

KeizerOpinion

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Vote for Harder

To the Editor:

I would like to share my encouragement in supporting a strong candidate for Salem-Keizer School Board.

This is a very close race between great people, all who deserve our respect for their willingness to serve. I have researched each of the candidates while keeping in mind this is a nonpartisan race; my opinion is based on their credentials and responses to what I believe our local needs are and for this reason I believe the best candidate is Dr. Kathleen Harder.

Though Salem-Keizer Schools have separate issues in each area of our neighborhoods, I am most experienced and involved right here in our Keizer schools. In Keizer, we face many issues: overcrowding, graduation rates, budget cuts, neighborhood parking, vital school programs have been cut that give our kids the necessary tools and skills to fulfill their potential after graduation and becoming productive members of our society which means our Career Technical Education (CTE) programs are vital to our kid's success.

The closest to my heart however is the amount of homeless students in our local Keizer schools. I know Kathleen will fight for these issues, our issues! She is passionate, compassionate and willing to fight the fight for what is right. This is the kind of human we need on our school board. I know the programs and initiatives she has been working towards and she believes in collaboration and utilizing our local resources above all.

I also believe she will be a good steward of our school budget keeping the needs of our kids at the forefront. I am proud to recommend this quality candidate to you my neighbors not only do I recommend her as your local community leader who truly understands the issues of our local schools but as a neighbor and mother who has raised her kids entirely through Keizer school system and knows firsthand the struggles our schools, neighborhoods, teachers and kids face daily. Our choice today will be the determination of our success tomorrow for all of our kids so please take the time to vote, I'm voting Kathleen Harder. Your vote matters.

Amy Ryan
Keizer

McNary student's convenience

To the Editor:

Regarding Newberg Drive student parking:

There have been many incidences of cars parked in front of driveways, sometimes it's even two times in the same day. In addition there is trash on the streets, trash on my roof, trash in yards, loud noises from cars, stereos and kids yelling, speeding cars, vandalism and even sex. I have seen students openly carry guns, sharing pipes for smoking and just plain over-crowding our streets here. This neighborhood should never be used as a high school parking lot. Just lock the gate to McArthur to stop it.

The city says they can not lock the gate but they can put up another gate fence on our side of the school property line. They could post a sign on the gate that says something like: "By Order of the City of Keizer this will no longer be an access point to the school grounds." Before doing that they could inform the school of this plan and if they know the city will actually block it then I bet McNary principal Erik Jespersen will comply with the ruling of the city. A fence

letters

is for both sides of that fence and each side of any fence can be constructed by either party, it is not an "immature" move it's just common sense.

The point that the City Council misses or can not wrap their heads around (Mayor Clark's words) is that this was not a problem two years ago in this neighborhood, so this extra high school parking is nothing more than a convenience for student parking and is "not a necessity" since the population of the school is the same as it was before the word got out to the students of the "free parking." Plus it's a huge safety issue as a drop off point and a huge waste of police resources, too.

Charles Anderson
Keizer

Herrera-Lopez for Salem-Keizer schools

To the Editor:

About a year ago, while doing volunteer work with Catholic Community Services in its effort to reopen the Cat Cavazos Center, I had the pleasure of meeting Levi Herrera-Lopez.

More recently, I was pleased to learn Levi is running for the Zone 5 position on the Salem-Keizer School Board. Levi's commitment to public education is unparalleled. Moreover, Levi's a graduate of the district's school system, and for 15 years Levi has lived in Zone 5 (which sets him apart from some candidates who, oddly enough, have lived only a few days in the zone they hope to represent). If you live in the Salem-Keizer School District, I urge you to vote for Levi Herrera-Lopez for school board.

Jesse Barton
Salem

Riddell-Norstrom for Keizer Fire Board

To the Editor:

I write to support Ms. Riddell-Norstrom's candidacy for the Keizer Fire Board. As a native Keizerite with long family ties to our fire department she has the fire department's and city's best interests in mind, not any personal ego or ambition. Ms. Riddell-Norstrom also brings a PhD level patient care perspective to the board. Having known her for over 20 years, I know she is professional, dedicated and diligent, she will not only show up for board meetings but will go the extra mile to make sure Keizer Fire is run efficiently and effectively and to the benefit of Keizer's residents.

