. Senseless murders. Tragic suicides and unnecessary, preventable deaths. Lives destroyed by people who should never have had access to firearms in the first place. Mass shootings are made exponentially more deadly by the easy availability of military-grade, large-capacity magazines.

This November, Oregon voters can pass Measure 114 to make our communities safer. It's simple and effective. It will save lives. Each component of Measure 114 addresses a different part of the problems we have seen in our work. Researchers at Johns Hopkins University estimate that a similar permit-to-purchase law passed in Connecticut reduced firearm homicide rates by 28% and firearm suicide rates by 33% over a 22-year period.

Currently, a person may pur-



Brown Ellis Hummel

chase a gun if the state does not finish a background check within three days. This measure requires a completed background check before every purchase, closing a critical loophole that allowed a mass shooter in Charleston, South Carolina, to purchase a dangerous weapon of war that he should have been denied. A law like Measure 114 would have stopped that gun purchase.

Safety training will ensure that people learn the basics about handling, using, and storing firearms before making a purchase. Soldiers go through extensive training before they get their hands on weapons. And Oregon requires safety training and the ability to pass a test before getting a driver's license. It's just common sense.

Finally, this measure limits the size of ammunition magazines to

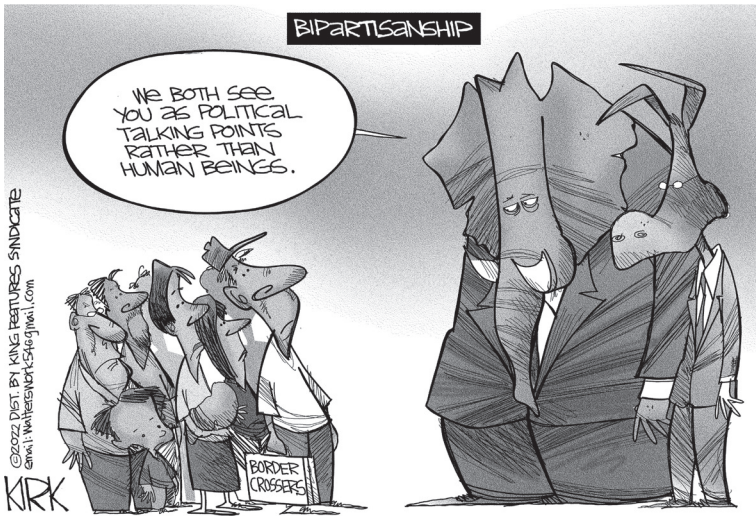
10 rounds. It ends the sale of military-grade magazines that can allow a shooter to spray 30, 40, or 50 rounds. States that limit the sale of large-capacity magazines experience fewer mass shootings and the shootings

that do occur are less deadly. This safety measure is already in place in our neighboring states of California and Washington, and we need it here in Oregon as well.

Measure 114 will undoubtedly help save lives, while also remaining in line with our Second Amendment rights. The laws apply to future purchases and no one has to turn in any gun.

Measure 114 is a simple and effective way to make Oregon safer. We urge you to learn more at [voteyeson114.org](http://voteyeson114.org).

John Hummel is the district attorney for Deschutes County. James M. Brown served as both Oregon attorney general and Benton County district attorney. Matt Ellis is the district attorney of Wasco County. This opinion piece was signed by 10 other current or former prosecutors.



### WHERE TO WRITE

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- Oregon Legislative Information** — (For updates on bills, services, capitol or messages for legislators) — 800-332-2313, [oregonlegislature.gov](http://oregonlegislature.gov).
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## LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

### Can we afford the luxury of a pool?

To the Editor:

America's and our individual wealth, as good as it may be or seem, cannot pay for everything we may want. Especially when our strengths and lifestyle depend on our financial stability and economy. We must also recognize that many of our fellow citizens are struggling financially. Consider all the financial commitments and other government programs that are in place to help those with limited income.

Unfortunately, many of our governmental representatives as well as many of us make decisions on emotions and don't necessarily think about what we can afford or whether or not the

expenditure is necessary. Consider as a nation we are over \$31 trillion in debt with no plans to pay this off. There are also all the entitlements commitments and expenses at all levels of government.

We all must live within our means and the government must stop just printing money, borrowing money and increasing taxes. The 60% or so who do pay taxes cannot nor should we absorb all the cost.

When it comes to the 20-year bond levy to construct a seasonal pool at a questionable cost which could increase, those of us within the John Day/Canyon City Parks and Recreation District must consider the estimated cost and future costs.

It has been stated the increase in property taxes only amounts to a cup of coffee or a pizza a

week. It may also represent the cost of a prescription, a meal or contribution to other costs such as groceries, rent, water and sewage, transportation, etc.

Many of us enjoy the Seventh Street Complex. Are we ready to trade off the open space enjoyed for the construction of a new pool? Will there be future construction in the area closing off more open space?

Consider the current economic climate and all the irresponsible spending by our governments and how increased costs will affect our financial stability. Consider the necessary future financial needs of our citizens, cities, county, state, and country.

Let your voice be heard by voting.

Louis E. Provencher  
John Day

**LETTERS POLICY:** Letters to the Editor is a forum for Blue Mountain Eagle readers to express themselves on local, state, national or world issues. Brevity is good, but longer letters will be asked to be contained to 350 words. No personal attacks; challenge the opinion, not the person. No thank-you letters. Submissions to this page become property of the Eagle. The Eagle reserves the right to edit letters for length and for content. Letters must be original and signed by the writer. Anonymous letters will not be printed. Writers should include a telephone number so they can be reached for questions. We must limit all contributors to two letters per person per month. Deadline is 5 p.m. Friday. Send letters by email to [editor@bmeagle.com](mailto:editor@bmeagle.com); by mail to Blue Mountain Eagle, 195 N. Canyon Blvd., John Day, OR 97845; or by fax to 541-575-1244.

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