



Dear Constantine:

I'm writing in response to our conversation last Wednesday, which included Maya Crawford Peacock. As I had indicated, I was caring for my 94-year-old dad and not in a great place for a substantive discussion. Given my request for context in advance of the call went unheeded, I probably should have not agreed to talk until I was back in Portland.

You expressed concern that I exhibited "poor judgment" for sharing language on my personal Facebook page taken from a Johns Hopkins University report about the role alcohol consumption plays in promoting heart disease. I linked the findings of the report to a news story in the business section of the Oregonian about a craft beer company owner who died suddenly from heart disease. The story included a photo of the owner of the company drinking alcohol.

While I appreciate that alcohol policy is a peripheral part of your many responsibilities, you should know that Oregon Recovers has worked for years to get Oregon to a place where advocates and industry representatives are around the table together. Don't be fooled. Their opposition to my inclusion on the Task Force is not about a single Facebook post. This is about five years of effective public education about the harm the alcohol industry is causing Oregon families—advocacy that has forced them to the table for the first time in 50 years. Of course they want me replaced.

After consulting with the executive committee of the Oregon Recovers board of directors (copied here) I wanted to respond to several of the specific concerns you raised:

- Your reaction to the post implies you believe excessive alcohol consumption is some form of moral failing. Oregon Recovers, as well as your colleagues at the Oregon Health Authority and Alcohol & Drug Policy Commission, fully reject that belief.
- Oregonians drink excessively for two primary reasons: to self-medicate due to a behavioral health problem and/or because they have not been educated about the fact that alcohol (ethanol) is a toxic, addictive, carcinogen that is the source of numerous life threatening diseases, including heart disease.

- Excessive alcohol use is a behavioral health problem not a personal failure. 12% of Oregonians have an alcohol use disorder (AUD) and an additional 10-15% engage in binge drinking. Each of them deserve, but do not receive, access to health information that would allow them to make sounder health decisions for themselves.
- Neither the brewery at issue nor the OLCC (which controls the sale of all alcohol in Oregon) provide consumer education about the harms of alcohol. Consequently, that responsibility has been relegated to public health community groups like the Oregon Alcohol Policy Alliance, Oregon Recovers, and the Oregon Society for Addiction Medicine. None of these groups have adequate resources for this education, so each must leverage public events and news articles to raise awareness—something that I do often.
- The Facebook post was one of nine I have posted on my personal Facebook page in the run up to the holidays about the health consequences of alcohol consumption. Many of my “friends” on my closed FB page are policy makers, people in recovery or people who, due to their own harmful consumption of alcohol and/or drugs, would be great candidates for recovery. No one from the brewery at issue has access to my personal Facebook page.
- You expressed concern that the co-owners of the brewery mentioned in the article were harmed by my attempt to educate my friends about the role alcohol plays in the development of heart disease. As previously stated, they do not have access to my personal FB page and were never intended to see it. Whoever shared my post with them is the individual who *intentionally* caused the harm.
- You shared that Mr. Anderson was a beloved member of his community, which I have no doubt is true. However, it is important to note that the Oregon Brewers Guild is composed of 79 alcohol manufacturers who, according to the Center for Disease Control, accrue 60 % their profits from harmful consumption (underage drinking and binge drinking). Comparatively, Oregon Recovers advocates on behalf of the 9% of the Oregon population (approximately 378,000 people) that identify as in recovery and advocates for an additional 12% (approximately 504,000 people) of Oregonians that are actively addicted to alcohol.
- Additionally, you suggested that the concerns of the Oregon Brewers Guild about my public health post would be an “obstacle to dialog and collaboration” if I remained involved. But no brewers have been appointed to the Task Force. Instead, the Governor has appointed the corporate council for Anheuser Busch (the largest beer manufacturer in the country) and the lobbyist for the Brewers Guild. I’m confident both are professionals and have the emotional fortitude to work collaboratively with people with varying perspectives. The alcohol manufacturer’s family will not be involved in the work of the task force and their feelings about me are not relevant to the work of at hand.

- Lastly, you articulated that removing me from the conversation was an attempt to eliminate a disruption to the start of the task force. You should be aware that our communications consultant has been working with at least six reporters on stories about the Task Force that will run once it begins its work. All are aware I have been appointed. At this juncture, if I were to be replaced there would likely be multiple stories about the composition of the task force, its mission, the role campaign contributions played in its formation, and possibly even the personal life of Mr. Anderson. None of that is in anyone's interest. Likewise, the news that I was replaced at the request of the beer industry will create significant backlash within the public health community.

Constantine, I wish you had reached out to me before escalating this to the Governor. I personally supported her campaign; Oregon Recovers has applauded her every move since she was elected and when she was publicly accused of corruption, we were the only organization who publicly (and effectively) defended her. Bringing the concerns of the alcohol manufacturing community directly to the Governor, without first affording Oregon Recovers the opportunity to provide important context, appears one-sided and disrespectful.

A final thought: according to your colleagues at the Oregon Health Authority, on average, six Oregonians die each day due to alcohol. In other words, **since my post on December 7th, over 120 people have been killed by alcohol**. Every one of those deaths could have been avoided if the alcohol industry, including the brewery upset with me, had acted more responsibly. Shouldn't we prioritize the feelings of their families as well?

As I mentioned on our call, my board of directors is disbursed for the holidays. Before I interrupt their vacations, I think it would be helpful if you responded substantively to this communication. If you like, I can try to arrange a call with our executive committee so that you can hear first-hand their concerns about the shortsighted approach being proposed.

With respect,
Mike Marshall