

# KeizerOpinion

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## Deductions, PERS, K-12 & life

Another couple of weeks in the Oregon Legislature and the days are long here at the Capitol, but each one seems to go by quickly as they are full of committee hearings, research, and meetings with constituents and others regarding specific bills.

There are many conversations being had about the budget and what is being called the "transportation package," but it's currently too early to tell what will be included in those bills. While we are waiting for the details, we are moving a few bills every day on the House floor.

I am always glad to hear from constituents and recently I have heard from a lot of you on some important issues. We are currently being bombarded by emails from concerned homeowners regarding House Bill (HB) 2771 and HB 2006. Among other things, these bills would eliminate the property tax deduction as well as cut the mortgage interest deduction. I am not a fan of discouraging home ownership, but rather encouraging it.

We have received many phone calls and visits regarding PERS. This is such a huge issue that impacts our entire state in many ways. Previous legislatures have voted to cut benefits that were already contractually agreed on, and the courts have struck those down. We need creative solutions to solve this crisis, but they need to be constitutional solutions and I believe we must do it this session.

My wife has been a teacher for

nearly 30 years so I constantly hear about the struggles in our K-12 education system. I have personally advocated that the K-12 budget be separated from the rest of the budget and require that it be voted on by March 1, so that our local school districts have certainty going into their own budgeting process each year. I can assure you that the minority party and I are very much in favor of a much larger budget for K-12 and want it passed right now. We have been told the schools are asking for \$8.4 billion. We are asking the co-chairs to get that to the House floor right now for a vote.

Recently I had several farmer constituents drop by the office to talk about Senate Bill 779 as well as receiving a very good amount of emails from farmers in the St. Paul area. This bill would provide clarity for agricultural employers regarding the sick leave legislation that passed last year. Many of the farmers in my district have reached out to me on this, and I am hopeful that the bill will come out of the Senate to the House where I will be able to vote for it.

By far however, the bill that I have heard from you all the most has been HB 3017. It is the ban on late term abortion. I have been gratefully stunned by the number of constituents who took the time to thank me for co-sponsoring that bill. I want to thank them for their support and very kind words.

(Bill Post represents House District 25. He can be reached at 503-986-1425 or via email at rep.billpost@state.or.us.)



from the capitol  
Rep. BILL POST

## Popular vote should be rule

To the Editor:

On February 23, our state senator, Kim Thatcher, argued in *The Times* against Oregon signing on to the National Popular Vote Interstate Compact (NPVIC).

NPVIC states allocate Electoral College votes to the presidential candidate with the plurality of votes across the country. NPVIC does not change how the Electoral College works. It changes the way states signing it allocate their votes, a state right under the Constitution.

Senator Thatcher seems to prefer the congressional district method that "give[s] the states better representation within their own geographical diversity." This method moves the level of control from the state (winner take all) to the district. It does not protect "minority opinions or different ways of life" within districts, especially gerrymandered

districts or districts with voter suppression laws in place.

Analyses of how the congressional district method might work assume all states adopt this method, therefore eliminating state choice. The only way to ensure every person's voice is heard is to base presidential election results on the national popular vote. NPVIC only goes into effect when states with 270 electoral votes sign on. If you want Oregon to sign onto NPVIC, contact Senator Thatcher and your state representative today.