Heather Van Meter
Keizer

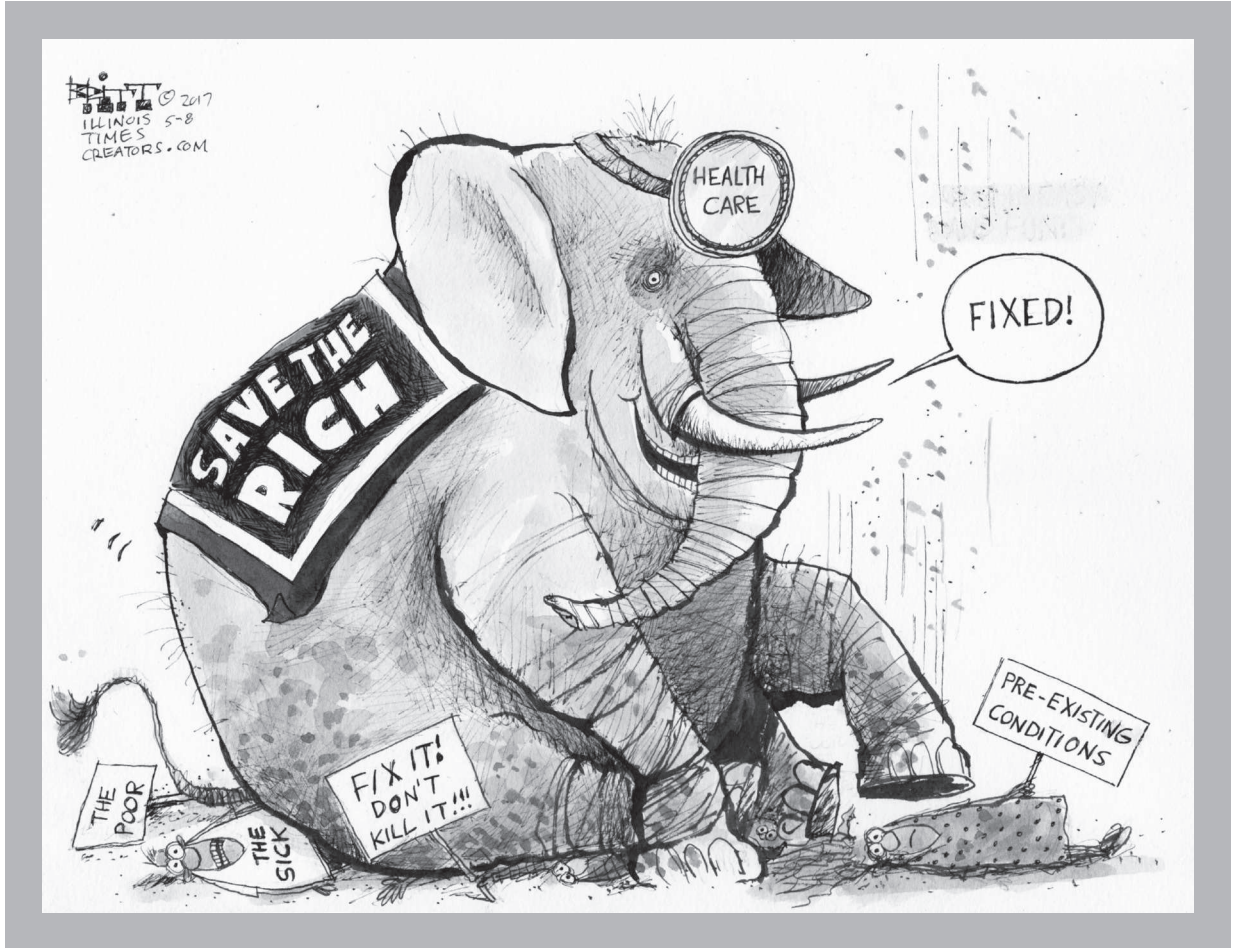
Best school board candidates

To the Editor:

Your vote for the best Salem Keizer school board candidates is important. There are three candidates that really stand out as very qualified and committed to working on behalf of our public school students: Kathleen Harder, Sherrone Blasi, and Levi Herrera-Lopez. We can vote for all of them since each is running from a different zone. They are dedicated to improving our school system and insuring all students have the resources to succeed.

Please join me in electing Kathleen Harder, Sherrone Blasi, and Levi Herera-Lopez to the school board.

Anita Owen
Salem



Will Trumpcare be Obamacare 2.0?

By DEBRA SAUNDERS

Comedian Jimmy Kimmel went to the heart of the debate on pre-existing conditions during a monologue last week. He talked about the birth of his son Billy, who was born with a heart condition that required surgery within days of his birth. Billy Kimmel is doing fine now, but the situation was traumatic for Kimmel and his wife, Molly. At least, Kimmel noted, they didn't have to worry about whether their child would be treated.

"Before 2014, if you were born with congenital heart disease like my son was, there was a good chance you would never be able to get health insurance because you had a pre-existing condition," Kimmel said.

Kimmel was referring to Obamacare's most important benefit—the requirement that health care plans offer coverage to people with pre-existing medical conditions at the same rates healthy people pay. No longer would working people with chronic illnesses, or their families, be priced out of the quality health care.

President Donald Trump agreed with Kimmel when he was a candidate. Then Trump said he would repeal and replace the Affordable Care Act, but retain the mandate for covering pre-existing conditions. The first version of his American Health Care Act reflected that promise—and it never made it to a vote.

