

OPINION

“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 the people peaceably to assemble, and to petition the Government for a redress of grievances.”

FIRST AMENDMENT TO THE U.S. CONSTITUTION



MARC MURPHY/USA TODAY NETWORK

Mask giveaway is just one way CVEP helps businesses



Your Turn
Randy Florence
Guest columnist

This week, the Coachella Valley Economic Partnership announced its “Regional Million Mask Giveaway.”

Working with the State Office of Emergency Services, CVEP worked to secure over \$1,000,000 in PPE. This equipment (over 1.4 million masks, 70,000 bottles of hand sanitizer and 44,000 face shields) was provided free by the state and is being provided at no cost to the valley. Joe Wallace, CEO, and the staff at CVEP provided the appropriate information to the state, coordinated the receipt of the equipment (4 semi trucks with 144 pallets of much-needed equipment). The staff unloaded the trucks, stored the PPE and developed an equitable plan for distributing the equipment in concert with our partner cities.

Many in the valley are not aware that there is a non-profit providing this type of service (and many others) to the local business community.

CVEP, formed in 1994, is the only nonprofit that provides regional assistance to small businesses and the business community as a whole. We bring together business partners, including businesses of every size, the nine cities, unincorporated areas, the tribal governments, regional governments and the Palm Springs Convention and Visitors Bureau to make our region a better place.

Our board has representation that covers all economic influences in our valley. City government, utilities, education, health and medical, finance, business leaders, both big and small, and people who helped to build, shape and guide this region.

For the past 16 years, CVEP has put on the CV Economic Summit, providing the community with annual updates on our valley’s economy. The summits in-

clude presentations from inspirational and visionary business leaders from many areas to address our valley. The talks center around the unique economic influences that can impact our community positively and negatively.

CVEP provides business and economic data to the region. The analysis developed by the incredible staff at CVEP helps give businesses confidence to invest in the valley. During the pandemic, the staff moved into high gear to help put information out to the valley that included reports on work from home activity, PPP loan analysis, business impact, and other information critical to understanding how the region was being affected.

We provide business service centers to new and established businesses in the area, giving them access to the information needed to grow and stabilize their entities.

CVEP also manages the Palm Springs Innovation Hub (iHUB), which is a state-designated business incubator as well as sites in Indio and Palm Desert. The iHub focuses on early stage businesses in renewable energy, health and medicine and digital technology. An estimated \$33million has been invested in iHub companies.

Vision and leadership are going to be necessary to move us through this crisis. Leaders with experience, resolve and intestinal fortitude are going to move us through this time. Leaders who, while moving us through this crisis, keep an eye on the issues the region was facing before the pandemic.

Joe Wallace, the staff of CVEP and the board of directors are all local residents working to drive and improve our local economy, during this crisis, and going forward.

If you’d like more information on how CVEP supports the region, find us at www.cvep.com.

Randy Florence, chairperson for Coachella Valley Economic Partnership, lives in La Quinta. Reach him at randy.florence@gmail.com.

YOUR VOICE

As far as I know, Sheriff Bianco is not a doctor

How does Sheriff Chad Bianco think he has the qualifications to publicly talk about the coronavirus and what he thinks will and will not work to protect ourselves? As far as I know, he is not a doctor.

What gives him the right to publicly criticize and personally and angrily attack Governor Newsom and his attempts to lessen the danger of spreading the virus? Isn’t a sheriff’s job to protect the people in the county in which he serves?

Bianco’s refusal to follow the mandates is disrespectful, irresponsible and ultimately dangerous. Sheriff Bianco needs to resign if he is not going to do his job of protecting Riverside County citizens.

Lorna Albertsen, Palm Springs

Sheriff, you are no medical professional

Count me in as a critic of Sheriff Chad Bianco for his big mouth denouncing California’s stay-at-home order. He is no more a medical professional than I am and he has no business broadcasting his personal opinions. He appears to be taking instructions directly from Donald Trump’s playbook for causing public confusion and division.

Perhaps he’s attempting to gain followers in the same way as Trump has.

Regardless of his views as sheriff and his instructions to his deputies, Mr. Bianco needs to keep his personal opinions to himself.

