

KeizerOpinion

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Marketplace will decide wages

Increasing the minimum wage and income inequality will continue to dominate the news in 2016. It is expected that income inequality will take center stage during the presidential nominating and general election campaigns.

Income inequality is not something that will be corrected by protests in the street; it would take systemic changes in tax laws, lobbying rules and reforms of campaign finance laws.

Increasing the minimum wage can be accomplished at the ballot box. Voters sympathetic to workers' demands for a higher wage are not necessarily the people who would benefit. Oregon has one of the highest minimum wages at \$9.25 (the federal minimum is \$7.25); a measure in the 2016 general election would call for an increase in our state's minimum to \$15 by 2019 and annual increases after that.

Businesses say that an increase will force them to raise prices; some businesses say a wage increase will cause them to cut jobs. An increase in payroll also increases a business' tax bill as well as increased contributions to Medicare and Social Security. Business has always passed on its increased expenses to its customers, a wage increase would be no different.

Reasonable people would not begrudge a fellow citizen from earning a life-sustaining wage. The debate will come down to what a living wage is. A post-high school teenager earning \$9.25 an hour might be quite satisfied with the wage, even working part-time. A single mother of two would probably not be satisfied with that wage especially if child care is part of her weekly expenses.

editorial

A household earning less than \$15,000 per year is eligible for the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program. An eventual increase of the minimum wage to \$15 would make many workers ineligible for

SNAP. Unless the eligibility ceiling is increased along with the minimum wage, in which case nothing would change. In that scenario the minimum wage sought would continue to climb.

The marketplace will have to decide what the minimum should be. But business should take a lesson from Henry Ford. The car manufacturer understood that thousands of his employees would be able to buy one of the cars they built if they were paid better.

Depressing wages while stockpiling cash at the top is a recipe for more than discontent; it's a recipe for a shattered society in which everyone fights to grab their share of the economic pie. Capitalism has its winners and its losers. Once, hard work and persistence were enough to lift a person out of poverty, now that path to success is much harder—and some would say obstructed.

Financial success is available to anyone who will work smarter, harder and not feel entitled to success just because they want it. Success is seldom an overnight thing. In a world where instant gratification is the desire, success will come to those who know nothing comes easy or free.

Political and business leaders should applaud those who strive to reach the next rung. The public should demand, though, that they not put a foot on the fingers grasping for the next level.

—LAZ

Paint part of the mural

To the Editor:

The Keizer Mural, located on the long exterior wall of Town and Country Lanes, is developing with great community input and involvement. A number of local people are designing the individual images and will soon create a collage with the numerous elements of the Keizer Iris Parade.

Keizer Public Arts Commission (KPAC) and Keizer Arts Association(KAA) will soon be sending out a 'call to artists,' asking for submissions of portrait portfolio work. This' heads up' is an opportunity to develop a few representative pieces of portrait work for the paid commissioned faces that will be a part of the mural. Details will be explained in the actual call to artist announcement. Final selections will be done by the KAA board.

If anyone is interested in joining the community mural effort, please attend the next meeting, at 6 p.m. on Wednesday, Jan. 6, at the Keizer Civic Center. At this meeting Barbara Hunter, a local artist, will offer a short presentation on impressionistic techniques that will be used in the making of the mural. There will be several mural-related presentations over the next few months. Experience or none, professional or amateur, young or old, all are welcome and we will have jobs and tasks for most everyone. Please, come join the effort, contribute and be a part of the growing expressions of Keizer

letters

er art. We have a number of images just waiting to be claimed and developed. Come to the meeting and claim your image of choice to develop. No experience necessary. We