Angela Roccogrondi  
Wilsonville

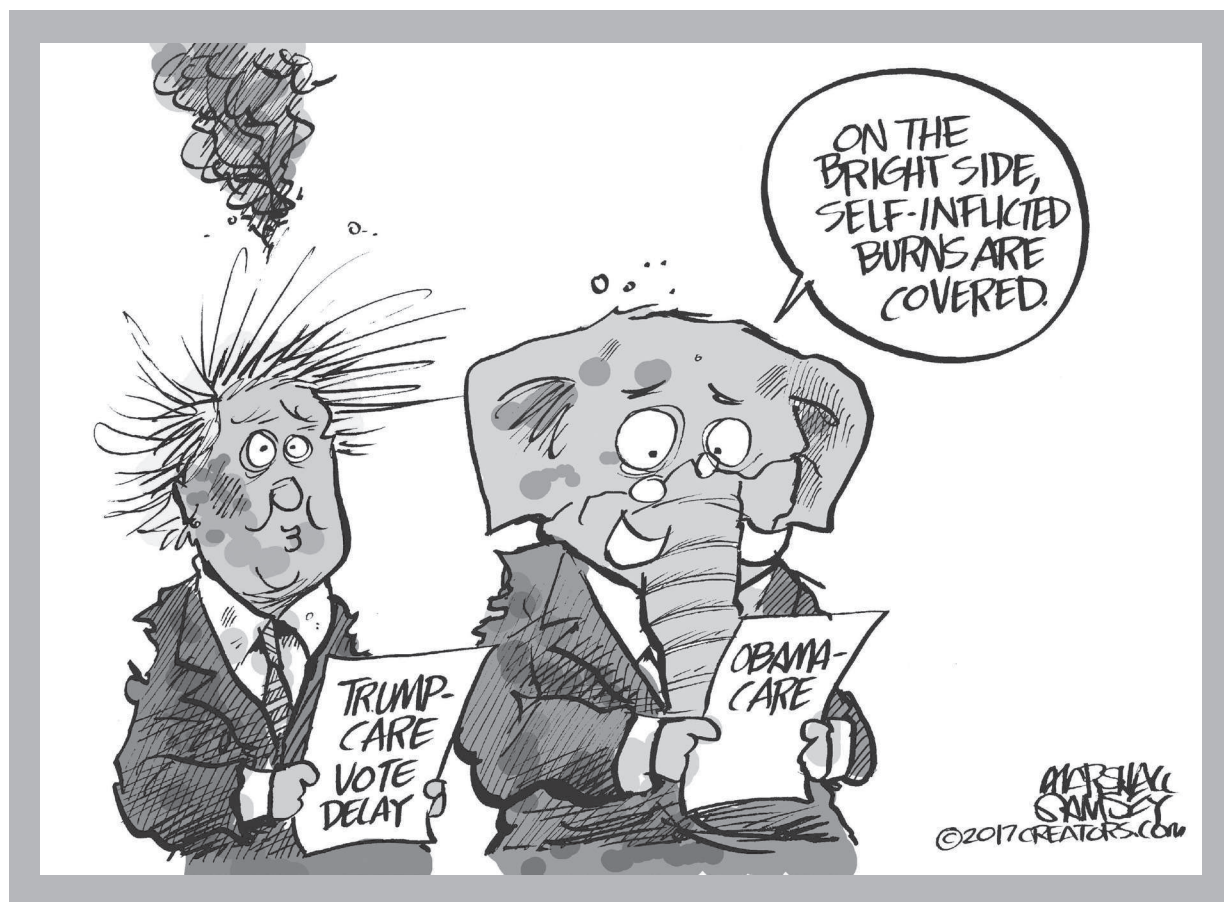
## letters

## Share your opinion

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## How Trump can get his groove back

By MICHAEL GERSON

The central promise of the Trump administration—the repeal and replacement of Obamacare—has failed. The central premise of the Trump administration—that Donald Trump is a brilliant negotiator—has been discredited. In the process of losing a legislative battle, Trump has lost the theory of his presidency.

The lessons, however, run deeper. Like other politicians before him, Trump ran for office arguing, in essence: Just give my party control of the elected branches of the federal government and massive change will quickly follow. Many Americans believed in this promise of winner-take-all government.

The American system of government—with its constipated Senate rules and its complicated House coalitions—is designed to frustrate such plans. But the closeness of recent national elections has encouraged partisan dreams of political dominance. Republicans had control of the House, Senate and presidency in the 108th Congress. Democrats had the same in the 111th Congress. Now Republicans have it all in the 115th Congress.

Total control is intoxicating. The winners feel like they have a mandate, even a mission. But the losers know, if they maintain partisan discipline and prevent achievements of the other side, they have a realistic chance of winning it all back. This leads to a cycle of hubris and obstructionism.

