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The key to solving poverty without ruining incentive

By MADISON ZAITZ

Poverty is arguably one of our nation's biggest problems that is yet to be solved. I have seen the attempts at resolving, and observe the many flaws.

In the following ways people are trying to amend poverty: giving out money, privileges and jobs, while also taxing "the rich" and offering through-the-roof unemployment benefits. When those in poverty are constantly given money by the government, it chips at their incentive to actually earn those funds. Their day-to-day life is reliant on being given money by those in power, and therefore their incentive to improve their lives has been diminished.

The consequence is similar for taxing "the rich." This does not work because, again, it ruins incentive and nobody works, because what's the point to earn good money if it's then taken from you? Then there is the labor shortage that arises when people are incented to not work, resulting in an unbalanced labor market (demand higher than supply), which causes labor prices to rise, which are then passed into the broader economy through increased costs of goods and services.

Raising the minimum wage and giving huge unemployment sums also reduces labor participation, hurting the same things that are trying to be helped—through labor shortages and the consequent inflation, things become harder for those of low income to afford.

This is how the system spells out:

Poverty>>>giving money>>>losing incentive>>>labor shortages>>>supply chain and prices of labor suffer, which impacts the same people that are trying to be helped.

Poverty>>>taxing the rich>>>losing incentive>>>labor shortages>>>supply chain and prices of labor suffer, which impacts the same people that are trying to be helped.

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OPINION

These things have been tried. They do not work. And as a result, things are worse off than they started. There needs to be a new solution.

Small, local businesses are doing their part in finding that solution. They, as more localized corporations, deeply touch people in poverty and give them a foundation to stand on, instead of distantly sending money in hope it'll help. Local governments could partner with groups like these to actually help their community.

A wonderful example of this is Thistle Farms. Thistle Farms (thistlefarms.org) is a nonprofit organization that helps women in poverty gain a better life. Their difference is that they help these women flourish. The women are employed in a community, where they work and are taught integral financial skills. They are given a home for two years, then afterward, the women have the financial skills and support they need to succeed in the real world. Thistle Farm's website boasts that five years after graduating, 75% of those women once on the streets are living healthy, financially stable lives. They are given a foundation to grow from, not a fistful of cash to do as they please with. This is the kind of system poverty needs. One where those in need are employed while still working, taught the skills they need, and then are able to succeed.

If groups like these are set up individually and locally all over the country, then we may be on our way to helping the crisis of poverty.

(Madison Zaitz lives in Wilsonville.)

School choice options are changing in Keizer

By ANDREW CAMPANELLA

If you're reading this, chances are you're a parent, or have friends or neighbors who are. Baby Boomer, Gen X, or Millennial—the K-12 school scene has changed so much since we were kids. Understanding these changes can help moms and dads guide their children to greater learning, success, and happiness. So: here are the three biggest changes affecting education in Keizer and across the U.S. today, and what these changes mean for your family.

First, school choice opportunities have broadened over the last generation. That means parents have more options for where to send their children to school. For example: traditional public schools have adopted more flexible enrollment policies. Charter school laws have passed in 45 states, including Oregon. More families are aware they can choose public magnet programs, where kids receive education with a special focus, like STEM or the arts. Today, some Oregon students are able to receive private scholarships to help fund their tuition at independent schools. Plus, a growing number of Oregon families are choosing homeschooling.

A second game-changer since when we were kids is that there's now more community support for making school choices. There are also more resources for parents to help them find schools and learning environments that meet their children's needs. I've worked in K-12 education for more than 15 years; over that time, I've seen dozens of parent-focused organizations spring up to shine a spotlight on learning options in local communities. From helping parents find scholarships to private schools, to helping them figure out the process of transferring to public school outside of their zone, to offering bilingual application assistance, grassroots organizations are cutting the stress out of school searching.

You can visit schoolchoiceweek.com/oregon to find community organizations in Oregon. Keep in mind that parents cite



word-of-mouth as a key factor in what school they choose. This means you have the power to help others in Keizer by sharing your own school experiences.

Third, a plethora of online learning environments have developed since our school days. These online schooling options are more comprehensive and focused than the emergency remote learning that many families experienced during the pandemic. For example, Oregon offers several free, full-time online learning options for students, like Oregon Connections Academy, Oregon Virtual Academy, Frontier Charter Academy, Baker Web Academy, Cascade Virtual Academy, Insight School of Oregon—Painted Hills, and Destinations Career Academy of Oregon. Besides official online schooling, resources like schoolhouse.world offer free support to supplement in-person learning.

All of these changes to K-12 education are reasons for hope. With more options, Keizer parents have more opportunities to find a free or inexpensive education personalized to their unique children.

If you are considering a new or different environment for your daughter or son for the next school year, though, the time to start evaluating your options is now. Begin the school search process during National School Choice Week (January 23-29), when 208 schools and homeschool groups in Oregon will be working together to raise awareness of opportunity in K-12 education. You won't regret it, and your children will thank you.

(Andrew Campanella is author of *The School Choice Roadmap: 7 Steps to Finding the Right School for Your Child*.)

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We can celebrate

By JIM PARR

"We did not come here from some other country like the white men did. We have always been here. Nature placed us in our lands."

— Yellow Wolf, Nez Perce

The original people of North America are known to have been here for the past 19,000 years or more. Their presence in Oregon dates back to at least 11,000 years ago. They witnessed the last great Ice Age and its eventual melting out over this land. Considering that white Europeans have only been in North America for about the past 450 or so years, "have always been here" is a pretty good claim. For thousands of years the Indians lived on this land with a very light footprint.

After the end of the Civil War and into the early 1900s, Indians in the west, including here in Oregon, were marched around and moved off of the land they had lived on forever. With an apparently indifferent Congress (and under the guise of the doctrine of 'manifest destiny') white settlers, with the assistance of a post-Civil War U.S. Army with little else to do, gradually took their land from them. Land had become property and the concept of ownership was forced upon the Indians.

Today, despite the struggles of a pandemic, there is reason to celebrate. The Nez Perce Tribe is buying back property in northeast Oregon that they had been forced off of over 100 years ago. And notably, Native American Deb Haaland of New Mexico has been confirmed and appointed as Secretary



of the Department of Interior. Also notably, Oregon's own Charles "Chuck" Sams III of the Confederated Tribes of Umatilla Indians has been confirmed and appointed as Director of our National Parks System. And the Confederated Salish-Kootenai Tribes of the Flathead Indian Reservation are assuming management and operation of the National Bison Range in s Montana. Locally our Confederated Siletz Indian Tribe has plans for a brand new service station and store at Keizer Station. They also have a casino in the planning stages.

There are Indian members of Congress. Hopefully their ranks in Congress will grow. After all, who better to manage and oversee our land and resources than the people who have always had a spiritual connection with the soil, the air, the water, the plants and the animals. We all remember with respect and admiration the great Indian chiefs who led their people with care, fearlessness, and skill. They were focused on holding on to places where they could live, protect their culture, their elderly and most of all, securing a good future for their children. Maybe one day one of these chiefs will become 'chief executive' (president that is) of our nation and country. It is their time.

(Jim Parr lives in Keizer.)