will help you if you ask.
Jill Hagen
Mural project manager

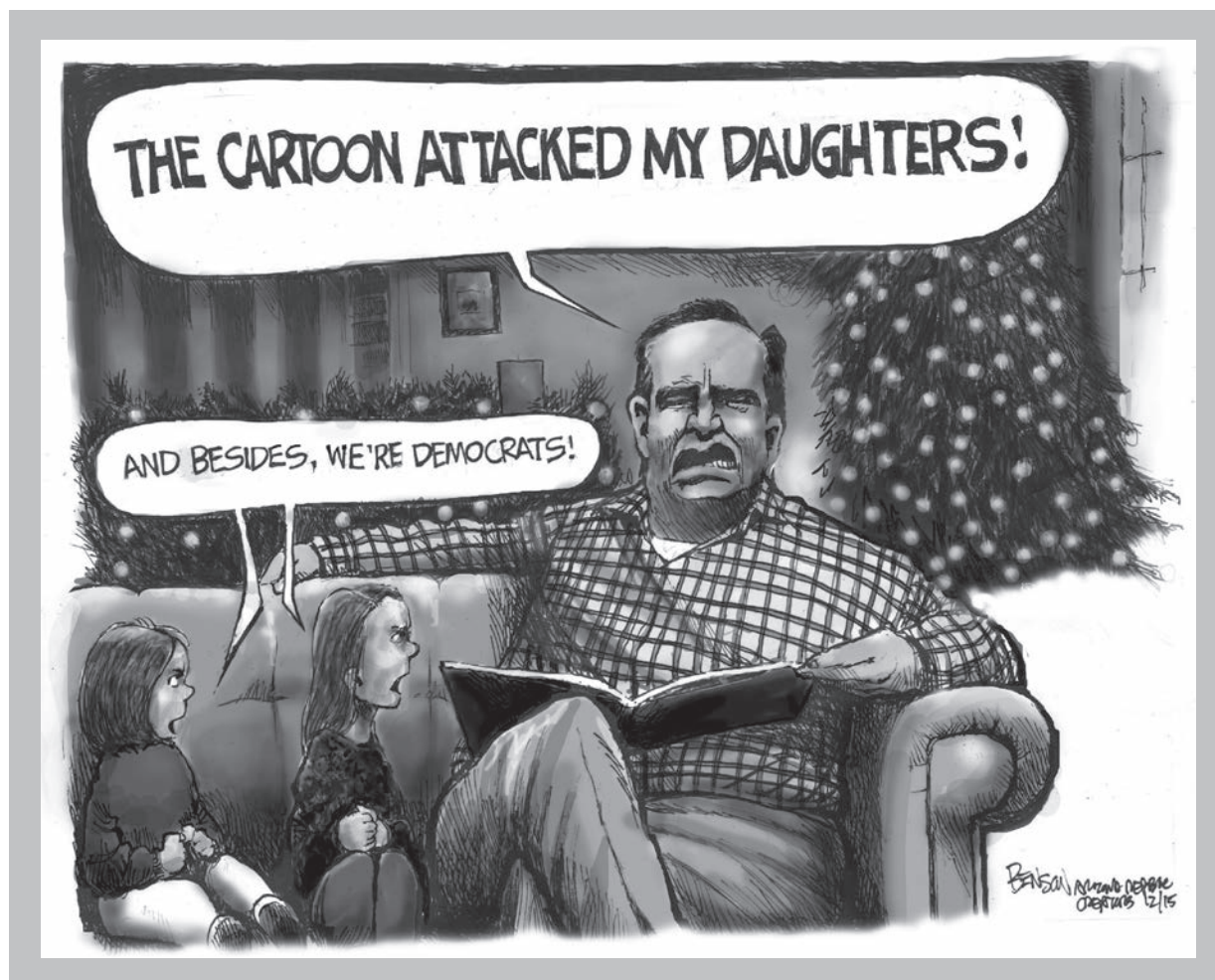
Gesture brings smile to my face

To the Editor:

One afternoon in the the summer of 2013, I had a very brief exchange with someone whose name I still don't know, but I think about him often and would love to thank him for brightening my day with his inspiring attitude.

I had just entered the Keizer Civic Center and was headed toward City Hall when I heard steps behind me. I looked and noticed that an older man was hurrying to get ahead of me. He opened the door and stood there holding it for me as I passed through. I thought "Wow, that's chivalry!" and I thanked him for the gesture. He smiled and shrugged a little and said "My wife is watching me from above." As soon as he was gone, I turned into a mess of tears, admiring this man for honoring his wife in such a lovely way. Wherever he is today, I hope he is still smiling at her memory and doing little things to make her proud.

Dorothy Diehl
Aumsville



Bernie Sander's lessons for capitalists

By E.J. DIONNE JR.

There is an irony to the presidential candidacy of Bernie Sanders: The senator from Vermont is often cast as exotic because he calls himself a "democratic socialist." Yet the most important issue in politics throughout the Western democracies is whether the economic and social world that social democrats built can survive the coming decades.

Let's deal first with the tyranny of labels. "Socialist" has long been an unacceptable word in the United States, yet our country once had a vibrant socialist movement, whose history has been well recounted by John Nichols and James Weinstein. Socialists had a major impact on the mainstream conversation. Reforming liberals, including Franklin D. Roosevelt, co-opted many of their best ideas, and it's one reason they were marginalized.

Moreover, the vast majority of "democratic socialists" are now properly described more modestly as "social democrats" because most on the left believe in a successful private sector. But they also favor a government that achieves broad public objectives, from a clean environment to wide access to education, and regulates and redistributes in ways that strengthen the bargaining power of those who don't own much capital.

When Sanders defined his own brand of socialism earlier this year in a speech at Georgetown, he made clear he's in this camp. "The next time you hear me attacked as a socialist, remember this," he said, "I don't believe government should own the means of production, but I do believe that the middle class and the working families who produce the wealth of America deserve a fair deal."

Honestly, Bernie, you're really a social democrat.

other views

But there is great honor in this. The bargain between government and the market that allowed the United States and the

other Western democracies to share growing prosperity from the end of World War II until recent years was essentially a social democratic achievement.

As the economist J. Bradford DeLong argued in a recent essay on *Talking Points Memo*, these economies were "relatively egalitarian places when viewed in historical perspective (for native-born white guys, at least)." The chance to influence politics was "widely distributed throughout the population" while "the claims of wealth to drive political directions" were "kept within bounds."

Yet the headline on DeLong's piece, *The Melting Away of North Atlantic Social Democracy*, raises the question we need to debate far more explicitly in the presidential campaign: Was the great social democratic experiment an aberration in history? Are all the wealthy societies destined to become far more unequal, as they were in the late 19th century, because of globalization and technological change? Or can governments find new ways of ensuring a degree of justice and fairness?