Kevin Wilcoxon, Indio

CV Rep is a jewel in the desert

I’ve been involved in theatrical production and events in the valley for more than 30 years, including 20 producing the Palm Springs International Film Festival film awards gala show. Last summer, I attended an event at CV Rep for the first time and was impressed that a theater facility of that caliber existed in the desert.

There are smaller theaters, such as the Annenberg, and larger theaters, such as the McCallum, and casino showrooms, but CV Rep is a whole new ballgame.

I finally had the opportunity to work there when my team and I produced an ACT for MS television show that will air on Saturday. This is a theater made for theater lovers. It’s intimate and there are no bad viewing angles.

The technical setup of the theater is impressive. It has the feel of a Broadway theater. It was a great place to work — the stage is excellent, especially if you’re a dancer. The tech team and the entire CV Rep staff that helped put this production together was top-notch.

Right now, I realize that we are all sort of grounded. But, when quarantine is lifted, I recommend that everybody take advantage of this new theatrical gem.

Richard DeSantis, Palm Desert

The Senate should be ashamed

I would like to thank The Desert Sun for publishing all the positive and truthful articles about what our country has gone through. Now what do we do with one man trying to destroy our democracy? It is hard to believe that we have no recourse.

The Senate should be ashamed for not helping people in need. Are there no people in Kentucky that are in need? What can the average American do?

Phyllis Wine, Palm Desert

SEND YOUR LETTER

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■ Letters should be fewer than 200 words

■ Letters may be edited for length, clarity and taste

See a complete list of rules online.

Gyms provide essential service to Riverside County residents

Your Turn
Katelyn Delaney
Guest columnist

As Southern California settles into new restrictions set by the California stay-at-home order, gyms and fitness centers have been given the green light to remain open — an important recognition that exercise is an essential activity. With California serving as a leader in our nation’s efforts to curb the spread of COVID-19, the actions taken in the Golden State should be followed by the rest of the country.

According to the California’s COVID-19 website, “Outdoor gyms meet the essential workforce definition of an outdoor recreational facility for the purpose of facilitating personal health through physically distanced outdoor exercise and may continue operations.”

In addition, Gov. Gavin Newsom noted in his press conference Thursday, Dec. 3, that it’s vital to stay active during these times. The governor’s acknowledgement highlights the importance of exercise and getting outdoors for mental and physical health. These steps to deem fitness as an essential activity sets an important precedent that should be followed by the rest of the nation.

According to the Centers for Disease Control (CDC)

and Prevention’s Morbidity and Mortality Weekly Report, three times as many people are experiencing symptoms of anxiety disorder and four times as many are experiencing a depressive disorder today when compared to 2019. At the same time, exercise has long been known to support stress and anxiety reduction and positively impact mood.

What’s more, the risk of a coronavirus-related hospital death more than doubles for people with a body mass index of 40 to 44 and doubles again for those with a BMI of 45 or more, according to a study conducted by researchers from Kaiser Permanente. With these factors in mind, promoting exercise is a way to enhance mental and physical wellness, which are equally important components of overall health, according to the CDC. So, while the public is rightfully concerned about protecting themselves from COVID-19, people should also not forget that staying healthy means more than staying free from coronavirus — and gyms play an important role in the equation.

That’s not to say gyms should be operating under the pre-pandemic status quo. In fact, gyms — like other businesses that welcome community members — have an obligation to do everything possible to keep their patrons, employees and community members safe. Mask requirements, social distancing, required gym reservations and increased sanitation are just a

few of the protocols that should be supported. At EoS Fitness, like many of our colleagues in the fitness industry, we’re following the recommendations of health authorities in addition to those set out by the Medical Fitness Association.

The California Fitness Alliance is also serving as a united voice of fitness professionals in California to keep the state healthy and fit. During the COVID-19 crisis, the alliance is partnering with state and local officials to set and define safe, effective standards and guidelines.

Responsible operational plans combined with help from gym-goers, who also play a critical role in keeping themselves and their communities safe, should be supported. In the meantime, we, and other fitness providers, have converted space outdoors, bringing strength and cardio equipment and group fitness classes outside, in the fresh air. While working out outside might not be everyone’s favorite option, we’ve committed to outdoor operations because we passionately believe in the power of fitness.

Thank you, California, for recognizing the importance of exercise as a valuable tool to get us all through the pandemic, and beyond. I hope the rest of our nation will make the same commitment.

Katelyn Delaney is a fitness manager at EoS Fitness.