

OUR VIEW

Voters deserve to have final say

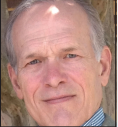
Politicians like to talk a lot. Americans — voters — get that. We all — perhaps subconsciously — take into account the role politicians play in our great experiment and understand that doing a lot of talking for an elected leader is often just part of the gig. Yet voters need to listen when politicians start to pontificate, and there is no better example of that premise than the recent remarks by Oregon Democratic Senate Majority Leader Ginny Burdick regarding the new cap-and-trade bill, Senate Bill 1530. As many readers may know, a cabal of Democrats decided to once again lead the carbon emission limit one-trick pony out onto center stage during the current 35-day legislative session. A bill with similar goals was put on ice during the last session and died an unceremonious death, after a walkout by Republican lawmakers in June 2019. Opponents to the bill cite a range of problems with the proposed legislation and some Republican lawmakers, including Sen. Bill Hansell, R-Athena, have proposed the carbon emission proposal be placed before voters for a final say. Burdick told a group of reporters the “new cap-and-trade bill was too complicated for voters to understand, and therefore the people shouldn’t be allowed to decide this issue at the ballot.” If you just had to reread that statement again — to be absolutely sure your eyes were not deceiving you — we understand. Because such a statement is not only surprising but amazing in its implications. Essentially, the message sent is voters are stupid. That’s Oregon voters. Burdick’s argument — such as it is — remains a prototype of electoral ignorance and is about as condescending an argument as one can possibly imagine. Perhaps Burdick — and other lawmakers who seem to be confused — should be required to attend mandatory Civics 101 classes to understand how democracy works. Democracy isn’t a closed arena where elected leaders are the final arbitrators of what is right and what isn’t or who deserves to be included and who does not. Politicians work for the voters. In the end it is the people — not politicians — who have the final say in a democracy, and if we were on the sidelines regarding voter participation in the carbon emission limit plan we are not now. Our lawmakers are going to waste a lot of time debating about this newest carbon emission limit plan so a specific political agenda can be shoved through to law. We urge legislators to remove the bill’s emergency clause, which would allow it to go into effect immediately. That’s just not wise. Voters, indeed, should have the final say on whether the state should adopt a carbon emission plan. That’s because they’re not stupid.



OTHER VIEWS

Putting a price on moral exhibitionism

Moral exhibitionists are people who make a point out of taking a very public “moral” stands on an issue. This posturing costs them nothing and imposes the burden of paying for their sanctimony on others. Examples include union organizers who don’t even own a lemonade stand demanding a \$15 an hour ‘living wage,’ wealthy leftists demanding action to fight global warming, and Members of Congress who want “Medicare for All” while knowing they will receive gold-plated, no-waiting healthcare. Those hypocrites are why a recent WoePost (Washington Post) story was so refreshing. Aaron Seyedian is refreshing because although he believes in the living wage, he isn’t expecting Uncle Sam to force someone else to foot the bill. Seyedian is the founder of Well-Paid Maids. (The name proves this is his first marketing effort. It’s an inward-directed name and a bit off-putting for customers. It’s like naming your investment firm “Fat Commissions Brokerage” or your personal injury practice “Filthy Rich Lawyers.”) Well-Paid Maids is different because the 31-year-old Seyedian’s firm is “explicitly dedicated to paying a living wage.” And the other benefits aren’t bad either. “(Aaron) the cleaning staff \$17 to \$19 an hour, which is well above the national median of \$11.43 for house cleaners and the D.C.-area median of \$13.12. Staffers also get 22 days a year of paid vacation. “In addition, Seyedian offers a zero-deductible health plan, which costs about \$8,000 per worker, and an employer-paid disability plan.” Seyedian doesn’t Uberize his staff either. Every employee is full-time. There are no contractors paid by the weight of the dirt in the vacuum cleaner bag. Plus, it’s harder to join his staff than it is to become a cop. Only one out of every 15 applicants is hired. Seyedian is new to business, and new to tooting his own horn. He said his staff makes about \$35,000 a year, but that number is way low. When you add the monthly cost of a bronze Obamacare plan and its punishing \$5,700 deductible, neither of which employees pay, total compensation is closer to \$46,232.00. Why that’s high enough to make an American want the job! Well-Paid Maids’ total compensation



MICHAEL SHANNON

is almost double the \$23,770.00 US News calculates is the average salary at Poorly-Paid Maids. According to Career Builder that salary puts one in the same neighborhood as biological technician, licensed practical nurse, mental health counselor or surgical technologist. All occupations that require an advanced degree or training. Seyedian is one businessman Bernie’s Angel-of-Death-for-Capitalism should pass over. Naturally the question becomes how much does it cost to have your apartment cleaned by someone that makes more money than you do? This is where we can finally calculate the exact monetary cost of moral exhibitionism for those few actually willing to let their money back their mouth. Homeguide calculates the average cost for a maid service to clean a one-bedroom, one-bathroom apartment is “\$75 for standard cleaning.” The kind of money won’t get Well-Paid Maids to answer the phone. The price to have guilt-free cleaning - without what Seyedian calls the “nanny tax” — is \$159. Which puts the Moral Exhibitionism Markup at approximately 112 percent. It’s the difference between paying \$1.00 at the Dollar Store and \$2.12 at the Living Wage Dollar Store. It would be cheaper to hire a Grievance Studies PhD., assuming they could operate a Hoover. With those unsustainable rates starring me in the face, I assumed the target market for Well-Paid Maids is billionaires, cabinet secretaries and Meghan Markle, but that’s not true. Seyedian is looking for “mission-minded customers.” “Some customers feel uncomfortable that they employ people who don’t make enough money to live on,” Seyedian said. “Since it is not in your power to change the living wage overnight, by us doing this is a way for people to do something voluntarily that is at least in line with their views.” And it frees cheaper outfits to work people like me into their busy schedule. Aaron runs the business out of his apartment. He billed \$300,000 his first year, \$600,000 last year and is hoping to break a million in 2020. His customer base is about 1,500 with 40%

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being repeat clients. After paying all his expenses, Seyedian paid himself \$90,000 in 2019. Aaron’s business might be viable in recession-proof D.C., home of the never laid-off government ‘worker’, but I have my doubts about potential success in other markets. Still, there is much to admire about building a business model that supports his beliefs without resorting to government coercion. My only suggestion as a retired marketer, would be to do something about that name. How about “Guilt-Free Cleaning” or “Ticket-to-the-Middle-Class Maids” or even “No Tip Necessary Maids”? *Michael Shannon is a commentator and public relations consultant and is the author of “A Conservative Christian’s Guidebook for Living in Secular Times.” He can be reached at mandate.mmpr@gmail.com.*

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