

Opinion

One party rule

How one responds to the Republican state senators hightailing it out of the capital to deny a quorum during the debate and vote for the cap and trade bill likely depends on one's ideological bent.

The right cheered on the maneuver; the left disparaged the move.

To deny ruling Democrats the opportunity to steam roll their cap and trade legislation into reality, the Republicans took a page from other states and Oregon Democratic legislators themselves by skipping town. Without the minimum number of

legislators in attendance, the cap and trade bill could not move forward. Earlier this week Senate President Peter Courtney admitted that even his own caucus did not have the necessary votes to pass the bill.

Some say that the Republicans should have returned to Salem and do the job they were elected to do—even if it means being on the losing side of a vote. Others say that the Republicans were only doing what they had to do to stave off what some call a disaster for the state.

The political stand-off resulted in the no-show Republicans being fined \$500 a day for staying away. Those fines can be paid for out of the legislator's campaign coffers. Most of the Republican senators were in Idaho, out of reach of the Oregon State Police, who have been tasked with rounding up the errant

legislators.

There are about 100 pending bills in the state legislature that will die for lack of action due to the walkout. That is one repercussion. This is not the last time this will happen, by either party. We are seeing in real time the dangers of the legislature held by supermajorities.

There are lessons here that need to be heeded. If the Republicans want to have a big say in governing they need to chip away at the Democratic majorities by running candidates more palatable to independent voters in the state's more progressive areas.

The Democrats must learn that just because you can pass some legislation doesn't mean you should.

It has been shown that real work for the people gets done when one or both houses of a state legislature is evenly divided between the two parties. True compromise is required to pass any bills.

It is understandable why the Republican senators did what they did—they didn't have much of a choice. There is no guarantee that a passed cap and trade bill could be revoked via the ballot in 2020.

The GOP has shown they have as much determination as the Democrats. Politics is the art of compromise. Let's see more compromise and a lot less drama.

—LAZ

our
opinion

Helping hope return

By MICHAEL GERSON

The U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention recently released a report that is the closest thing we have to the quantification of despair. Between 1999 and 2017, suicide rates in America rose to their highest level since World War II. The increase can be found among women and men, and in every racial and ethnic group. But the spike among people between the ages of 15 and 34 is particularly disturbing. Hopelessness among the young seems a more direct assault on hope itself.

Researchers posit that the opioid epidemic may be partly to blame. Just as a family can be decimated by an overdose, a sense of general despair may take root in communities where overdose deaths are common and visible.

Another proposed explanation is social media, which may expose younger people to bullying while constricting meaningful human interactions -- increasing the need for emotional support while narrowing the sources of emotional support. Even worse, emotionally fragile people can find perverse forms of online community that echo and encourage their despair.

Weighing and testing such explanations are important to understanding the sociology of suicide. But for people who contemplate or attempt suicide, the struggle is more personal and philosophic.

If the most important attribute of human beings is autonomy, and the purpose of life is a positive balance of pleasure over pain, then mental anguish and physical suffering can

make suicide seem like a rational choice. It can even be seen as the ultimate expression of autonomy and choice.

But this is deceptive in a variety of ways. First, autonomy is a lie. Human beings are fundamentally social creatures who only find mental health in the context of supportive relationships. In isolation, naturally depressive people are more likely to enter downward spirals of despair. The inner voice that normally whispers worthlessness can become a shout of self-condemnation. And it is dangerous when there are no other voices -- no kinder voices -- to contradict it.

Second, in most cases, the rational weighing of suicide's costs and benefits is a lie. Suicidal people with mood disorders are at a particularly dangerous stage when considerations that seem true to them are not true at all.

I am not talking here about a terminally ill patient wanting a "do not resuscitate" order. This strikes me as determining not the length of living, but the length of dying. End-of-life choices often require rational thoughts about horrible dilemmas.

But in the case of suicide, the instrument that determines our view of reality is malfunctioning. The computer is wired in favor of despair. The decision to commit suicide is generally informed by lies that seem very, very true in the moment. That loved ones don't love you. That friends secretly have contempt for you. That problems are permanent. That everyone would be better off without you.

This is the reason that people with depression need intrusive family and friends around them. They need

people who will gently but firmly intervene when they withdraw, or start giving possessions away, or talk a lot about death, or have a major loss (of a loved one or job), or begin saying goodbye to others, or buy a weapon, or use drugs and alcohol to dull pain, or act recklessly, or exhibit other changes in mood or behavior. In these situations, intervention is not the violation of privacy -- any more than using a defibrillator on a person having a heart attack is a violation of privacy. Intrusiveness -- defined by pushing a depressed person toward professional help -- is the appropriate response to a medical emergency.

