

Our View

Vote no on Measure 110

Drug abuse and addiction are huge problems in Oregon. Methamphetamine, opiates (heroin, fentanyl and oxycodone and others) and cocaine damage and kill thousands of people every year. Few of us reach adulthood without knowing someone whose life was destroyed by drug or alcohol addiction. Some of us have been victims of crime in which the perpetrator was seeking a way to fund their addiction.

There is considerable tension between those who believe that dangerous drugs should be illegal, with criminal penalties for their possession versus those who believe use of these drugs is primarily an addiction and thus a mental health and behavioral health issue. Ideally, we should have a behavioral health system that can intervene before the criminal justice system needs to.

Measure 110 on the November ballot would redistribute marijuana tax revenue above \$11.25 million per quarter — reducing revenue to schools, state police, mental health programs and local governments. This revenue would be redirected to a new “Drug Treatment and Recovery Services Fund” that would grant money to fund “Addiction Recovery Centers” in each existing coordinated care organization service area in the state, as well as “organizations providing substance use disorder treatment, peer support and recovery services, permanent supportive housing, and harm reduction interventions” at no cost to the recipients.

It also decriminalizes certain drug offenses for juveniles and adults, such as possession of heroin (1 gram or less), cocaine (2 grams or less), methamphetamine (2 grams or less), MDMA (less than 1 gram or 5 pills), LSD (less than 40 user units), psilocybin (less than 12 grams), methadone (less than 40 user units) and oxycodone (less than 40 pills, tablets or capsules). In doing so, it removes the judicial system’s authority to mandate participation in drug courts or other addiction treatment for those found in possession.

The Oregon Association of Chiefs of Police oppose Measure 110, along with 26 out of 36 district attorneys in the state. They believe law enforcement plays an important role in getting people the help they need — and we agree.

The Oregon Council for Behavioral Health is opposed to Measure 110 because it does not address fundamental problems in Oregon’s addiction treatment and recovery system. While the measure provides for screenings and assessments, it does not, for example, create treatment beds and outpatient care.

Oregon desperately needs more detox centers, residential and outpatient treatment options, and supports for ongoing recovery. We appreciate all efforts to provide treatment for those whose lives are controlled by their addiction and to keep them out of the criminal justice system, but we don’t think this ballot measure — which seems to be a test case for the New York-based Drug Policy Alliance — is the way to do it.

We recommend a “No” vote on Measure 110.

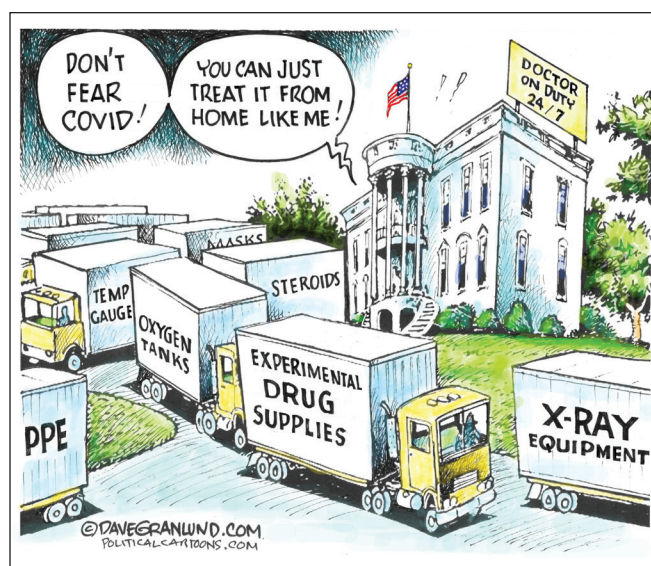
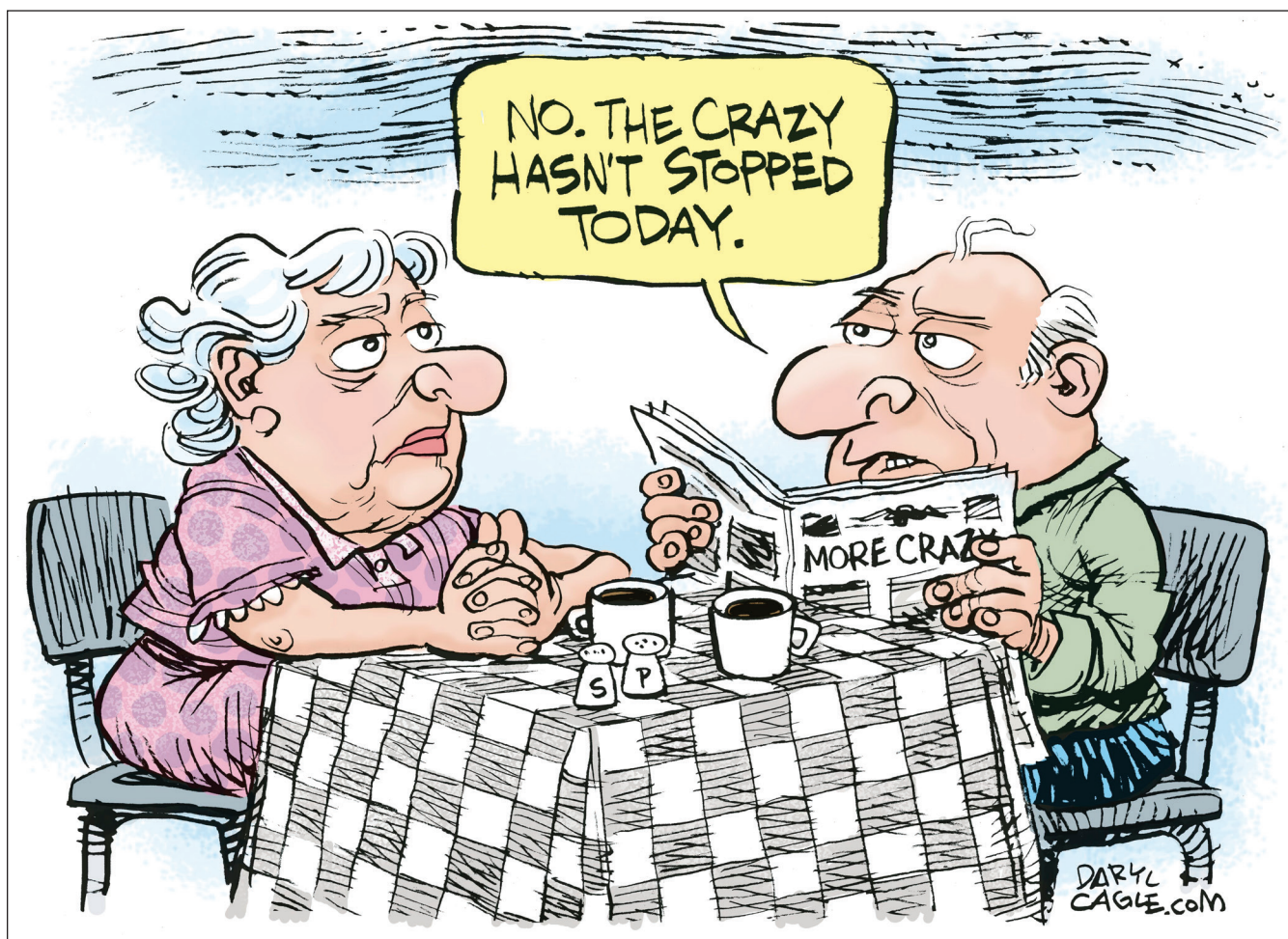
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Letters

