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Letters

Most Americans do want health reform

To the Editor:

I was both disappointed and surprised to see a political cartoon in the March 4th edition of *The Independent* that indicates your willingness to pass on extremist political disinformation. The cartoon I refer to is of a mother bird feeding her hatchlings (more or less a good thing one would think) but captioned, "Jam it down their throats; they'll just have to swallow it". The "it", as captioned, is "Health Reform". This implies the editorialist thinks most of us baby birds don't want health reform. Well, we do; and have at least since the presidential election of 2008! Almost any poll one could cite (except maybe one sponsored by the Far Right) acknowledges this fact. An article in the March edition of the AARP bulletin says that between 60% and 73% of

those polled, depending on how the question was asked, WANT healthcare reform. And further, that many that are against the current bill before Congress are against it because it doesn't go far enough! That is, a very sizable portion of us Americans want as good a healthcare program as almost any other western industrialized nation in the world. Canada, all western European nations, and many "developing" nations as well, already have some form of a single payer system, like Medicare for all, and have found it pays for itself. But after a year of trying to reason with obstructionist Republicans and Right Wing extremists, it's pretty clear this compromise is about the best we can do for now. Any progress on any front, under current political circumstances, requires strong public support. Some day, when we as a nation become more unified, we might

be able to do as well as other nations. And to assure the arrival of that day, we absolutely depend on the continued wisdom and credibility of our Fourth Estate (that's you, oh ye editorial cartoonist currently of deceptive intent) to help educate and maintain an informed electorate. Words (and cartoons) are a powerful thing! Don't use them carelessly.

**Nick Galaday
 Vernonia**

Editors Note: We do not censor our cartoonist, columnists or writers of Letters to the Editor. Their opinions are their own and do not necessarily reflect the opinion of the editorial board.

John Day stands up against hate group

To the Editor:

Congratulations to the citizens of John Day in Grant Co. for standing up to the Idaho

Aryan Nations. Mayor Bob Quinton spoke against their attempt to purchase property in John Day and the community responded. Letters, signs, rallies and a large showing at public meetings made it clear that they would not tolerate hate groups in their town.

Former white supremacists have said that hate groups "test" a community by taking action and then seeing if anyone in the community responds. If they don't, they set up shop.

This could happen anywhere, so let's make sure communities all over the state stay alert and be ready to challenge any such groups. Just because we are rural does not mean that we would tolerate racist hate activity.

Columbia County Citizens for Human Dignity - CCCHD

Invitation to join with Christian gathering

To the Editor:

We envision the Pioneer Baptist Fellowship to be a gathering of families where God is worshiped, the Bible is taught, the truth of Scripture is applied, all peoples are disciplined and lovingly embraced, and the Gospel is intentionally proclaimed to the ends of the earth.

I, John Cahill, am the Pastor, and my wife, Lynda, is the musician, helper, inspiration and whatever else God calls on her to do. If you have been helped by the Police, Fire, or Ambulance, you will recognize me, as I have been their chaplain for the last 30 years. I retired from the First Baptist Church two years ago but am now re-fired for the Lord.

Our first service on Sunday, March 7, was well attended. We invite you to attend this brand new work and help us with all the tasks it takes to

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Salem Scene

*By Representative Brad Witt
 Oregon District 31*



Now that the Special Session is over, I thought I would do a quick summary of our accomplishments. Our primary goals were to help struggling families, provide incentives for both business and labor to put Oregonians back to work, protect

the level of funding for our education system, and bolster emerging green technology. I am genuinely pleased with the focus of our efforts and the level of success attained during such a short time frame. Here is a snapshot of the session:

Strengthening the Job Market...

I hear time and time again that the biggest obstacle small businesses face to creating jobs is a lack of access to working capital. That's why we voted to provide capital and other resources for small businesses that create new, full-time jobs in Oregon. Key bills include:

- HB 3698 – BOOST: Establishes a fund to provide loans and grants to help small businesses that create new jobs and hire Oregonians.
- SB 1017 – Accessing Business Capital: Makes it easier for businesses to access funds from the Oregon Business Development Fund.
- HB 3644 – Economic Gardening: Creates a task force and establishes a fund to support fast-growth industries to be funded solely from grants, donations and gifts.
- HB 3627 – Allows a tax credit of up to \$500,000 for the investment of severance pay into a new or existing business (Small Business

Investment Act).

- HB 3646 - Adjusts existing state bonding statutes to allow for the new federal Build America Bonds process by allowing federal rebates to be deposited into the state's debt service funds.

Helping Struggling Families...

Too many Oregonians are unemployed and struggling to find jobs. Unemployment benefits will run out for 12,000 over the next few months, and about 1,000 unemployed workers will lose their benefits each additional week. We voted to extend unemployment benefits for these families. We also worked to ensure that families are protected from foreclosure and unfair lending practices. Key bills include:

- HB 3655 – Unemployment Benefits Extension: Extends unemployment benefits for nearly 19,000 Oregonians whose benefits have run out or will soon expire.
- HB 3656 – Mortgage Protection: Protects families who lose their homes to foreclosure from also being sued by lenders on remaining deficiencies on certain loans.
- SB 1045 – Prohibits the use of credit histories in the hiring process unless a credit history would be job related, and its use must be disclosed to the applicant.

Investing in the Future...

Oregon is fast becoming a center for the growing alternative energy industry and we need to continue to encourage these high-skills, high-wage jobs. That's why we voted to encourage these types of industries to locate in Oregon. Key bills include:

- HB 3649 – Hydropower: Provides stability and growth potential for low-impact hydropower facilities throughout the state.

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Policy on Letters

The INDEPENDENT will not publish letters with personal attacks on private citizens. Preference will be given to brief letters, 300 words or less.

All letters must be signed and include a verifiable address or phone number.