

OUR VIEW

Trying to get Brown's attention

The efforts to put a recall of Oregon Gov. Kate Brown on the ballot is a visible sign of the rural-urban divide.

There are two separate efforts underway — one sponsored by the Oregon Republican Party, the other by a self-proclaimed grassroots organization that goes by the descriptive moniker “Flush down Kate Brown.”

To get a recall on the ballot, either group needs to collect 280,050 valid signatures from registered voters by Oct. 14. Realistically, either effort will need well over 300,000 signatures to survive challenges.

Our colleagues at the Oregon Capital Bureau talked with people signing the petitions at the Oregon State Fair.

The majority of those interviewed at the fair struggled to specify why they wanted to recall Brown, and seemed to be doing so based on a gut feeling. Most commonly, people brought up cap and trade — a failed effort by the Legislature that Brown backed to curb greenhouse gas emissions.

“My understanding is that a lot of people just don't think Salem cares about them right now,” said Linn County GOP Chair Adam Keaton.

Indeed. Many Oregonians feel that political leaders such as Brown have not only abandoned them but are actively working against their interests.

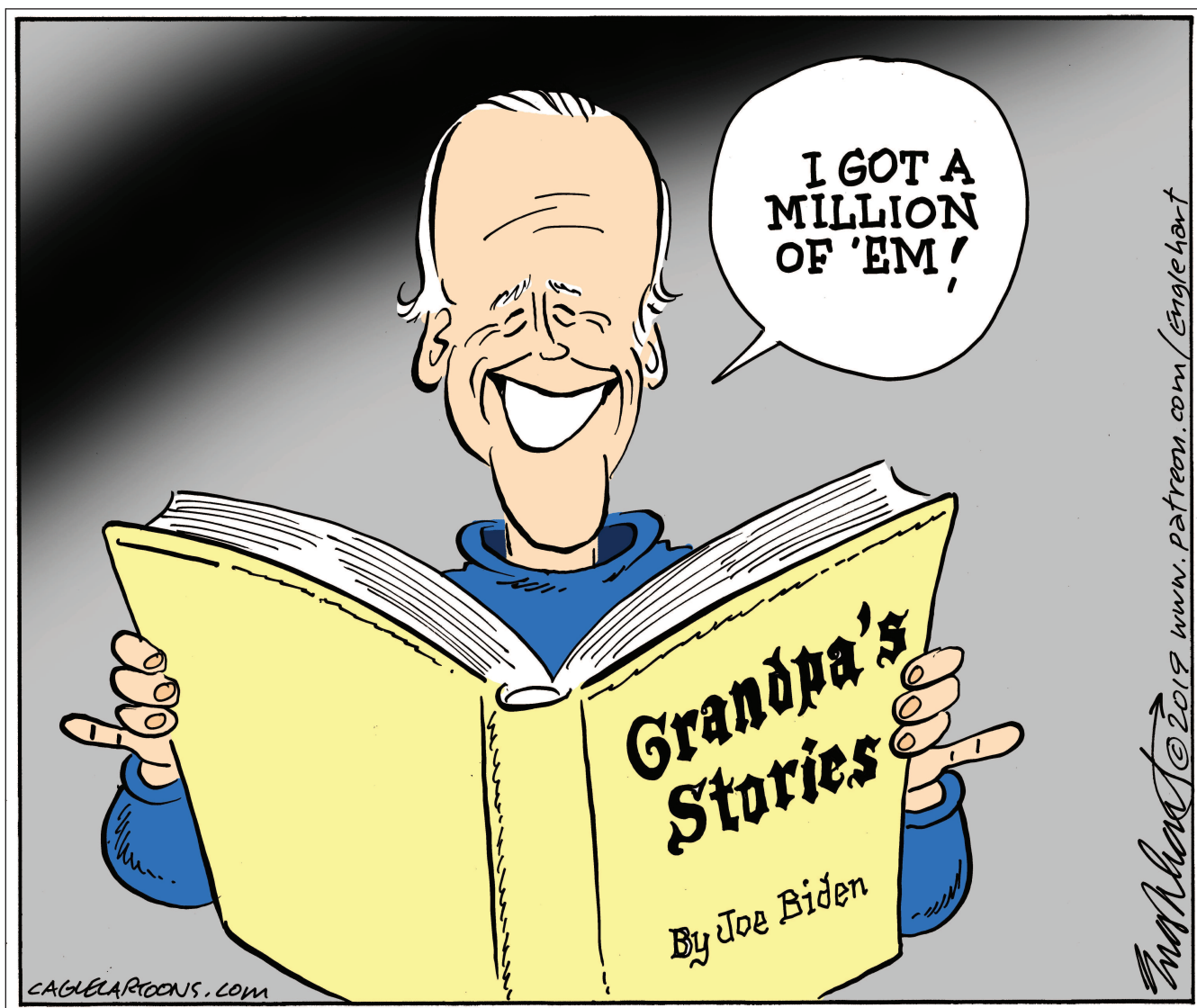
Kate Brown is not a wildly popular governor. As secretary of state, she ascended to office when John Kitzhaber resigned in 2015. She barely won a majority of votes in the special election to fulfill Kitzhaber's remaining term in 2016 and won just 50% of the vote in 2018 when she was elected for her own four-year term. A recent poll found her to be one of the least popular governors in the country.