Pet pigs are welcome in country town

I have lived in Union for 40-plus years and we love living in our little country town. Our pet pigs are just like other pets, just like your dogs, cats, horses, goats or even cows. That is one of the reasons why we like our little town. So, yes, pigs for (pets) are welcome. If you don’t like country living, maybe Union is not for you to move to then.

Jodi Falk
Union

B2H route the wrong choice for wildfire prevention

Recent attention on the Boardman to Hemingway transmission line and which route might be permitted in Union County brings me to share another option that doesn’t get enough attention. I have commented on this option since 2015, at the Oregon Public Utility Commission. While I honestly did not have wildfires on my mind back then, it’s all I can think about these days.

This option needs to be surfaced and discussed widely — especially among land use planners and utility regulators. The idea is the current 230 kilovolt line coming through Union County could be upgraded and “re-conducted.” This means if Idaho Power really needed “more capacity,” which Stop B2H and others dispute, they could upgrade to a 345 kilovolt line on the same poles in the same corridor.

While doing so, the company could digitize the line in preparation for future energy distribution, and it could fire-harden the line and clean the corridor, making us all more secure and safe. There are actually three of these existing 230 lines going into Idaho (the others go through the Hells Canyon complex). Upgrading these three lines could yield another 345 kilovolts of transmission capacity for the company’s profits.

I guess that’s still not enough profits for the hungry profiteers? Do they really need 500 kilovolt — when their lines are not constrained and people are using less energy? Apparently, Idaho Power would rather risk our lives, our livelihoods, and our cherished landscapes and habitats. Get involved — join www.stopb2h.org — and help Stop B2H. It’s obviously such a wrong and risky choice.

Fuji Kreider
La Grande

Vote for Steve Clements, a proactive public official

My name is Jim Whitbeck and I am writing in support of Steve Clement in his campaign for reelection to mayor of La Grande.

I had the pleasure of working with Steve in multiple capacities, but would first like to focus on my time as a city councilor. I believe one of the most important competencies for his position is a willingness to engage with new and different ideas, seek compromise and, where necessary, be willing to “agree to disagree.” Steve not only demonstrated this capability many times over, but brought a sense of leadership and responsibility that is often needed to build consensus and move challenging conversations forward.

Steve has one of the strongest foundations of public service experience of anyone in our community. Put simply, he knows how the processes of our local government work (no small feat) and has built the relationships needed to drive progress. Further, Steve is nothing if not accessible and open to input from any citizen seeking to be heard.

Speaking as the owner of a small local business, from my earliest days through the present Steve has been both a supportive customer and proactive public official in seeking out how the city can help us thrive. I have also seen him at every major community event I can remember, not that I could

miss his energy and enthusiasm if I wanted to.

Please consider voting for Steve Clements for La Grande mayor.

Jim Whitbeck
La Grande

Nicole Howard is always prepared and compassionate

I have lived in the city of La Grande for just over a year. One of the ways that helped me acclimate to this community was to attend the La Grande city council meetings each month. Magic happens when you observe a city council in person; you get to know what the community cares about, and you get to know your council representatives on a human level. (This is also a letter to advocate for civic involvement. More people should follow what happens on city council.)

One of the things I miss most about attending the city council meetings in person is watching how councilor Nicole Howard engages with the people of this community. No matter the concern, she comes prepared. She clearly does her homework regarding council decisions and is always ready to ask the fact-finding questions. Nicole also offers a sense of compassion to everyone with a civil concern. She carefully considers the needs of the full community and advocates for the betterment of La Grande. Once when she noticed two millennials were showing up to city council month after month, with no stake outside of interest in their community, Nicole introduced herself and asked how she could work for a better La Grande for us.

I see Nicole Howard as someone who deeply cares about our community, and is working to build bridges that make our city whole. I encourage everyone in La Grande to vote for Nicole Howard to serve another term on our city council.

Taylor Gould
La Grande

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