

Opinion / Politics

— GUEST OPINION —

Conservative values ...

By Sen. Doug Whitsett

The American Conservative Union (ACU) is the nation's premier conservative group supporting Americans who are concerned with personal responsibility, traditional values, a strong national defense and the preservation of liberty. The Washington D.C.-based organization is the national leader for providing conservative positions on issues to Congress, the Executive Branch, State Legislatures, the media, political candidates and the public.

The ACU researches and selects a wide range of bills that reflect a member's adherence to government integrity, as well as economic, social and cultural conservative principles.

According to ACU Chairman Matt Schlapp, "The Oregon legislature continues to churn out a liberal wish-list of legislation that results in higher costs to consumers for health care, housing and energy. The list includes complex notification requirements for landlords of apartment buildings, forcing insurance companies to pay physician rates to non-physicians, and making Oregon the first state in the nation to ban coal fired power plants. Fortunately, a House-passed bill that would have allowed the state police to indefinitely hold up a firearms sale was not taken up in the Senate."

After the 2016 legislative session ended last March, the ACU selected twelve bills to evaluate legislators' conservative values. They are as follows:

HB 4122—Food Labeling Mandate: This bill would have mandated that labels be applied to any genetically engineered salmon sold in Oregon. ACU opposed the bill because it was a mandate to drive up the cost of food to consumers. The House passed the bill by a vote of 32-27 but it subsequently died in the Senate Health Care Committee.

HB 4147—Firearm Transfers: This bill would have prohibited the transfer of a firearm if the Oregon State Police (OSP) allege they are unable to determine whether the recipient is qualified to possess a firearm. Currently, the law allows dealers to release a firearm after three days if OSP has reached no decision. ACU opposed the bill because it supports the founders' belief in the Second Amendment. The House passed the bill by a vote of 31-28, but it later died in the Senate Rules Committee.

SB 1532—Minimum Wage: This bill created a complex system of minimum wage laws across the state, with levels rising to \$13.50 per hour in Portland and to lower levels in other parts of the state. ACU opposed the bill because it artificially increases wages, hurting those who need the most help in finding employment, such as students and inexperienced workers. The Senate passed the bill by a vote of 16-12 and the House passed it 32-26. It was signed into law by Governor Kate Brown.

HB 4143—Rent Control: This bill creates a series of new mandates on landlords, including giving a 90 days' notice of terminating residency for month-to-month tenants. It also allows tenants to occupy the landlord's private property rent free if the notification policies are not followed. The ACU Foundation's Center for 21st Century Property Rights engages heavily on this issue because it opposes housing mandates that drive up prices to consumers and deny the rights of property owners. The bill passed the House with a vote of 48-11 and the Senate by 16-9. It was signed into law by Governor Kate Brown.

SB 1589—Expanding Corporate Subsidy Program: This bill expands a government business loan and credit guarantee program designed to help narrowly defined businesses that will "produce substantial benefits for the state." ACU opposed the bill because government programs that favor one business over another too often are the basis for crony capitalism and the subsequent expansion of government-preferred businesses. The Senate passed the bill by a vote of 21-9 and the House by 37-21. It was signed into law by Governor Kate Brown.

SB 1503—Health Insurance Price Controls: This bill mandates that insurance companies reimburse nurse practitioners and physician assistants at the same rates as physicians. It also prohibits negotiating separate rates for those who are not physicians. ACU opposed the bill because it interferes in the free market and drives up



Submitted Photo
Sen. Doug Whitsett represents Oregon's 28th District.

the cost of health insurance for consumers. The Senate passed the bill by a vote of 21-4 and the House by 44-15. It was signed into law by Governor Kate Brown.

HB 4037—Solar Energy Subsidies: This bill gives a direct subsidy to those who implement utility-scale solar installations. For example a two-megawatt installation would receive a direct subsidy of \$57,000 over five years. ACU believes that all forms of energy should compete within the free market and government should not put its thumb on the scale to favor certain businesses. The House passed the bill by a vote of 51-4 and the Senate by 22-6. It was signed into law by Governor Kate Brown.

HB 4086—Unemployment Benefits: This bill creates a new category of employee: those who are "locked out" of their place of employment because of a labor dispute. Those employees will receive up to 52 weeks of benefits, while others will receive only 26 weeks of benefits. ACU opposed this discriminatory bill, which was designed to benefit employees of one company in Oregon that was involved in a labor dispute. The House passed the bill by a vote of 48-10 and the Senate 20-6. It was signed into law by Governor Kate Brown.

SB 1547—Renewable Energy Mandate: This bill makes Oregon the first state in the nation to ban coal-fired power plants on or before the year 2030. It also requires the state to obtain at least 50 percent of its energy from renewable sources by 2040. ACU opposed the bill because it believes that all forms of energy should compete within the free market and government should not put its thumb on the scale to favor certain businesses. The Senate passed the bill by a vote of 17-12 and the House passed it 38-20. Governor Kate Brown signed the bill into Oregon law.

HB 4017—Medicaid Expansion: This bill directs state agencies to develop a plan to expand Oregon's Medicaid program to include certain immigrants covered by an international agreement known as the Compact of Free Association. Research based on the ACU Foundation's Family Prosperity Index shows increasing per capita Medicaid spending actually has a negative impact on the economy and family prosperity. ACU opposed the bill because it expands a program that has been rife with fraud and waste, with no reforms. The House passed the bill by a vote of 36-22 and the Senate by 18-10. The bill was signed into law by Governor Kate Brown.

