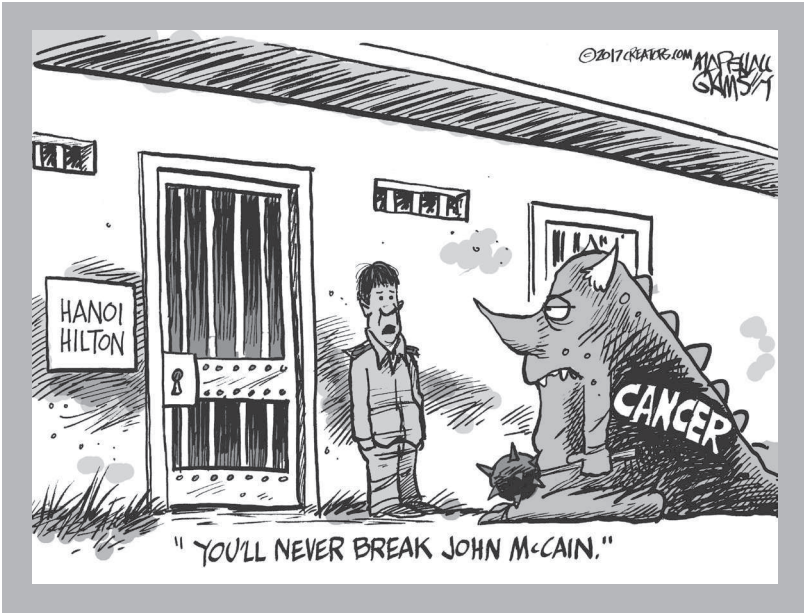


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Twin threats to our republic's health

By E.J. DIONNE JR.

The news is being reported on split screen as if the one big story in Washington is disconnected from the other. But President Trump's lawless threats against Attorney General Jeff Sessions have a lot in common with the Senate's reckless approach to the health coverage of tens of millions of Americans.

On both ends of Pennsylvania Avenue, we are witnessing a collapse of the norms of governing, constant violations of our legitimate expectations of political leaders, and the mutation of the normal conflicts of democracy into a form of warfare that demands the opposition's unconditional surrender.

Trump's latest perverse miracle is that he has progressives—along with everyone else who cares about the rule of law—rooting for Sessions. The attorney general is as wrong as ever on voter suppression, civil rights enforcement and immigration. But Sessions did one very important thing: He obeyed the law.

When it was clear that he would have obvious conflicts of interest in the investigation of Russian meddling in our election and its possible links to the Trump campaign, Sessions recused himself, as he was required to do.

Trump's attacks on Sessions for that recusal are thus a naked admission that he wants the nation's top lawyer to act illegally if that's what it takes to protect the president and his family. Equally inappropriate are his diktats from the Oval Office calling on Sessions to investigate Hillary Clinton and those terrible "leakers" who are more properly seen as whis-

teblowers against Trump's abuses.

Our country is now as close to crossing the line from democracy to autocracy as it has been in our lifetimes. Trump's ignorant, self-involved contempt for his duty under Article II, Section 3 of the Constitution to "take care that the laws be faithfully executed" ought to inspire patriots of every ideological disposition to a robust and fearless defiance.

But where are the leaders of the Republican Party in the face of the dangers Trump poses? They're trying to sneak through a health care bill by violating every reasonable standard citizens should impose on public servants dealing with legislation that affects more than one-sixth of our economy. Senate Majority Leader Mitch McConnell and House Speaker Paul Ryan have little time for worrying about the Constitution because they are busy doing Trump's bidding on health care.

Let it be said that two Republican senators will forever deserve our gratitude for insisting that a complicated health care law should be approached the way Obamacare—yes, Obamacare—was enacted: through lengthy hearings, robust debate and real input from the opposition party. In voting upfront to try to stop the process, Sens. Susan Collins and Lisa Murkowski demonstrated a moral and political toughness that eluded other GOP colleagues who had expressed doubts about this charade but fell into line behind their leaders.

