

OPINION

FIRST AMENDMENT “Congress shall make no law respecting an establishment of religion, or prohibiting the free exercise thereof; or abridging the freedom of speech, or of the press or the right of people peaceably to assemble, and to petition the Government for a redress of grievances.”

OUR VIEW

New law
right step

Our pets do so much for us, it’s about time we ensure their humane treatment while being produced for our companionship.

July 1 brought the implementation of a new state law governing large commercial dog and cat breeders. To protect and enhance the well-being of dogs and cats raised by commercial breeders the law requires licensing and inspection of those facilities.

Similar bills regulating dog and cat breeders have been debated in the last seven years by the Legislature. Finally, a bill was approved that enacts these new protections this year.

Livestock producers have for more than a century worked with the Minnesota Board of Health to control and eradicate disease and protect the health of animals across the state. It only makes sense those same principles be applied to commercial dog and cat breeders. A commercial breeder, under the law, is someone who breeds animals for sale and who possesses 10 or more adult intact animals and whose animals produce more than five total litters each year.

The new law will help breeders maintain safe, healthy and humane living

environments for cats and dogs in commercial breeding facilities.

Problems at commercial breeding facilities have been well documented in news reports. Minnesota has now joined more than a dozen other states with the adoption of inspection and licensing systems for large-scale breeders.

And while the law does a lot to improve the quality of life for animals in these facilities, it also provides protections for consumers. Among the more than 30 requirements in the law are standards of care, confinement areas, records and identification of animals, transportation and veterinary care.

Clearly, responsible and ethical breeders are likely already doing what is required under the law. And while it will cost breeders not now following those standards some extra money to comply with the law, in the long run these standards should allow breeders to demand higher prices for pets because the law should improve the quality of the animals they are selling.

The Board of Animal Health was established in 1903 and exists to safeguard domestic animal health in Minnesota. More than 100 years later, the board will continue to serve Minnesotans and the pets they love.



LETTER TO THE EDITOR

However it happened, bench is back

To the editor,

A month or so ago I wrote a letter to the editor about my parents’ memorial bench (Paul O. and MaryJane Woods Swendsen) stolen from Seven Oaks Park in Ranier. I am happy to report the bench is back.

According to various reports, the bench was not seen on either Saturday or Sunday by any of the people in the area. It apparently was placed on the Moonlight Rock Road sometime between Sunday night and Monday morning.

Ranier maintenance staff, Buddy and Nick, spotted it along the road and returned it to its place at Seven Oaks Park.

It is possible that whoever “borrowed” it felt guilty and wanted to return it but didn’t want to get caught at the park.

Whatever the reasons – I want to recognize Buddy and Nick and all the folks who offered their support. And also those who expressed their indignation at the crime.

**Sue Swendsen
Ranier, MN**

GUEST COLUMN

About those dirty Little Sisters of the Poor

Boy, our political debate is getting crasser by the moment.

And so it is that the National Organization for Women has put the Little Sisters of the Poor, an international congregation of Roman Catholic nuns who have devoted their lives to caring for the elderly poor, on its “Dirty 100” list.

NOW is upset that the Little Sisters sued the federal government, arguing that new ObamaCare mandates are inhibiting their constitutional right to freely practice their faith — that their vow to advance the dignity of life for every person, no matter how weak or unwanted, means they can never provide insurance policies that fund contraception, abortive drugs and sterilization, which ObamaCare was forcing them to do.

So NOW is calling the Little Sisters dirty — though the group should have done its research before attempting to tarnish some of the most remarkable women who have ever graced this Earth.

Little Sisters of the Poor was founded in France by Jeanne Jugan in 1839, when Jugan’s association

offered care and dignity to her first house guest.

Her mission, after all, was to dedicate her life to providing hospitality, dignity and care to the aged poor who could no longer care for themselves.

Born to modest circumstances, she trusted that God would provide the housing and resources she would need to care for her residents and she was correct.

To provide for the needs of the aged poor, she began a tradition still practiced today by which the Little Sisters visit merchants and others seeking alms of every kind — food, clothing, donations.

By 1849, she founded six more homes for the elderly. By 1850, she had 500 associates and houses as far away as England. By 1879, the year she died, she had 2,400 associates



Tom
PURCELL

providing care.

Today, Little Sisters of the Poor operates 200 homes in more than 30 countries providing care to more than 13,000 elderly residents — including a wonderfully cheerful operation on Pittsburgh’s North side.

For Jugan’s efforts, she was canonized a saint in 2009.

Her “dynamism is continued today across the world in the Congregation of the Little Sisters of the Poor, which she founded and which testifies, after her example, to the mercy of God and the compassionate love of the Heart of Jesus for the lowliest,” said Pope Benedict XVI at her canonization ceremony.

What is most striking about Jugan’s legacy is how her worldview was so different from that of NOW and so many others in our culture today.

Jugan’s interpretation of the term “rights” was that every individual is a child of God and has a right to experience dignity and love in his or her final days. She never demanded her government establish mandates to care for the elderly poor or even provide funding. She simply did everything she could as a private

individual to provide dignity and love.

In the United States, her organization has always been free to operate according to its principles. It has provided health insurance policies for its employees for years that did not fund contraception, abortive drugs or sterilization (though employees were, and still are, free to purchase such items on their own).

This was never a pressing problem until our ever-encroaching federal government demanded these things be included in insurance policies with the passage of ObamaCare.

So NOW, which considers government-mandated birth control a greater right than that of religious groups to run their organizations according to their religious principles, is calling some of the most humble and accomplished women on the planet dirty.

And that’s why, as our government expands into our personal and religious lives, our political debate is getting crasser by the moment.

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