

Letter to the Editor of The Salt Lake Tribune

For public sign-on

To the Editor of The Salt Lake Tribune,

The Salt Lake Tribune has published a cartoon by Pat Bagley using violent rhetoric and imagery to target members of Utah's congressional delegation. This is not satire — it is a reckless and dangerous act that dehumanizes public officials and undermines the values of civil discourse our communities depend on.

This is not the first time the Tribune has chosen to demean those it disagrees with. Parents — including many of us — have previously been characterized and mocked in Tribune cartoons for raising serious, good-faith concerns about pornography in schools and the wellbeing of children. Those cartoons reduced legitimate parental advocacy to caricature.

This latest cartoon crosses an even more serious line. By portraying specific elected officials with violent language and imagery, the Tribune has abandoned its role as a neutral institution of public trust and stepped into the arena of targeting people, not debating ideas.

As a 501(c)(3) nonprofit, The Salt Lake Tribune has a heightened responsibility to operate in the public interest — not to inflame political division or endanger individuals. This cartoon demonstrates a breach of that public trust and raises serious questions about the Tribune's commitment to its nonprofit obligations.

We call on the Tribune to take immediate, public action to address this breach of trust, beginning with the resignation of Pat Bagley. If Mr. Bagley refuses to resign, the Tribune must demonstrate through decisive action that it takes its responsibility as a nonprofit organization seriously — and that it is committed to upholding the principles of neutrality, civility, and public service.

This moment is bigger than one cartoonist or one editorial decision. It is about what kind of public discourse we are willing to accept — and what kind of example we are setting for our children.

We believe Utah deserves better. We believe responsible journalism must rise above hate, mockery, and violent rhetoric. And we believe the Tribune, if it wishes to retain public trust, must act.

Respectfully,  
Utah Parents