These questions have absorbed my former colleague Steven Weisman of the Peterson Institute for International Economics for some years now. His new book, *The Great Tradeoff: Controlling Moral Conflicts in the Era of Globalization*, provides an excellent text for the discussion we need. Weisman painstakingly avoids dogmatism and is

careful in laying out the often agonizing choices we face.

For example: Globalization has "elevated the living standards of hundreds of millions, if not billions, of people worldwide" but also "has helped suppress the incomes of low-skilled middle-class workers in rich countries." Where do our loyalties lie? How do we balance obligations to our fellow citizens in the communities and countries in which we live against the interests of those far away? And how do the vast disparities of wealth the system creates constrain the very process of democratic deliberation over what to do about it?

Weisman is more sympathetic to globalization than are many on the left, and I'm more drawn to its critics than he is. Still, Weisman does not let advocates of the market off the hook. Defending the achievements of globalization, he argues, requires facing up to its costs.

"The global economic system," he writes, "should be one in which opportunities are more equal, the distribution of rewards is fairer, and the preservation of communities is more respected."

How to achieve these goals is what politics needs to be about. The presidential campaign would be more edifying (and more relevant to the problems so many American face) if it focused directly on the need to renegotiate a social contract that once provided broadly inclusive prosperity but is now in grave jeopardy.

You don't need to be a democratic socialist to believe this. On the contrary, the survival of democratic capitalism depends upon facing the difficulties the system is having in delivering on the promises it was once able to keep.

(Washington Post Writers Group)

Want an outsider for president? Consider Musk

gene h. mcintyre

It is reported and polls show many Americans want a person elected president who's not a politician. Not someone who's a member of the so-called "establishment" or those folks who year-after-year make certain one of their favorite cronies is elected to the highest political office in the land.

I join those who want an outsider elected to lead my nation and will, as I've hoped for all the years I have been an adult and paid taxes, work for all Americans not just a chosen few as I feel the case is now, not only in D.C. but in Salem, too, clamoring, often successfully, according to media stories, for favors with every new governor. At the national level, I want a person not now running, Elon Musk, while at the state level, a person who gets things done and create enthusiasm for all things Oregon, such as Oswald West and Tom McCall did.

Musk, born in 1971, is a guy who proved himself early in his life and has continued to prove himself more than many who want to hold the reins of government but offer nothing impressive beyond a glib tongue. Unfortunately to my dream is that Musk was born in South Africa and the U.S. Constitution demands that the occupant of the White House must be born in the U.S. In Musk's case, an exception to the U.S. Constitution, Article 2, Clause (5) would have to be made.

Musk's story reveals that he was a mover and shaker from his earliest years, having made his first software sale in a game titled Blaster when he was 12. He moved around a lot in acquiring his formal education, in-

cluding stops in Canada and the U.S. His last higher education stop was Stanford where he sought a Ph.D. in energy physics but dropped out to found his first company, Zip2 Corporation. Zip2 was successful enough to be bought by Compaq Computer Corporation in 1999 for \$307 million and \$34 million in stock options. Further, he built a company that later became PayPal which was later sold to eBay for \$1.5 billion in stock of which Musk owned 11 percent.

Moving quickly in the world of business building and high finance, he founded Space Technologies Corporation or SpaceX intending to build spacecraft for commercial space travel. SpaceX got into a NASA contract in 2002 to handle cargo for the International Space Station. Last week, SpaceX received more fame for building a reusable rocket 229.6 feet tall (an American standard football playing field is 300 feet long) that delivered a payload into orbit and then landed by remote control back on earth and can be used again.

Another Musk venture is Tesla Motors that's dedicated to manufacturing electric cars. Five years after the company got underway it produced a sports car. Since its first auto in 2008, there have followed a sedan and, more recently, in 2015, an SUV. Musk's Tesla has also been helped by its relationship with Daimler and Toyota. This new

auto maker launched its initial public offering in 2010, raising \$226 million.

The Hyperloop by Musk is his concept for a new form of transportation. When made real it will dramatically shorten commuting time between cities. Resistant to weather and powered by renewable energy, the Hyperloop will propel riders in pods through a network of low-pressure tubes at speeds of more than 700 miles per hour. It's guesstimated at seven to 10 years to build. With all that he proposed or built, he seeks through competitions for help from individuals, teams of persons and other corporations.

Speculation here believes there's much more that Musk has in his head to create in addition to the other projects he's already brought to fruition. He's said he loves the U.S. and believes this nation to be the best anywhere, at any time. He's been married twice, with a first wife who's reported to have said nothing negative about him; he is currently married to his second wife. He offers, as an American citizen, a near perfect personal record, solid as granite and is a renowned problem-solver who moves like a clipper ship in his business endeavors. He's also a person who can unite people in common causes that serve all humankind and can ultimately improve life throughout the world. He would make, in the estimation of this fellow citizen, an outstanding president if only he could run for the office.

(Gene H. McIntyre's column appears weekly in the *Keizertimes*.)

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