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Editorial | Letters

Support jury trial amendment

Posted October 26, 2016

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Voters will consider an amendment to the Hawaii Constitution to increase the threshold for a civil jury trial in Circuit Court from \$5,000 in damages to \$10,000.

Jury trials are held in Circuit Court, not in District Court. As a result, the cost to the parties and the court system are significantly greater than in District Court. Fewer jury trials would keep more cases in District Court, which handles cases more expeditiously and with less cost.

Also, the burden would be lessened on citizens who otherwise would be summoned for jury duty on a relatively small claim.

Finally, raising the limit merely keeps up with inflation, since the last amendment to the \$5,000 limit was in 1988.

I would urge the voters to approve this amendment, remembering that if you do not vote, your non-vote is counted as a “no” vote. So please, vote on this issue.

Edward Kemper, Esq.

Downtown Honolulu

Mauna Kea can be called sacred

Please do not put quotation marks around the phrase, sacred lands (“TMT hearing focuses on religion,” Star-Advertiser, Oct. 25). That phrase has powerfully affected history, particularly in the Pacific islands, such as New Zealand.

Yes, Hawaiian factions fought an epic battle over religion — what society has not? — but we are unique as a country in elevating freedom of religion to a human right.

The Thirty Meter Telescope hearings are uncomfortable with the word sacred. Yet all human beings regard what is sacred as that which is set apart from ordinary things. Your child, your home, your life, your country — all are sacred. Humans are inherently religious.

The telescope project foundered because it did not take seriously what is sacred and supposedly set aside in a conservation district of Hawaiian lands.

There are other sites for telescopes. In Hawaii, there are only two or three sacred mountaintops, which cannot be replaced.

Would you build a skyscraper in Arlington National Cemetery?

Jean E. Rosenfeld

Downtown Honolulu

Let's have a huge voter turnout

I am very encouraged that so many people have registered to vote here in Hawaii. I hope those registrations turn into votes.

In this election, there is such a clear choice at the top of the ticket between inclusion vs. exclusion, appreciation vs. deprecation, unity vs. polarity.

Some people feel discouraged because when our polls close, the victory is already in hand.

Our voices can still be part of a nationwide mandate. We can be part of an electoral tsunami that rejects the politics of divisiveness and derision. The Aloha State can make a strong, unified statement that diversity is our strength, everyone deserves to be treated with dignity and respect, and immigrants continue to make our country great.

I hope to hear on the election day news, "And in Hawaii, there has been a record turnout of voters."

Jo-Ann Adams

Waikiki

Voter informed by latest news

As an independent voter in previous elections, I usually mailed in my ballot early because positions on issues by candidates were known in a timely manner.

However, the relationships between federal agencies, campaign committees, candidates and the news media have become questionable with the drip-drip release of WikiLeaks emails and non-reporting by the news media. It is frustrating to be an informed voter.

My vote will be based on citizen journalism, my own — seeking and vetting credible and reliable sources and avoiding endorsements and party campaign messaging.

For the lengthy City Charter amendments, it appears that pros and cons are beginning to be openly discussed. Because the commission members appear to be Democrats, the amendments seem to reflect the party platform.

More discussion is needed. Hence, the late walk-in vote by 6 p.m. on Election Day to accommodate late-breaking news.

Ed Ige

Kaneohe

Gary Johnson a good alternative

It was an excellent commentary by Jacob Sullum (“Gary Johnson’s refreshing foreign policy skepticism,” Star-Advertiser, Oct. 22).

He thoughtfully critiqued the foreign policy interventionism that led to our military involvement in Iraq, Libya and now Syria, as well as Hillary Clinton’s key role in these policies.

He also pointed out Donald Trump’s main concern — that the United States be reimbursed for the cost of defending other countries.

Gary Johnson, by contrast, believes that the U.S. military exists to defend the U.S. and its vital interests rather than to be used for dubious exercises in nation-building. It’s unfortunate that Johnson was not allowed to share the debate stage with Trump and Clinton so that American voters could hear more of his views and realize there is an alternative to Hillary and Donald.

Mark Saxon

Kahului, Maui