

Your views

Hopkins: The American people own the national forests

To the Editor:
The Observer in its article about the new Forest Service Regional Forester states that 48 percent of Union County and 68 percent of Wallowa County is owned by the Forest Service. Let's keep this straight. The American people own the national forests. We hire the U.S. Forest Service to be our janitor.

Doran Hopkins
Summerville

10 states in the country in terms of individual tax burden (www.TaxFoundation.org).

While Measure 104 won't stop every tax increase it will make it a little harder and ensure that there is broader, bipartisan support. Measure 104 sends the message to politicians that we want better management of our tax dollars. There's currently no political will to make tough decisions. Measure 104 forces politicians to eliminate waste before they come back to us for more money.

Rodney and Linda Botts
Joseph

Botts: Vote yes on Measure 104

To the Editor
Why you should vote yes on Measure 104:

1. In 1996, Oregon voters passed a constitutional amendment requiring a supermajority vote on all revenue-raising legislation. Politicians have created loopholes to get around the state's constitutional requirement for a three-fifths supermajority to raise taxes on Oregon families and small businesses.

Measure 104 will close the loopholes and make sure politicians follow the State Constitution. 2. Ballot Measure 104 ensures that any legislation that raises revenue requires a three-fifths majority vote. This includes fees or the elimination of tax exemptions, deductions or credits — making it clear that Oregonians are fed up with politicians working behind closed doors to increase taxes.

The Legislature has made a variety of attempts to raise taxes on a simple majority vote.

For example: Oregon politicians attempted to eliminate the home mortgage interest tax deduction for many taxpayers; attempted to implement a carbon tax without a supermajority vote and without providing Oregonians evidence that it would result in reduced carbon emissions; and robbed thousands of Oregon small businesses of recent federal tax cuts by disconnecting from the federal tax code — raising \$244 million in new revenue from small businesses on a simple majority vote (SB 1528–2018).

Oregon lawmakers just voted for \$1 billion in higher taxes within the past year, examples include: 10 cent gas tax increase, new payroll tax and car sales tax, car registration and title fees hike, truck mileage tax hike, family health insurance premium tax (\$330 million), small business tax (\$376 million), and hunting and fishing license fee hikes. Oregon now ranks among the top

Gougherty: No on 105 — immigration does not equal criminality

To the Editor:

The national events of the past few days have shown the effects of a toxic political atmosphere, where any group defined as "different" becomes demonized and threatened. Approval of Measure 105, which has been partially funded and supported by hate groups, would inject this sickening atmosphere into Oregon. It would renew racial profiling and make the most vulnerable among us even more vulnerable.

I have studied with, worked with and taught first- and second-generation immigrants from Mexico, Central America, Asia and the Middle East. Most immigrants, documented or not, work hard and try to do what is best for their families just like most Oregonians.

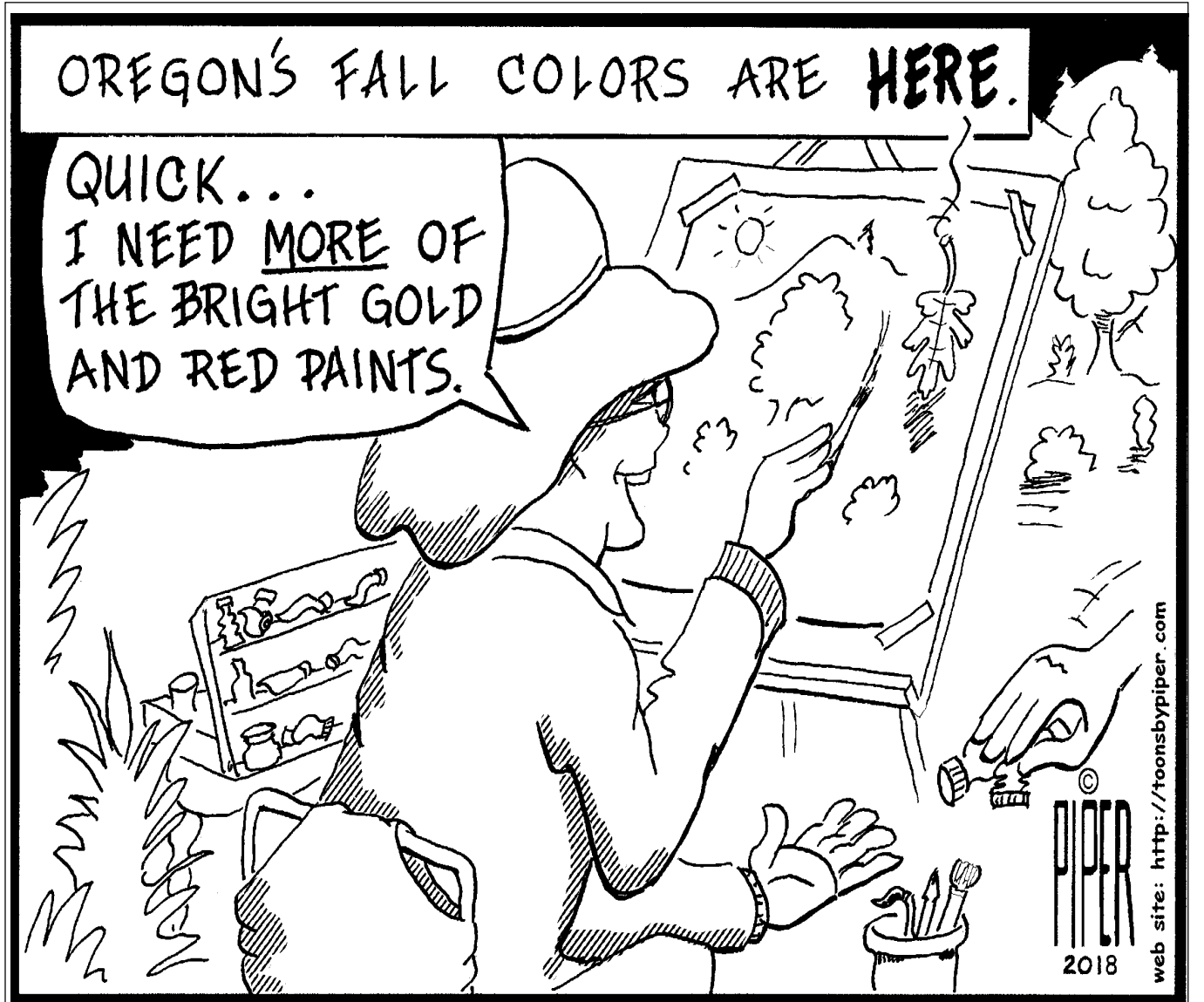
Since meeting with Sheriff Rasmussen over a year ago to discuss immigration policy, it has become increasingly clear he is a mouthpiece for an agenda he doesn't understand. He signed onto a letter in favor of the measure, which politicized a young woman's murder against her family's wishes. Such an action contributes to the false narrative that equates immigration with criminality.