The version passed by House Republicans Thursday is different. Under the new version, states will be able to apply for waivers from the Obamacare pre-existing conditions

mandates. To qualify, states would have to set up pools for high-risk individuals.

Or as Trump told CBS News' John Dickerson Sunday, "We've set up a pool for the pre-existing conditions so that the premiums can be allowed to fall."

There's one little problem with this so-called remedy. It's a gimmick that throws the hot potato where there are few if any hands are eager to claim it. How many governors want to incur the wrath of their voters by announcing that they want to get rid of a benefit that Kimmel and Trump himself in 2016 framed as American as apple pie?

Asked how many states were likely to apply for pre-existing conditions waivers, House Majority Whip Kevin McCarthy answered, "It could be a lot. It could be none."

White House Deputy Press Secretary Sarah Sanders referred a reporter to the Department of Health and Human Services, which would not respond on the record. Be it noted, governors and state lawmakers are not clamoring for the opportunity to do what House Republicans would not do themselves.

Forget governors. "There isn't a single insurance executive I know of who wants to get rid of pre-x," said health-care policy guru Robert Laszewski, using the lingo.

So why did House Republicans go after a reform that even insurance executives don't want?

A large chunk of the premium increases that hit the market with Obamacare are due to pre-existing

conditions. In 2014, the Affordable Care Act caused individual premiums to increase 40 percent, said Laszewski, with about 30 percent due to pre-existing conditions.

Since then, premium increases have been in the double digits because Obamacare policies are so unappealing that healthy people aren't buying, while sick people are clinging to their plans. In the industry, this is known as a death spiral. And it is the reason why insurers are running headlong from the individual market. Humana is pulling out of the market in 2018. After terminating plans in 11 states, Aetna just announced it will pull out of Virginia. The Trump White House is correct when it says that Obamacare is unsustainable.

Or as Trump put it during the Rose Garden celebration of the House passing the bill, "It's dead. It's essentially dead. If we don't pay lots of ransom money over to the insurance companies, it would die immediately."

Still, Trump seems poised to make the same mistake President Obama made before him—making huge promises on which he should have known his plan would not deliver.

Obama promised, "No matter what you've heard, if you like your doctor or health care plan, you can keep it."

Trump says, "Yes, premiums will be coming down. Yes, deductibles will be coming down. But very importantly, it's a great plan."

But if the key to cutting costs is a stunt—asking state politicians to do to their neighbors what D.C. Republicans will not do from afar—better not to hold your breath.

(Creators Syndicate)

other views

The example Australia sets

By GENE H. MCINTYRE

Reported out of Australia is the way that nation proposes to conduct tests to determine whether immigrants are granted citizenship. For openers, those interested must live there for at least four years before filing an application. Also, a person with such a desire must speak English fluently and conform to "Australian values." These conditions would be good for the United States.

Among questions on the Aussie test are whether they believe in forced marriages for children, genital mutilation, striking a spouse and prohibiting girls from attending school. Some questions seem aimed at Muslim immigrants but there are many entering from other faiths as nearly 30 percent of Australia's 6.9 million population is foreign-born. Here again, we in America don't know what to expect next from immigrants, legal or otherwise, when borders here are too often disrespected and ignored.

Speaking for his government, Australia's Prime Minister Malcolm Turnbull has said that Australia is "not defined by race or religion or culture." To the contrary, Trumbull says, they're defined by a commitment to common values, the rule of law, democracy, freedom, mutual respect, and equality for all. The citizenship process, he says, must deliver citizens who conform to what Australians have determined they stand for and believe in. I wish, big-time, we'd copy them.

The citizenship test there, at one time, amounted to knowing the na-

tion's history and political system while it afforded applicants unlimited opportunity to pass it. Under the proposed new design, three tries and you're out while a rap sheet with domestic violence on it means a trip to the "door" as do other unacceptable behaviors. Very appealing requirements.

Having spent enough time in Australia to get a feel for the place, conclusions reached were that

the Aussies have a better chance to establish and maintain a common values culture than most anywhere else. Maybe it's because Australia is so far away from Europe and North America that the typical Aussie guy is a friendly "bloke" who'll refer to you as his "mate" during the first "pint" of beer and will seek your friendship rather than getting at your U.S. dollars.

The genuine friendliness that was

observed by this American was experienced in a lengthy visit awhile back. My spouse and I were able to walk the streets of any of Australia's bigger and medium-sized cities without fearing for our safety. Hopefully, living conditions have not changed since our visit and that the proposed effort to keep the place livable is a general desire to preserve that nation's way of life.

With a population of about 24 million and surrounded by ocean, Australia has some advantages over the U.S. when it comes to immigration controls which those folks have maintained for the last 100 years. Unlike the U.S., having become a very seriously fractured country with churlish leadership and hourly incidences of murder and mayhem, Australia by comparison is a peace-loving nation with no NRA and strict gun controls.

(Gene H. McIntyre lives in Keizer.)

guest column

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