The most insidious aspect of McConnell's strategy is that he is shooting to pass something, anything, that would continue to save Republicans from having a transpar-

ent give-and-take on measures that could ultimately strip health insurance from 20 million Americans or more. Passing even the most meager of health bills this week would move the covert coverage-demolition effort to a conference committee with the House.

The Senate's unseemly marathon thus seems likely to end with a push for a "skinny repeal" bill that would eliminate the Affordable Care Act's individual and employer mandates and its medical device tax. But no one should be deluded: A vote for skinny repeal is a vote for an emaciated democracy.

A wholesale defeat for what might be described as the Trump-McConnell-Ryan Unhealthy America Act of 2017 is essential for those being served by the ACA but also for our politics. It was disappointing that Sen. John McCain's passionate plea on Tuesday for a "return to regular order" did not match his votes in this week's early roll calls.

But McCain could yet advance the vision of the Senate he outlined in his floor speech and rebuke "the bombastic loudmouths" he condemned by casting a "No" vote at the crucial moment. Here's hoping this war hero will ultimately choose to strike a blow against everything he said is wrong with Congress.

And when it comes to the ongoing indifference to the law in the White House, Republicans can no longer dodge their responsibility to speak out against what Trump is doing. They should also examine their own behavior. The decline of our small-r republican institutions can be stopped only if the party brandishing that adjective starts living up to the obligations its name honors. (Washington Post Writers Group)

Never forget Korean War veterans

To the Editor:

A time to remember. This year marks the 64th anniversary of the cease fire of the Korean War. A war by executive decision beginning 25 June, 1950, and continuing to 27 July 1953. This brutal conflict lasted 37 months and claimed more than 37,000 American lives, averaging 1,000 combat deaths per month. This equates to the population of the city of Keizer. (Something to think about.) The cease fire became effective at 2200 (10:00 p.m.) July 27, 1953. A truce had been signed, an armistice had been agreed upon, however a peace agreement has not been completed, therefore, the Korean War has not officially ended.

There are three memorials in the Willamette Valley dedicated to those men and women who fought and died in Korea fighting the war under the United Nations command. The first memorial completed is located at Willamette National Cemetery in Portland and was the project of the Chosin Few, survivors of the Battle of the Chosin Reservoir. Located in a beautiful setting and easy to find.

The second and largest memorial, sponsored by the Oregon Trail Chapter of the Korean War Veterans Association and dedicated in 2000 is located in Wilsonville. Engraved in the wall are the names of Oregonians who died in combat in Korea. A recent addition to the memorial is a life-size statue of General Douglas MacArthur, Supreme Commander during the early part of the war. The Korean Memorial Foundation of Oregon funded this project.

The third memorial in the Willamette Valley is located on the grounds of Veteran's Affairs at 700 Summer Street in Salem. The former Iron Triangle Chapter of the Korean War Veterans Association arranged for the funding of this black granite center piece flanked by granite benches. Another fine tribute to those who served. None of these memorials are intended to glorify war but are to remind us that "freedom has never been free."

Bob Wickman
Keizer
USN/USMC
Korea, 1953-54

Council's fee votes violate city charter

To the Editor:

"The law is reason free from passion."

—Aristotle

The city council of Keizer has just voted to add a fee for the police and parks to our water/sewer bill. I am quite sure their actions in doing so are heartfelt and justified in their own minds. They are even considering changing the name of, Water and Sewer Fee to a more all encompassing title of City Services Bill.

In doing this, an illegal act occurs by adding a third party to our Water and Sewer Bills.

To do so legally requires amending the city charter (a contract between a governing body and its citizens), which was last done by public vote in November, 1993.

letters

The Keizer City Charter has two specific sections: 36—"Special assessments for public improvements or other services to be charged against real property;" and, 43—"Water revenue use—All revenue, shall be used exclusively

to pay for the water department fund expenses."

