

This month, first and foremost, I want to wish you and your family a Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year. Furthermore, I truly hope you had a wonderful Thanksgiving. If it's Hanukkah that you celebrate, then let me wish you a Happy Hanukkah!

Most Americans identify with the Christmas season, which is why we go shopping for Christmas gifts, decorate Christmas trees, make Christmas cookies, sing Christmas carols and wish one another "Merry Christmas."

Notice that I didn't say "happy holidays." It troubles me that our society has reached a point where wishing glad tidings with a simple statement like "Merry Christmas," could be interpreted as offensive and negative.

As an elected official and leader in the community, it is my duty to speak out and stand up to the vocal minority's attack on Christmas.

Our Founding Fathers brilliantly established the United States not as a democracy, but as a republic. The difference is crucial. It is the very foundation of our political framework. In a democracy, the majority rules, often at the expense of minority rights. In a republic, power is vested in individuals, and is exercised through their elected representatives. While frightened by the tyranny of the majority, it also was not the Founding Fathers' intent for the majority to live under the tyranny of the minority. We trust our elected officials to understand the difference.

The ridiculous recommendations of the Fort Collins holiday display task force are a perfect example of tyranny of the minority. By suggesting that Fort Collins city buildings not display any sign of Christmas, the very holiday that most of us celebrate, this small but vocal group tried to force its will on the rest of the city and any visitors traveling to northern Colorado for the season. This time of year is not about winter festivals, holiday trees, penguins, icicles, mitten trees or wishing people "happy holidays." It's about Christmas.

It's unfortunate that a small group of people want to sanitize the meaning of Christmas in an attempt not to offend anyone. Local businesses and national retailers alike seem to have fallen into this trap. In an attempt not to offend anyone, they disrespect the beliefs of the vast majority. Is this not offensive to the vast majority who celebrate Christmas?

Last year I went to dinner at the local Red Lobster. At the end of the meal the waitress handed me the bill and said "happy holidays." I asked her why she didn't say Merry Christmas. She replied that management told the staff not to say "Merry Christmas" as it might be inappropriate or offensive to some people. Because of Red Lobster's willingness to offend my faith and beliefs, I have not been back for dinner since.

Recently, Lowe's Home Improvement chain advertised the sale of "family trees" to replace the Christmas tree. First of all, someone please explain what exactly is a "family tree." While Lowe's management is trying to dig itself out of that public relations blunder, I can take advantage of our wonderful capitalistic system and choose not to shop

there. I will search for a retailer that has not fallen into the hysteria of political correctness that demands phrases like "happy holidays" and "family trees."

The Christmas season is truly the best time of year. It's about the birth of Christ and is the story of love and redemption. It's about happiness, joy and peace on earth. What about that is offensive?

I commend the Fort Collins City Council for listening to the community, not bending to the pressure of political correctness and allowing Christmas to be a part of the city's seasonal celebration. As one vocal supporter of the season said, "We tolerate winter; we celebrate Christmas."

Closer to home, I am thankful that this type of political correctness has not infected communities in Weld County. A mature, respectful society should have tolerance for one another. When that tolerance turns into exclusion and attempts to force the opinion of minority groups on the entire community; we have gone too far.

Merry Christmas, Happy Hanukkah and Happy New Year! If you see me out during this wonderful season, please feel free to wish me any of these. I certainly won't be offended.

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