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Saturday's Letters to the Editor

Published: Friday, December 2, 2011 at 7:00 p.m.

ELECTORAL BRIBERY

EDITOR: I agree that we need a constitutional amendment declaring that corporations are not people and that money is not speech ("Coca-Cola and parks," Letters, Monday). I would add language providing for matching public funds of all private contributions to political campaigns at the national level.

I would hope that the Occupy movement might see it as an issue to pressure the City Council to pass a resolution in favor of such an amendment. If all the various Occupy groups scattered across the nation would do likewise, I think we could actually get such an amendment passed.

Given that the candidate who spends the most money wins 93 percent of the time with our current system of legalized bribery, it would be interesting to see what kind of government we would get if it were no longer for sale to the highest bidder.

MIKE PETERS

Santa Rosa

REAL-WORLD APPROACH

EDITOR: Occupy Santa Rosa (which appears to be mainly Santa Rosa Junior College students) now wishes to focus their free time on marching to the Exchange Bank with a message that they want their representatives involved in the scholarship board's decisions ("Occupy SR weighs life after City Hall," Friday). Did I read that right?

These scholarships were suspended when the economy turned. Exchange Bank, along with many other local businesses, tightened its belt in order to continue in business. Might I suggest these students put their efforts into getting their families and friends to move their bank accounts, as well as taking advantage of the other services offered, to Exchange Bank?

As the bank's revenues grow, the likelihood of the Doyle Scholarship being re-instituted gets much better. Remember, this is a local business with shareholders and a board that is responsible for its operation, not students from the SRJC with a lack of experience in the work world.

ROSS LISCUM

Santa Rosa

SHABBY HIGHWAY



EDITOR: I lived in Sonoma County for 38 years before moving to Oregon six years ago. I've always known the roads to be in rough condition, and I understand the costs associated with upkeep.

However, there is no reason to let weeds take over Highway 12 through Santa Rosa. It doesn't cost that much to keep weeds down, and it would change the look and feel for anyone, especially tourists, traveling through town. It has to be embarrassing for such a beautiful area to look so trashy.

Highway 101 used to look the same way, but the lane additions took care of that. Where is the sense of pride? Or has Santa Rosa become accustomed to simply being a link to the nicer parts of the county?

A well maintained median is no different than a well maintained yard.

ALLEN SMITH

Grants Pass, Ore.

TREATMENT, NOT JAIL

EDITOR: Sonoma County's behavioral health director claims he "recognizes the complex array of factors from housing to employment that are necessary ingredients to recovery for people with mental illness" ("An improved picture for mental health services," Close to Home, Wednesday). But housing providers and employers won't house or hire people who are currently psychotic and delusional. They need treatment first.

He argues Laura's Law is not needed because he is training police to better handle people with mental illness, and components of Laura's Law are available to the mentally ill once they are arrested. But sending the mentally ill to the criminal justice system is not success, it's failure. Nevada County found Laura's Law reduced incarceration 97 percent and saved money.

Nevada County funds Laura's Law with Mental Health Services Act funds. So can Sonoma County. No voluntary programs need cutting. MHSA can be used to provide access to existing programs for people regardless of whether they have voluntary or involuntary status.

Laura's Law not only compels a small group of the most severely ill to accept treatment, it compels the mental health department to stop sending the highest-functioning patients to the front of the line for services while offloading the most severely ill to the criminal justice system. Is that Michael Kennedy's real objection?

DJ JAFFE

Executive director, Mental Illness Policy Org.

New York

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