The city charter is a contract between a city's governing body and its citizens, and cannot be altered, nor added to, in any manner, without the consent of the governing body and the vote of its citizens which is the will of the people.

In all service agreement contracts, including the state of Oregon's own contract, there is a 'no third party beneficiaries clause': "Nothing in this contract gives any benefit or right to third person (parties) unless such are identified and described as beneficiaries of this contract."

The question to be asked by vote of the citizens is: "Do we need additional police services and parks and recreation personnel and how do we share the cost reasonably and legally among Keizer's citizens?"

The law is clear—it cannot be done in the manner chosen. If this is allowed, we must consider what is to prevent the adding of streets and sidewalks, homeless shelters, drug treatment programs and all else from being added to our water and sewer bills?

The purpose behind the law of all parties involved in a contract is that one party cannot change or alter the agreement.

Lynn B. DeSpain
Keizer

Who will be fired next in Washington?

To the Editor:

Before the most recent recession there was another recession that had a huge negative financial impact on the Boeing Corporation, then still headquartered in Seattle. So many fewer planes were being ordered and built that thousands of Boeing employees got pink-slipped. Someone with a flare for the sarcastic bought a message on a billboard in Seattle. It read: "Will the last person to leave Seattle please turn off the lights."

It reminds this writer that we now have a president who rather obviously does not want an investigation into whether he and his cohorts colluded with Russia to help him win the 2016 election. He has made a number of moves making it clear that anyone in law enforcement who threatens him with revelations of complicity will be fired, including the current special investigator, Robert Mueller, and the recused U.S. attorney general, Jeff Sessions.

Now the reminder of Seattle from a few decades ago and what looked to some prognosticators like the end of a great American aircraft-building company, appears to apply to federal law enforcement officials where a billboard in Washington, D.C. might appropriately provide this message: "Will the last person fired from U.S. law enforcement please lock up the J. Edgar Hoover Building."

Gene H. McIntyre
Keizer

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I'm still a less government legislator

It has been an honor to serve you in the legislature this past session and I wanted to take a moment to fill you in on some of what has happened.

During the regular 2017 session I ended up introducing more bills than I did in my freshman year. I still tried to keep that number low however, as I am still a firm believer in "less government." All of my bills were centered on freedom and cutting red tape in state government. Sadly, the one that meant the most to me, my "Sudafed bill"

(which would have sent Sudafed-related drugs back to "behind the counter") did not go anywhere. In fact, most of my bills didn't even get hearings in committees. Here are some of the bills I found success with and a couple that I wasn't happy with from the 2017 session:

My House Bill (HB) 2598, expanded the offense of vehicular assault to include contact with motorcycle, motorcycle operator or motorcycle passenger. As a biker myself along with many of my constituents, it amazed me that bicyclists and pedestrians were covered but

not motorcyclists.

Another important bill I was involved with passed: HB 2732, affectionately called the "hot dog in a car bill." There has already been a case in Oregon where the passing of this bill saved a dog's life. I was also successful in getting Senate Bill (SB) 677 passed which allows cider businesses to be on cider farms in Oregon. Sort of like the wineries and breweries we have now.

• HB 2017: The Transportation Package.

I voted *no* on the package for many reasons. I was disappointed in the amount designated for the Newberg-Dundee Bypass, the fact that it didn't do a whole lot for Keizer or St. Paul, the 0.5 percent tax on new car sales (which by the way goes right back to the "better off" as a rebate for electric cars) and generally the fact that once again, the Metro Portland area gets the lion's share of the projects. The bill passed 39-20 and my vote didn't stop it. I just didn't think you wanted more taxes.

• HB5517: The K-12 Budget. This budget was entirely inadequate

to properly fund our teachers and provide the education our kids desperately need so I voted *no* on it.

