

**OUR VIEW**

## Trump still has rural support

A recent story in the Capital Press tried to gauge whether rural voters still support Donald Trump. It appears that they do.

We don't think potential opponents in the upcoming campaign are doing much to understand Trump's appeal to those voters and address their concerns.

Rural voters accounted for 17% of the electorate in the 2016 elections and Trump carried 62% of the rural vote, according to exit polls. Electoral maps show the president largely carried rural counties in the Pacific Northwest.

A recent poll by Grinnell College in Iowa shows that Trump's approval rating among rural voters ranges from 56% to 63% on issues such as his performance as president, the economy and immigration.

Support for Trump in rural areas is not unanimous or homogenous. Even among supporters it's not uncommon to hear frank discussions of the president's shortcomings — both in policy and manners.

The president has delivered a mixed bag for farmers and ranchers.

On the campaign trail Trump railed against trade deals he said were unfair to the United States. Agriculture depends on foreign trade and the prospect of more advantageous treaties was just as appealing in rural America as it was in the industrial Midwest.

His on-again, off-again trade war with China has had a huge impact on farmers. His imposition of punitive tariffs on Mexico and Canada even as he was announcing a replacement for the North American Free Trade Agreement led to retaliatory duties on farm products.

But that deal has now passed the House. There are bilateral agreements with Japan and South Korea. Phase One of a multi-part agreement has been announced with China.

The president has delivered on his promise to reduce government regulation, most notably in reversing the controversial "Waters of the U.S." rule. Farmers and ranchers have mostly benefitted from the 2017 tax reforms.

Rural voters largely felt left out of the conversation during the eight years of the Obama administration. But our sources say the Trump administration is listening and they are being heard — even if they don't always get what they want.

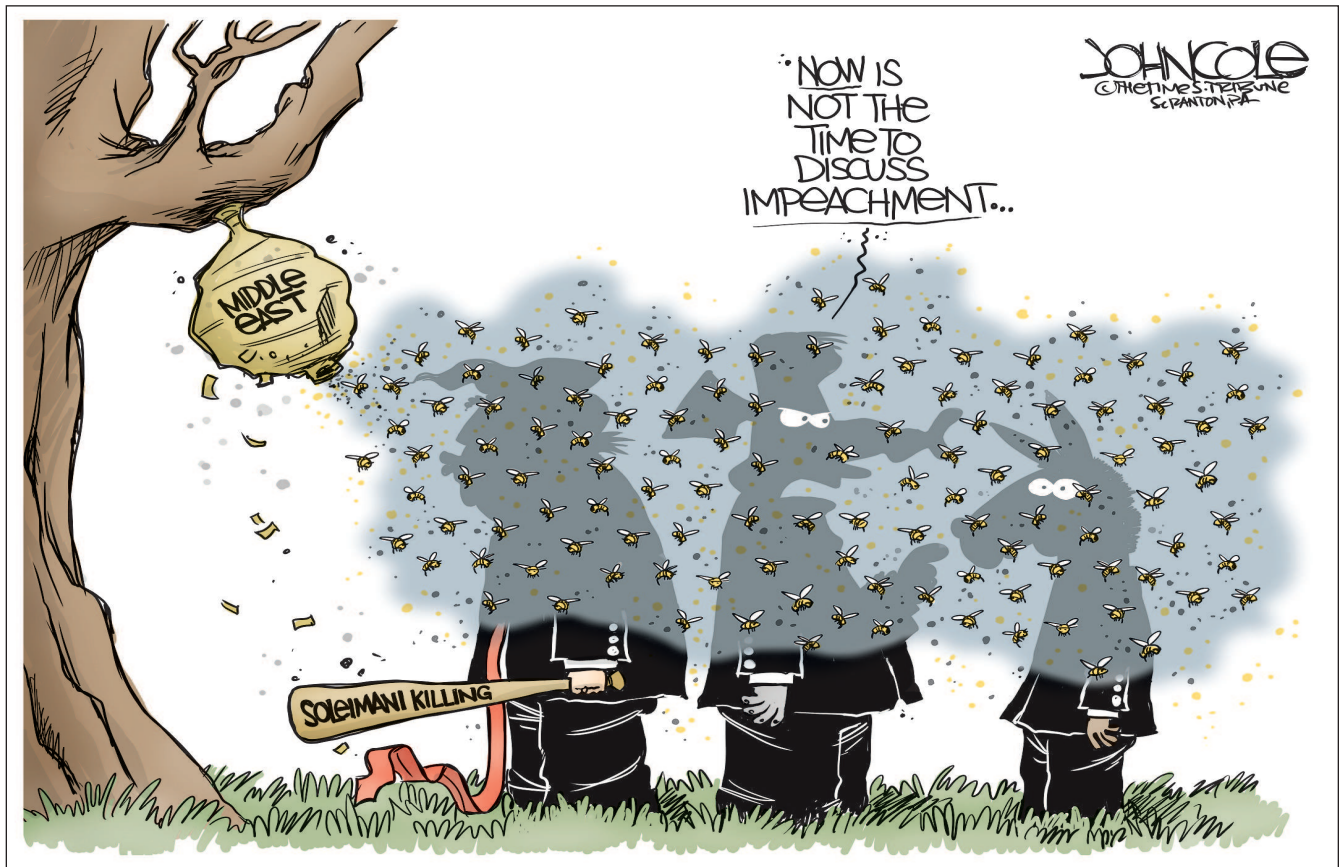
Trump has twice addressed the American Farm Bureau Federation's national convention and has addressed the FFA's convention once. No president since George H.W. Bush has done either.

