

HEALTHY POLITICS

Sen. Ron Wyden sets a great example of transparency and listening to the public with his town halls and the recent interview with the *Eugene Weekly* (July 13). His work against the Senate health care bill, along with the raised voices of citizens across the country, paid off: the bill was dropped.

In addition, the attempt to just repeal the Affordable Care Act (Obamacare) hit a dead end as well. Now it is time for both parties to work together for a bill that provides affordable care for all Americans.

So let's continue to raise our voices, this time to demand a bill that will provide affordable care for everyone. Perhaps Sen. Wyden will set the example again, by working across the aisle to see this happen.

Willie Dickerson
Snohomish, Wash.

CUTHBERT GESTAPO

We went to the Alice Cooper concert at the Cuthbert Amphitheater on June 17. The musical performance and theatrics were very entertaining, but due to the invasive

manhandling, all in the name of security, which we had to endure to enter the venue, we will never return to the Cuthbert again.

Not only were we given full body pat-downs worse than most TSA pat-downs, but we were asked to empty all our pockets and barked at belligerently, by security, for forgetting that I had in my jacket such items as two pencils, an old ticket stub, a breath freshener and some assorted change.

By the time we got through the entrance process we felt as if we might as well have entered San Quentin prison.

A week later we went to see Roger Waters, a far more controversial figure and larger target, in both Tacoma and Portland. There, we weren't even asked to empty our pockets. Just walk through a metal detector.

I don't know what the Kesey brothers think is so risky, or so valuable, that they must employ Gestapo security guards, but we won't endure this again.

William Kurth
Eugene

STOP MAKING NONSENSE

Jeff Freeman's letter ("More Monster Trucks, Please," July 20) does nothing to improve the tone of public debate, especially his peculiar reference to "left-leaning, latte-drinking, NPR-listening elites." Personally, I don't drink lattes, but I certainly listen to NPR because NPR is the calmest, most rational newscast on air, with its only competition coming from the BBC.

If Mr. Freeman has any interest in elevating our fraught political discourse, he'd be well advised to stop spouting nonsense.

Rick Marcus
Eugene

HERE WE GO AGAIN

In 2005, the question on the Eugene ballot was: Should the City Council hire an appointed external police auditor? Certain people raged against the idea, assuring everyone that doing this would forever change our council/city manager form of government, and should be avoided at all costs.

It passed, and the government wasn't ruined — it's better!

So now why all the same hue and cry about how electing an independent city auditor will destroy our form of government? Would it hurt the public to actually know what happens to our tax dollars after they land at City Council, besides all the downtown projects?

And if you think that an appointed auditor would be able to really look at where everything goes, don't kid yourself. The minute that appointed auditor got close to anything remotely interesting, suddenly their budget disappears and there's no more money. Surprise!

Interestingly, the main proponents of hiring an external police auditor appear to have been City Councilor Chris Pryor, former Mayor Kitty Piercy and former City Councilor Andrea Ortiz. It would be helpful to hear the two living proponents give us feedback on what they think about this new elected independent city auditor ballot measure.

Mayor Piercy's special commission looking at a city auditor way back in 2002 concluded that the city should have an auditor! Nothing but the sound of crickets since then.

HOT AIR SOCIETY BY TONY CORCORAN

Kate's Score

IS THE REGISTER-GUARD ALWAYS RIGHT AND NEVER LEFT?

The *Register-Guard* recently won 30 awards from the Oregon Newspaper Publishers Association. Thank god it didn't finish first for editorial board content.

The *R-G* editorial board has become an apologist for the Oregon Republican Party. Its viewpoints simply mirror recent press releases from the Republican House and Senate caucuses. So much for its stated policy of "impartial publication ... candid but fair and helpful ... a citizen of its community."

Today, this editorial board reads more like "fair and balanced" *FOX News*.

On June 24, two weeks before the session ended, The *R-G* blamed Democrats for Speaker Tina Kotek's announcement that no vote would be taken on a gross receipts tax dedicated to education funding. *R-G* editors blamed Gov. Kate Brown, Kotek and Senate President Peter Courtney for an "absence of leadership."

There was not a mention of the Party of No. Not a mention that Democrats lack a supermajority in the House and that Republicans refused to budge.

Most important, the editors failed to explain PERS and its unfunded actuarial liability in a "candid but fair and helpful" manner.

There was not a word in the board's editorial about the abysmal voting records this session and the endless procedural delays promoted by those other so-called leaders: Republican caucus heads Ted Ferrioli and Mike McLane.

The 2017 session did not lack leadership, it lacked Republican votes to do the responsible thing: Stop the erratic boom-and-bust cycle of dependence on personal income tax to fund schools, which has existed since Measure 5 passed in 1990. That was followed in 1996 by Ballot Measure 25, which requires a three-fifths supermajority in both houses of the Oregon Legislative Assembly for any revenue-raising legislation.

Seems like a thousand years ago, and the Party of No still can't get its story straight.

From my perspective, I was amazed that the Democrats were able to get the health care provider tax through and save Oregon's Medicaid population. And I was even more amazed that the transportation plan was successful for the first time since 2009.

I admire Springfield State Sen. Lee Beyer for many of the same reasons I think so highly of U.S. Rep. Peter DeFazio. Transportation and infrastructure policies seldom make the headlines, but they are the skeletal component that moves Oregon's people and our economy.

Lee had been working on this transportation package for the past 18 months. But he said that six hours before it came on the Senate floor for a vote, he wasn't sure whether he had the votes. He praised two Republicans, Sen. Brian Boquist and Rep. Cliff Bentz, for their hard work on the compromise package.

By their nature, political compromises are never pretty. But when you throw in all the interest groups in a transportation funding debate — industry and labor, environmentalists, rural governments, counties, cities, transit districts, futurists and Neanderthals — you need a big room, lots of chairs in the room and a buttload of patience.

I asked Lee why the Legislature finally succeeded for the first time in eight years in getting a transportation deal. He was quick to praise the work of Gov. Brown and her chief of staff, Nik Blosser. And Lee is not the first legislator to praise Nik and the governor for wading back into the clean fuel controversy with environmentalists and holding their ground with all the parties involved.

It's clear from many observers of this past session, legislators and lobbyists alike, that both Kate and Tina sacrificed their personal agendas on revenue (gross receipts tax), cap-and-trade climate legislation and housing in order to get the transportation package through.

One observer pointed out that both Nik and Kate have a quiet style that patiently works in the background, not caring who gets the credit, trying to find Republicans willing to take on their own caucus and do the right thing. That's leadership.

The most pathetic comment by the *R-G* editorial board was regarding PERS. The editorial concluded that "more robust proposals" regarding the unfunded actuarial liability "might have become the basis for a comprehensive tax spending and education improvement plan." Utter balderdash!

We discussed what those Republican proposals were in their last-ditch amendments to SB 1067 — putting teachers and state workers on the Oregon Health Plan and stealing death benefits from PERS beneficiaries to pay down the actuarial liability. The Republicans never intended to budge on the gross receipts tax. Nike and Intel were OK with it, but the Republicans were too scared of their own constituents to vote.

R-G: Citizen of its community? Really?

Former state Sen. Tony Corcoran of Cottage Grove is a retired state employee.