But people who suffer from depression have responsibilities of their own. In times when their depression is under control, they need to cultivate a circle of family members and friends who are fully informed about their illness. And this requires the exact opposite of autonomy. It requires people with depression to be vulnerable and willing to receive help. In this case, secrecy and shame can lead to death. And since the children of people who commit suicide are more likely to commit suicide themselves, death spreads like anthracnose through family trees.

It is not an easy or natural thing for people to periodically distrust their own version of truth. But that is what someone with depression must learn to do. When things that are self-condemning and self-destructive appear self-evident, that is the time to trust in some other person's more reliable perception of reality. And then, with patience and professional help, hope can make its return.

(Washington Post Writers Group)

other
voices

gene h.
mcintyre

School's out! Or is it?

Some of the best learning is done when we don't think we're learning. Kids think that all education must cease for the summer—June through August is for fun and frolicking. Experienced parents know the truth.

When a human is in their teenage years, every day is a time for learning something. A camping trip is crammed with learning moments—how to safely build and extinguish a fire; how to clean a freshly-caught trout; the best way to fold that large tent to fit into that itty bitty bag it came in.

Closer to home kids may learn how long it does take to weed out the garden or how to compost the cuttings from their lawn mow job. An ambitious parent may teach their young how to make jam from the valley's bounty of summer berries.

Close to home next week there will be a fun event that is a wonderful learning tool: the civil war reenactment at Heritage Powerland Park in Brooks (formerly Antique Powerland). Adults, kids, teenagers, history buffs and war buffs will find something to engage them.

The grounds of Heritage Powerland Park are filled with both Union and Confederate encampments. The reenactors live as if it was the 1860s, no modern conveniences, using only what was used 150 years ago. Food is cooked over

a campfire. That same fire heats water for bathing. The reenactors wear what was worn in that period.

Members of the Northwest Civil War Council are serious about their hobby. They invite questions about the lifestyle on Civil War-era battlefields. Everyone involved is knowledgeable and can answer any question about that period.

The highlights of the four-day event are the two-a-day battles reenactments. Spies creep, looking for the enemy. Soldiers march in formation. Troops place cannons in preparation for engagement with the opposite side.

The thrill of the booming cannons is unforgettable; the smoke from the big guns wafting over the battlefields. The generals and majors on their horses commanding the battle atop their steeds. It may not be the Avengers or the Stormtroopers, but it is just as exciting.

Every battle scene, every encampment populated with soldiers and those in support of the armies is a master class in how the Civil War was fought and what it was like to live in the 1860s. Kids (and adults) won't even think about learning when they attend the civil war reenactment, they will be so thrilled with the sights and sounds, they will only realize they learned something when they tell their friends what they experienced.

—LAZ

Humans shouldn't speed up climate change

An aching heart is the result of daily news reports that, while my government ignores the fact-based warnings that climate change, global warming, the greenhouse effect, no matter its name, means that, if we continue as we're going now, it will not be possible for the human species to survive within a few decades' time. A threat to all living things, President Trump, with help from U.S. Senate GOP members and former lobbyist cabinet members, has made eliminating federal regulations a priority with 83 former air, land and water environmental protections in termination.

Yet, Trump, who has a reputation for not reading anything, listening only to coal barons and those most against renewable energy, and he who embraces the climate deniers, refuses to protect our planet's human population. He has taken the U.S. out of the 2015 Paris Climate Accords while 173 other United Nations members signed up to work together in a concerted, coordinated effort to reduce carbon emissions, slow global temperature risings, and help all the countries of the world control the effects of climate change.

In Oregon, the legislature tried to make headway with carbon emissions controls. However, the survival in office of GOP politicians by their

absence from the capitol "won" the day over human survival concerns. It's mortuus est finis here!

Elsewhere in the world there are those who seek to help aching hearts, most recently exemplified by Pope Francis. The pope convened some of the biggest and most powerful oil and companies in the world, including Exxon Mobil, BP, Royal Dutch Shell, and Chevron, to a Vatican climate summit where he encouraged them to focus on the risks of climate change to their businesses and the importance of switching to cleaner energy sources.

Pope Francis also emphasized the moral imperative "to save God's creation." When he spoke he also pointed out to the gathering of the oil executives that, if managed well, the new world design would "generate new jobs, reduce inequality and improve the quality of life for those affected by climate change" (as would have happened in Oregon by passage of House Bill 2020). Pledges to change secured by Pope Francis were followed up on at the European Union summit where these same leaders discussed efforts to combat climate change by bringing carbon emissions to a halt by 2050.

