

Letter: Wrong vote

January 27, 2023



This letter is in response to the events of the town supervisors' meeting approximately one month ago. During this meeting, funding was denied to the Del Norte County LGBTQ Resource Project. This project is geared towards addressing the needs of LGBTQ community members, and especially adolescents, who suffer from unparalleled suicide rates and lack of services. The reasoning given by supervisor Chris Howard for not voting to fund the project was that the fiscal sponsor, Queer Humboldt, stated on their website that they are against systems that are settler colonialist. Howard asked what dismantling settler colonialism would mean, and implied that this would be an undesirable prospect in any case.

As an answer to supervisor Howard's confusion about what dismantling settler-colonialism means, I wish to first define settler colonialism from a google search using Oxford: Settler Colonialism: a type of colonialism in which the indigenous peoples of a colonized region are displaced by the settlers who permanently form a society there.

Now that the definition is clear, I wish to share the process of decolonialization, taken from the book Ka'm-t'em, a journey towards healing, by Kishan Lara-Cooper and Walter J. Lara Sr. (2019). I found this book while working for the Del Norte schools as it is provided by the Yurok Tribe to each school library. They state: "... (these are) decolonization strategies as the antidote to colonialization: Language and culture restoration; renewed assertion of land, cultural, and human rights; a return to traditional governance; food

sovereignty and security; revival of ceremony and spiritual practices; truth-telling and the revision of settler-history; and return to traditional healing practice (from forward).

Which aspects of this process of decolonization is a threat to our board of supervisors? The consequences of not funding the project are tragic and real. The board voted wrongly and unethically.

Bruce Lerner

Gasquet