How can this cycle be broken? There is only one way. Someone

must do genuine outreach, involving the credible promise of compromise, *from a position of strength*. It is the winners who must act first, taking the risk of offering a hand that may be slapped away. Then it is the political losers who have the responsibility to reward good faith.

Obamacare—passed in a partisan quick march and viewed by some Republicans as the focus of evil in the modern world—may not be the most promising ground for agreement. The same may be true for tax reform, which involves a thousand well-funded special interests. But genuine negotiation might be possible on an infrastructure bill. The same might be true on legislation designed to increase the skills of 38 percent of American workers whose jobs are threatened by automation. And at least one culture-war issue belongs on the list: religious liberty.

Many religious conservatives imagined they would, at this point, be in a defensive crouch. Instead, unexpectedly, religious conservatives find themselves in a position of relative strength, as one of the main contributors to Trump's victory. It is possible they will squander their standing on repeal of the Johnson Amendment that restricts political endorsements from the pulpit — a change that few have demanded and none really need. Instead, they could use their influence to encourage genuine pluralism, with benefits that are shared and nonsectarian.

What would the elements of a legislative compromise look like?

It would need to allow institutions motivated by a religious mission, including religious schools and charities, to maintain their identity. Religious liberty involves, not just the freedom of individual belief but the freedom to create institutions that reflect a shared belief.

But any realistic agreement would also need to include broad anti-discrimination protections in employment and services—including for gay people—outside of the strong carve-out for religious nonprofits. Religious conservatives would need to accept sexual orientation as a protected group in economic interactions.

This is consistent with what Jonathan Rauch calls "the obvious compromise: protections for gay people plus exemptions for religious objectors." In practice, this would allow religious people to organize colleges, hospitals and charities according to their beliefs. But the cake baker would need to bake for everyone. The florist would need to sell to everyone.

The strongest advocates on both sides of this issue will find any compromise abhorrent. But it could be powerful for religious conservatives to attempt outreach from a position of political strength. And Donald Trump, oddly, may be the leader to get this kind of deal. He broke ground among Republicans in recognizing LGBT rights in his convention speech. But he is also close to religious conservative leaders.

And just about now, Trump needs a way to reconstitute the meaning of his presidency.

(Washington Post Writers Group)

## I choose more cops over parks

By ROBERT CONAHEY

I am writing in response to the recent article in the *Keizertimes* about a proposal to add five officers to the Keizer Police Department.

I exceptionally and greatly support this proposal; it is greatly needed and overdue. I only wish that there could be more officers added. I enjoy the system of parks that the city of Keizer has and they are very nice *but* I think that it is *more important* to have additional police protection.

The recent burglary covered in the March 24 issue of the *Keizertimes* illustrates this point. More police means more coverage and more coverage means less crime. Suspects are more likely to be caught and locked up.

By having more officers on the streets the word will go out through the criminal network that Keizer is not open for business. Criminals will not be welcome here and they should just move on and go somewhere else to commit their crimes.

I have been a victim of crime and reported it to the police. If there had been more officers and more resources available to the department and the officers then maybe the case could have been

resolved instead of going cold and me having to pay out of my own pocket for a private investigator and lawyer with my limited resources.

It is important to have a safe community and for the residents

and others to know that they are safe and well protected. New residents and businesses, especially those that provide good living wage jobs will not come to an area that is not safe and well protected. I think that we all agree that

Keizer is growing and will continue to grow and that employers who provide good jobs that pay a living wage with benefits are what we seek and they will not come to an area that it not safe and well protected.

I don't mind paying more taxes to have good police and fire protection. If that is what it takes to make and maintain Keizer as a safe and vibrant community and the place we all want it to be.

Long-term I would like to see the Keizer Police Department be staffed so that there are two officers in the car at all times. In the short term during the hours of darkness there should be two police officers per car. It helps with officer safety and productivity.

As for parks, the city of Keizer prides itself on volunteerism. What is wrong with having volunteers, churches, youth groups such as the various scout groups and those required to do community service perform these tasks.

(Robert Conahey lives in Keizer.)

## guest column



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