Venture it to say, any Oregonian who has lived through the last five decades, and been poignantly con-

scious of his surroundings, knows that our winters are shorter, spring now comes earlier, summers are more torrid and fall is a season of greater length. Oregon's forests are dryer and more often afire as are the open fields and range lands east of the Cascade Range. For now, however, we may be considered the more fortunate in the U.S. compared to the brutal, devastating tornadoes, days of rain that result in floods that turn farmlands, towns and cities into paths of overflowing rivers and waist-deep lakes where the water then stands dirty brown, drowning people and farm animals, destroying everything it covers. Meanwhile the polar ice caps melt and oceans rise.

The new order of life in America is that it is under a huge strain with the former occupants of lowlands and farms wondering if they'll ever return to normal conditions. However, normalcy is unlikely to happen since humankind continues to add carbon emissions in tonnages to nature that was formerly friendly to humans but now a threatening foe. We should all heed and be agents of action here and throughout the planet. We should demand that our government lead the way to change; however, unfortunately, making money remains a stronger motivator than that which, if implemented, would save humanity.

(Gene H. McIntyre shares his opinion regularly in the Keizertimes.)

End of legislative session is in sight

In case you missed it, Sine Die has been declared imminent by both the Senate and House leadership... meaning notice to announce work sessions in order to further legislation is now suspended. In other words, legislation can move very quickly and the 80th Legislative Session is getting closer to adjournment. Constitutionally, the session needs to adjourn by June 30th. I've been asked many times what's taking so long to adjourn with a supermajority? Especially considering that Washington adjourned almost two months ago and with a \$52.4 billion budget... double the size of Oregon's budget.

Most of the contentious bills have already passed this session... SB 1008 (Measure 11 reform), HB 2015 (allowing undocumented immigrants to obtain a driver's license), HB 3427 (educational funding tax), SB 872 (National Popular Vote), etc. Probably the most heated discussion this year... cap and trade. HB 2020 (100 pages

long) passed in the House Chamber this week. The bill now goes to the Senate Chamber. Currently, the Senate Republicans are threatening to "walk out" if the bill moves to the

Senate Floor for a vote. The Senate Republicans agreed to vote on any budget bill but will not be voting on HB 2020. The Governor has announced if the Senate Republicans do walk out, she will hold a special session the first week in July and order the Oregon State Police to bring the Senate Republicans back to the Capitol.

So...as of right now, the legislature has not adjourned because of the HB 2020 debacle and we still have budget bills to pass. Interestingly enough, HB 5048 has already been signed by the Governor, which ensures that any state agency with no budget before July 1, 2019, remains at current service levels. In other words, if no other budget bill were to pass by the end of session, the legislature would still

meet its obligations of a balanced budget.

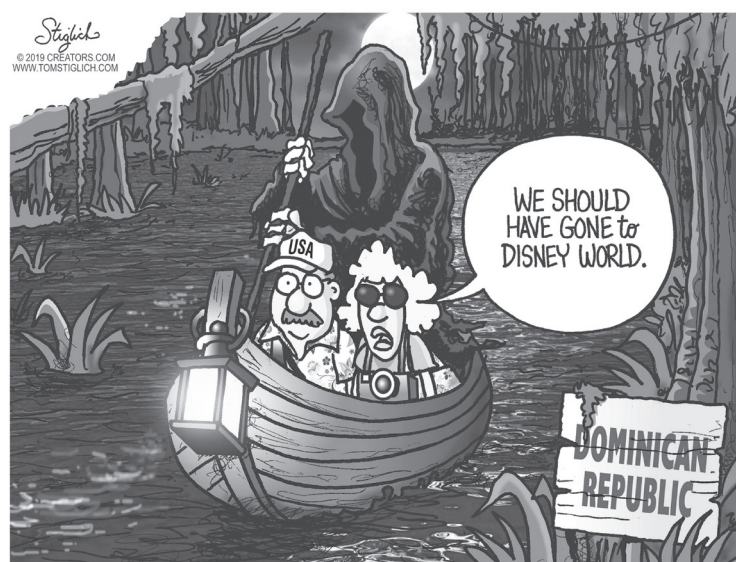
I also believe the other two controversial bills holding up adjournment are HB 2270 (raising tobacco taxes by \$2.00 per pack) and HB 2005 (extending paid family leave benefits). On a personal note: the bills that I was most passionate fared about 50/50. Daylight Saving Time passed and was signed by the Governor this week (but still must pass California's Senate and be approved by Congress to take effect) and the "Sudafed" bill is dead. To find out more about this session and specifics on bills, keep an eye out for my town hall coming soon at a date and location to be determined.

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Share your opinion

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