SB 1533—Affordable Housing Set-Asides: This bill violates private property rights by forcing landlords to set-aside 20 percent of their properties for "affordable housing," at prices below the market rates. The bill also imposes a new one percent excise tax on the permit value of construction projects. ACU opposed the bill because it arbitrarily creates mandates that drive up the cost of housing for others. The Senate passed the bill by a vote of 20-8 and the House by 39-21. It was signed into law by Governor Kate Brown.

SB 1587—Criminalizing the Free Market: This bill created a new felony for violating Oregon's "prevailing wage" laws that is punishable by up to five years in prison. It establishes three new government positions and creates regulations that employers must follow in order to comply with the law. ACU opposed the bill because it artificially increases wages, driving up the cost of construction projects. The bill, in effect, makes it a crime to pay wages based on a free market. The Senate passed the bill by a vote of 21-7 and the House by 59-1. Governor Kate Brown signed it into law.

These are only a few of the bills enacted by the 2016 Legislative Assembly that defy conservative values and the principles of a government limited by authority granted by the U.S. Constitution. Oregonians may expect more of the same during the 2017 Legislative Assembly. We have no doubt that Oregon's current legislative political majority will continue to adhere to its progressive liberal agenda.

Please remember—if we do not stand up for rural Oregon, no one will.

Sen. Ted Ferrioli to address 2016 ORAVI Summit

On October 4, Senator Ted Ferrioli will address over 100 Oregonians at the ORAVI Summit hosted by the Oregon Aviation Association in Aurora, Ore. As one of five keynote speakers at the event, Ferrioli will discuss the urban-rural divide in Oregon and the benefits of retaining and expanding air transportation to rural Oregon communities.

"The diversity of Oregon's communities leaves us with unique transportation challenges," explained Ferrioli. "The urban-rural divide leaves rural Oregon communities without the attention and access to transporta-

tion solutions they need to not only survive, but thrive. We need to consider multi-modal transportation options for the whole state, not just big cities, invest in rural economic development and boost aviation opportunities to help rural Oregonians move safely and efficiently."

Ferrioli has served as State Senator for Oregon Senate District 30 since 1997. SD 30 covers 36,000 square miles in eastern Oregon, the largest legislative district in the state. One area of focus for the 2016 ORAVI Summit is rural air service for Oregon communities outside of metropolitan areas. A 2015 bill

passed by the legislature raised \$20 million for rural commercial air service assistance, rural economic development, and other air transportation priorities.

"Rural communities across the state are working hard to attract new employers offering good, family wage jobs. Our success in recruiting these family wage employers would soar if, in addition to the highest quality of living and great, kid-centered communities, we could also offer them timely, reliable air freight and passenger service on a predictable schedule," said Ferrioli.

Rep. Walden receives award

U.S. Rep. Greg Walden has been named a "Guardian of Small Business" by the National Federation of Independent Business (NFIB).

NFIB President and CEO Juanita Duggan praised Walden for his record of standing up for small businesses.

NFIB is made up of small businesses nationwide, including over 7,000 in Oregon. The Guardian of Small Business is NFIB's most prestigious award. It is reserved for lawmakers who vote consistently with NFIB on the key issues identified by small business owners.

NFIB tracks the votes of every member of Congress. House members and Senators who vote with NFIB members at least 70 percent of the time are eligible for the Guardian Award. Walden received a 100 percent voting record during this session of Congress.

— LETTERS TO THE EDITOR —

Scripture to go with recent angel article

To the Editor:

Since the recent article about angels was liberally sprinkled with Bible references, it's fair to let the Bible speak for itself.

Are all angels good?

"And there was war in heaven: Michael and his angels fought against the dragon; and the dragon fought and his angels, and prevailed not; neither was their place found any more in heaven. And the great dragon was cast out, that old serpent, called the Devil, and Satan, which deceiveth the whole world: he was cast out into the earth, and his angels were cast out with him." (Revelation of John 12:7-9)

Can Satan and his evil angels deceive people?

"And no marvel; for Satan himself is transformed into an angel of light. Therefore it is no great thing if his ministers also be transformed as the ministers of righteousness; whose end shall be according to their works." (II Corinthians 11:14-15)

Is it truly possible to communicate with dead people?

"For the living know that they shall die: but the dead know not any thing, neither have they any more a reward; for the memory of them is forgotten. Also their love, and their hatred, and their envy, is now perished; neither have they any more a portion for ever in any thing that is done under the sun." (Ecclesiastes 9:5-6)

What warning does the Bible give about trying to contact "spirits of the dead"?

"When thou art come into the land which the Lord thy God giveth thee, thou shalt not learn to do after the abominations of those nations. There shall not be found among you any one that maketh his son or his daughter to pass through the fire, or that useth divination, or an observer of times, or an enchanter, or a witch, Or a charmer, or a consulter with familiar spirits, or a wizard, or a necromancer. For all that do these things are an abomination unto the Lord: and because of these abominations the Lord thy God doth drive them out from before thee. Thou shalt be perfect with the Lord thy God." (Deuteronomy 18:9-13)

Linda Kotz
Baker City

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