Representative Barreto, who initially co-sponsored the petition, would rather divide us and divert our attention away from his lack of concrete achievements for Union County.

It is rather ironic a politician who claims to be pro-family and in favor of local control supports a measure that would tear families apart and divert local resources to federal immigration enforcement.

I encourage you to vote NO on Measure 105.

Matthew Gougherty
La Grande



Pfister-Minogue: McLeod-Skinner is ready to protect our democracy

To the Editor:

It's time to think seriously about what has happened in this country and to put senators and representatives in Congress who will use their voice to support everyday people. Big corporations, including health insurers and pharmaceutical companies, are allowed to make enormous contributions to campaigns, thus buying what they want to see happen. Insurance companies are profit-making entities and the current law protects "Big Pharma" from any price controls (which is why drugs in this country are so expensive).

President Trump is busy stripping away many of the protections that previous administrations put in place, such as clean-air regulations, workplace rules and guarantees of net neutrality.

He gave a huge tax cut to already wealthy corporations and a temporary one to the rest of us. It's clear: every day, the Trump administration puts corporate profits ahead of people's safety and security.

Proposals in Congress threaten Social Security and Medicare. Social Security is not in the red — and it's not a giveaway. Many of us have paid into Social Security for years and we deserve to have it continue. Before the advent of Social Security, more than half of elderly people lived in poverty (now it's 10 percent). Medicare is very cost effective (non-profit), yet there are proposals now to

give vouchers to people on Medicare to limit their use of health care. I don't think the billionaires running the show understand or care about the average American.

I'm voting for Jamie McLeod-Skinner who is ready to stand up for the average person and protect our democracy. Regular people (not big corporations) fund her campaign. She has traveled more than 40,000 miles across the state meeting with both Republicans and Democrats. She knows how to listen in a bipartisan way. Vote with me for Jamie McLeod-Skinner for Congressional District 2 before Nov. 6.

Kathy Pfister-Minogue
La Grande

McCracken: Citizens must have free and open platforms to present their views

To the Editor:

Greg Walden has been my senator for 20 years. Unfortunately, he actually represents a few major industries when voting to shape national policy.

Given his near bottomless campaign fund, supporters of any grassroots opponent have difficulty even getting an alternative message out. Jamie McLeod-Skinner is running for CD2 with individual donations and volunteer support. Corporate media is extremely expensive, yet it controls most means of disseminating information in America today. Jamie's volunteers formed phone banks and have gone door to door with information. How else can volunteers reach voters?

Write to us

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

The Observer welcomes letters to the editor. Letters are limited to 350 words and must be signed and carry the author's address and phone number (for verification purposes only).

We edit letters for brevity, grammar, taste and legal reasons. We do not fact check. We will not publish poetry, consumer complaints against businesses or personal attacks against private individuals. Thank-you letters are discouraged.

Letter writers are limited to one letter every two weeks. Email your letters to news@lagrandeobserver.com or mail them to La Grande Observer, 1406 5th St., La Grande, Ore., 97850.

Letters deadline

The Observer does not run endorsements of more than 350 words.

The Observer will institute a deadline for letters to the editor, so we can be fair with all the letters we receive and allow for responses before Election Day if necessary.

We run the letters on a first come, first served basis. We will publish our last letters on Monday, Nov. 5. Election Day is Nov. 6.

I chose to encourage people to vote while handing out fliers outside local stores.

At each store managers asked me to leave. I feel the need to provide information other than "paid for by" on media platforms. So I chose to continue offering information and encouraging people to vote even after being asked to leave.

Citizens must have free and open platforms to present their views to others. Freedom of speech and press mean nothing without opportunities to disseminate information. Denying citizens the opportunity to educate voters will further the control of big money in this country. That is not democracy.

Mary McCracken
Island City

Hainley: Vote yes on Measure 102 to promote affordable housing

To the Editor:

Oregonians need a safe, stable and affordable place to call home. Too many members of Eastern Oregon communities are struggling to put a roof over their heads and put food on the table. In Eastern Oregon, the crisis is impacting seniors, agricultural workers, families and the entire community. Community and Shelter Assistance Corp (CASA of Oregon) works to ensure the basic need of shelter is available to all Oregonians. We work with community partners to help develop capacity to respond to community needs.

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