Recall efforts are a long shot, even with officials of marginal popularity. In the absence of actual corruption or malfeasance, we question the wisdom of trying to overturn legitimate elections either by recall or impeachment. It's a clumsy way to reconcile policy differences.

Still, we understand the frustration that farmers, ranchers, loggers, truckers, fishermen and other working Oregonians — rural and urban — are feeling. They think they have no other options left but to replace Kate Brown with the next officer in the line of succession — state Treasurer Tobias Read, a Democrat who is at least as liberal as Brown.

What they really want is for Brown and other urban leaders to hear their concerns and take them seriously.

Do they have her attention now? We can only hope.



My Voice

Remember those affected by war

Friday, Sept. 20, is POW/MIA Recognition Day. This special day and the Prisoner of War/Missing in Action flag are symbolic of our nation's resolve to never leave our warriors behind. Our armed forces will look for the missing until they are accounted for.

Sunday, Sept. 29, is Gold Star Mother's Day. A Gold Star Mother is one who lost a son or daughter while serving their nation in times of war or conflict. These two special days have a great deal in common.

On Sept. 20, and Sept. 29, we should all stop and ponder the losses of our American families through the years. After all, these losses and sacrifices were made to protect our nation. Through the years, about 1 million brave warriors lost their American Dream so that we could live ours.

We should remember that:

- All totaled, there were over 130,000 American military personnel who were prisoners of war in the 20th and 21st century wars, including 184 from Oregon.

- About 7,500 warriors are missing from World War I — 19 from Oregon.
- 72,676 warriors are missing from World War II — 886 from Oregon.
- 7,634 warriors are missing from the Korean War — 56 from Oregon.

- As of July 26, 2019, there are 1,587 still missing in Southeast Asia — 33 from Oregon.

Let us all keep these sacrifices at the forefront. That is the purpose of the POW/MIA flag. That is the reason there are monuments and memorials. The adage “Let us not forget” is appropriate.

We should support those who are working to help us not to forget. Yes, more monuments and memorials should be built. There is a shortage of memorials that specifically honor our Vietnam veterans.

In Salem, on state properties, one can find memorials and monuments that honor the veterans of every war except

Write to us

MY VOICE

Steve Bates has resided in Boring for 42 years and is a life member of the Associates of Vietnam Veterans of America. He serves as chair of the committee on memorials & remembrance and president of the Vietnam War Memorial Fund. He can be reached by email at vietnamwarmem@aol.com.

My Voice columns should be 500 words. Submissions should include a portrait-type photograph of the author. Authors also should include their full name, age, occupation and relevant organizational memberships. We edit submissions for brevity, grammar, taste and legal reasons. We reject those published elsewhere. Send columns to La Grande Observer, 1406 5th St., La Grande, Ore., 97850, fax them to 541-963-7804 or email them to news@lagrandeobserver.com.

the Vietnam War and the Persian Gulf War of 1991. There are Vietnam War memorials in Portland, Canby, Newport and a new memorial is under construction in Medford. Many communities have established memorials and parks that honor veterans from all wars.

The community of Boring dedicated a Vietnam War memorial at its Boring Station Trailhead Park on Sept. 21, 2018, which was POW/MIA Recognition Day. A portion of the dedication ceremony included the raising of the POW/MIA flag for the first time over Boring. The dedication ceremony also paid tribute to Gold Star Mothers and Gold Star Families as the community honored 41

Write to us

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Clackamas County warriors who gave the ultimate sacrifice in Vietnam.

A group of Oregon residents is proposing a Vietnam War memorial on the Oregon State Capitol Grounds. This proposed memorial will honor all who served during the Vietnam War era, regardless of their duty station. Special reverence for those who served in Vietnam and those Oregonians that perished in Vietnam will be included. Also, this memorial is planned to have tributes to all Gold Star Families, Oregon's Prisoners Of War and those Missing In Action.

For more information on the project, visit www.vietnamwarmemorialfund.org.

Those of us who never wore a military uniform should give special consideration to POW/MIA Recognition Day and Gold Star Mother's Day with a resolve to honor all who served and sacrificed. We must also remember their families. These sacrifices were made so that we can live as a free people.

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