

KEIZERTIMES PUBLIC SQUARE

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Meeting about schools was an eye-opener

By ANDREA SMITH

I am a parent of a current student in the Salem Keizer School District. I have lived in the Salem area for the past seven years. I grew up in New York City and Chicago.

This week I attended a meeting being held and promoted by two local organizations: SK We Stand Together, and Oregon Moms Union. As I did not grow up in the area nor attend the local schools here, I appreciated the Oregon Moms Union's advertisement and blurb of who they are and what they do (they presented inclusivity, a quote from Martin Luther King, Jr. and photos including diversity). I showed up and quickly found myself surrounded by about 30 people without masks on, in a closed room above a bowling alley in Keizer.

Current schoolboard member Dr. Satya Chandragiri was present, maskless. There were current Salem-Keizer school principals and teachers, maskless. I quickly learned that this was a very far-right group. Though it was advertised as non-partisan, quick reference was made to Democrats and Republicans. Dr. Chandragiri was a key speaker, who provided his card and personal assistance to all. Dr Chandragiri shared that it's important to find ways to skirt around the current laws. I found this meeting was absolutely partisan in nature. Another current schoolboard member Marty Heyen was in attendance, unmasked.

Chandragiri gave his entire speech unmasked—which included making comparisons to the abuses the Native communities have faced regarding the abusive Native boarding schools—to the fact we are not allowing God in our schools today. He also clearly stated that the intergenerational trauma that the Native Americans have lived through, is exactly the same as these Christian families' children having a checkbox on a test that gives the option

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of transgender or non-binary.

Dr. Chandragiri was stoking these folk's fears at worst, knowing full well exactly what he was doing. I was horrified. One parent shared that their son feels like he is being forced to be transgender while in a classroom with a pride flag on the wall. The parent then explained that his son "returned to normal" as soon as he left the classroom.

I would like Satya Chandragiri investigated for his ties to these far-right groups. He was doing harm to our community and continues to by allying with very harmful and fearful rhetoric. I believe he needs to resign, or we need him out of a position of power.

I also did not expect to have literature handed out by these folks from The Heritage Foundation. Can a resolution be made that standing board members and anyone having to do with our schools not use the offensive information provided by The Heritage Foundation, for starters? And they called sex education "Marxism."

Is this actually happening? Why are these folks in positions of power? If folks like these continue to be in positions of power in Salem/Keizer, the children are going suffer. I am of the mindset that religion and school should be separate. I am also of the mindset that exposing a child to folks who live different lifestyles than they do can only be a good, positive thing. To think these are the folks in charge of things, the teachers, principals, schoolboard chair members, it makes me very worried.

(Andrea Smith lives in Salem.)

The so-called plot to fix the 2024 election

By DEBRA J. SAUNDERS

Most Americans don't stay up nights worrying about "voting rights" reforms in the belief that they are needed to eliminate what progressives call "barriers to voting."

A September *Morning Consult* poll found that 44% of U.S. adults believe voting rules are not strict enough, while "only" one-third believe it's too difficult for eligible Americans to cast their ballots.

Yet big media are obsessed with stories about GOP attempts to make it difficult to vote, even if most voters don't see a big problem.

In *The Atlantic*, Pulitzer Prize winner Barton Gellman writes of a "plot" to steal the 2024 election. "Thousands of votes will be thrown away, or millions, to produce the required effect," he predicts. "The winner will be declared the loser. The loser will be certified president-elect."

Trump's Next Coup Has Already Begun, the headline reads.

The next presidential election is three years away, and already leftists are concocting dubious reasons they could lose. They're already writing pre-conspiracy screeds.

Note that when the conservatives challenge how elections are conducted, the media lament that the right is undermining public faith in elections.

When progressives do likewise, it's like a tree falling in the woods with no one there.

In her new book, *Rigged: How the Media, Big Tech, and the Democrats Seized Our Elections*, Fox News regular Mollie Hemingway quotes Democratic pols who claim the 2016 election was "stolen." (Hillary Clinton said that.)

In 2019, former President Jimmy Carter told *NPR*, "Trump didn't actually win the election." You don't see a lot of fact checks or stories about election "misinformation" from these sore losers.

The real misinformation, Hemingway points out, was the false story about Russia colluding with the Trump campaign—which Special Counsel Robert Mueller did not find—and the impeachment efforts, based on the bogus Russian collusion fiction, that followed.

Hemingway catalogues the various ways Democrats gamed COVID-19 to increase voting by mail and extend when people could vote and where. At the same time, signature verification and other safeguards were relaxed. Ahead of the November general election, 39 states changed their election laws or rules.

When it was over, Biden won.

My view: They changed the rules in the light of day. It was the campaigns' job

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to adjust accordingly. That's the American way.

But when Republicans try to peel back the changes also in the light of day, Gellman sees "election theft."

Not a coincidence: President Joe Biden's poll numbers are underwater with 52% disapproval and 42.3% approval, according to the latest RealClearPolitics polling average. Americans disapprove of his handling of the economy, the coronavirus, immigration, foreign policy and the direction of the country.

At the end of a very long and tortured piece, Gellman concedes that former President Donald Trump or another Republican could win a fair election in 2024.

He uses the word "coup" anyway.

Trump likewise threw shade at the electoral process, even though he won in 2016.

In 2017, Trump named an election integrity panel. It disbanded after six months with no evidence of the fraud Trump had alleged.

Either election integrity meant little to Trump or he was incapable of luring the best people to fight bad actors. Or, most likely, Trump just wanted something other than himself to blame if he lost in 2020. Which he did.

The next presidential election is three years off, and already Democrats are constructing arguments that explain their loss: They were outplayed by a ruthless team. If only they hadn't been so trusting.

But really, who would believe that?
(Creators Syndicate)

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