A frenetic spellbinder, Trump is a master at keeping the attention of both friends and foes focused on himself and his agenda.

It would be a mistake for challengers to believe that his rural supporters are being manipulated. Trump is merely giving voice to positions on trade, regulation, taxes and the role of government that they already had.

If they want the rural vote, challengers must come more in line with those views.

In 2016 many rural voters saw Trump as the lesser of two evils. With just 10 months until the next election, they aren't seeing a viable alternative in 2020.



**MY VOICE**

## Vietnam vets another year older, still without a capital city memorial

The United States of America Commemoration of the Vietnam War is currently ongoing. This national commemoration was authorized by Congress, established under the secretary of defense and launched by the president in May 2012.

It will continue through Veterans Day, Nov. 11, 2025. This program commemorates the 50th anniversary of the Vietnam War and recognizes all who served on active duty in the U.S. Armed Forces, regardless of location, during the period of Nov. 1, 1955, to May 15, 1975, as a Vietnam veteran.

While 2020 brings another year, our Vietnam veterans are a year older and there is still not a Vietnam War memorial in Oregon's capital city of Salem.

During the Vietnam War era, more than 9 million Americans served in the United States military. More than 2.7 million served in Vietnam, of which about 57,000 were Oregonians. It is estimated that a total of 180,000 from Oregon served during the Vietnam War era. Currently, it is estimated with data provided by the United States Census Bureau, that there about 100,000 Oregon Vietnam era veterans alive today.

The average age of our Vietnam veterans is now over 70. The Vietnam Veterans of America announced that the average age of their membership in 2019 was 72.

The United States Department of Veterans Affairs published a report that forecast 14,000 Oregon Vietnam veterans either have passed away or will die between 2015 and 2020 at a rate of 8 veterans per day.

It is inevitable that our Vietnam veterans will leave us.

Vietnam veteran and United Mine Workers of America, International Union President Cecil E. Roberts made this statement in March 2019: "With an estimated 390 Vietnam veterans passing each day there will be few, if any alive in 10 years."

The state of Oregon dedicated a beautiful World War II Memorial on the Oregon Capitol Grounds on June 6, 2014. At that time, over 95% of all World War II veterans were gone already.

It has been said by several Oregonians that we have an urgent situation. Time is running out. The window of opportunity is slowly closing for the state of Oregon to honor its Vietnam veterans while they are still with us. A Vietnam War memorial on the Oregon Capitol Grounds is needed sooner rather than later.

During the 2020 legislative session, it is anticipated that a Senate bill will be introduced which will establish a Vietnam War memorial on the Oregon Capitol Grounds. Currently, the Oregon Parks and Recreation Department and the Oregon State Historic Preservation Office are reviewing a proposed design for such a memorial.

You can see the proposed design at [www.vietnamwarmemorialfund.org](http://www.vietnamwarmemorialfund.org).

It is estimated that the proposed Vietnam War memorial on the Oregon Capitol Grounds will cost 2.7 million dollars. A nonprofit corporation exists to raise these needed funds. The stated goal is to raise these funds from the private sector.

**About the author**

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

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You can help. Call your state legislators and tell them you wish for them to pass the Vietnam War Memorial Senate Bill. You can also make a tax deductible donation to the cause.

Another year has passed and, with your help, we are one year closer to honoring our Vietnam veterans with a Vietnam War memorial on the Oregon Capitol Grounds.

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