

Letter: Speak with One Voice Against Lawlessness

August 1, 2024



It would be very easy to jump on the “ Illegal Fireworks Band Wagon” and start demanding our local leaders “do something” but what exactly does that entail? It is clear from the Sheriff’s report that several laws are already on the books to handle “illegal fireworks” and have been for years. Two suspects have been arrested for a series of felonies related to the South Beach incident which seriously injured a three year old toddler and several others. The two posted bail and are due back in Court in August.

What then? Shall we ask law enforcement and first responders to step up their game on South Beach? Shall we ban fireworks entirely? Shall we add more ordinances to demand what? Shall we distribute information about the dangers of fireworks prior to the 4th? Shall we train more individuals in intervention skills to be deployed on South Beach?

Sadly, resources are very limited!

What are the answers that have finally come to a head with the injuries sustained by an innocent toddler?

I’m sure the City, County and Harbor are searching for answers for the problem, like so many problems are decades in the making.

During the 80's the 4th on South Beach was a relatively civilized affair where locals and visitors gathered to celebrate. Sparklers, a few small fireworks and some random louder bangs were the accompanying sights and sounds while the main fireworks off the Jetty were on display.

Over the years, the extracurricular activities began to grow bigger and bolder, July 4th was no longer restricted to the day of but expanded to surrounding days. With the escalation came a few minor injuries scattered up to present day where a small city now occupies South Beach over the 4th and the incidental illegal fireworks have grown in proportion.

The County has become a week-long scene of loud explosions for the last several years.

Large urban areas have multiple laws on the books banning fireworks over the Holiday. These efforts have not stopped the problem.

Illegal fireworks, disobeying laws has become all too common up and down the Golden State and dutiful Del Norte has followed the State like an obedient puppy. Del Norters have changed the culture to reflect no need to address the problem. People no longer feel the need to restrict their behavior in society and are becoming quite comfortable flouting laws they consider restrictive.

Illegal fireworks are a stark reminder of what happens when culture submerges law-abiding good citizenship. Unintended consequences occur.

The City, Board of Supervisors and Harbor need to speak with one very firm and articulate voice, to change this culture of lawlessness. Failure to address what took place on South Beach will only ensure a repeat mass casualty.

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