• HB3464: Sanctuary State bill. Restricts the ability of state and local agencies, including law enforcement, to inquire about an individual's immigration status. The bill specifically prohibits public agencies from disclosing information to the federal government except in certain circumstances. I voted *no*.

SB719: A well-intentioned answer to veteran suicides but allows courts to compel an individual to surrender their firearms on the word of a judge or others. I voted *no*.

HB3391: Provides \$10 million for on demand abortions even for those who are undocumented. This bill disturbed me more than anything I've done or seen in my two terms.

Overall, I saw this session as the most hyper-partisan in recent memory. No matter which party it is, the state as a whole suffers when one party has complete control. When one party controls all the committees, all the bills and all the processes, Oregon is not being properly represented.

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

Fix skate park for a lot less than \$500,000

By JERRY MCGEE

I sat in the audience at the last city council session and was deeply saddened as I listened to the Director of Public Works describe the condition of the Carlson Skateboard Park. He described it as unfit for use, even dangerous. He said that the experts recommended total replacement rather than to repair it. He said the cost would be between \$350,000 and \$500,000. This could consume much of the new-parks assessment dollars. (Incidentally I spoke in favor of a parks assessment)

I was saddened because I remembered the many hours that Charlene and Steve Carlson spent to make the skate park a reality. Charlene was the fund raiser and the political arm and Steve was the organizer of the work parties. Don't tell me it wasn't built right. Steve, through his organized labor connections, brought the top steel men from Portland, journeyman carpenters and concrete men from all over, all willingly donating their skills and time.

When the park was finished it was the jewel of the valley. It was designed and built to require little maintenance, but like any concrete structure, it would require some attention from time to time.

I decided to take one last look at

this monument to volunteerism. So on Monday, July 24, at 3:30 p.m., on a very hot day, I drove over to Carlson Skate Park. I expected to see the park posted with danger signs or even fenced off.

But what I saw were twenty (I counted them) young men ages from 11 to 17 on skate boards, scooters, and two were on bikes all having athletic fun. I talked to some of them. They said they came often to skate. They were aware of "bad" spots but they just avoided them.

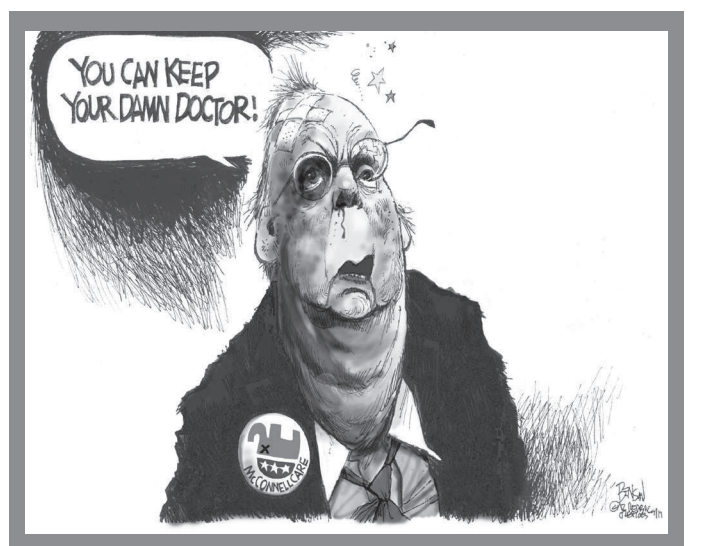
In walking over the area I could see many cracks that could be repaired just as the Oregon Department of Transportation repairs the concrete on bridges (epoxies). Several areas would require more

extensive repair. The entire area could be gunnited. The gunnite and smoothing would need to be done professionally. Filling the cracks with epoxy would be a good volunteer project.

I asked my new skating friends if they felt the skate park was obsolete compared to other such parks, a claim stated by the director of Public Works. They said they didn't use any other skate park and that this one "is just fine."

In my opinion the skate park is repairable and it can be done at a lot less than \$350,000 to \$500,000. (Jerry McGee lives in Keizer.)

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