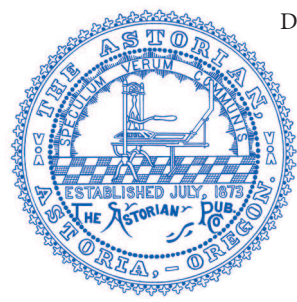


# THE DAILY ASTORIAN

Founded in 1873



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## OUR VIEW

# Unfunded mandates show state's lack of real leadership

In politics, it's easy to pass the buck — or the blame — through the age-old practice of unfunded mandates.

It's the practice where one government orders an agency or a lesser governmental entity to take a specific action to fix a problem, but doesn't supply the money to make it happen. The mandate makes the agency or the community fix the problem out of their own budgets, which is often nearly impossible to accomplish without raising taxes, cutting services or both.

Even more, this practice usually rears its head at election time to give voters the idea that leadership is truly addressing problems rather than letting them slide. But the fact that those leaders have to issue a mandate in the first place shows the problem did slide. And sometimes, those same state leaders avoid transparency by using mandates as a scare tactic to get legislative or voter approval for unpopular or controversial legislation that they support.

That's the case currently with two state mandates in the past three weeks.

And to no surprise, the mandates surfaced as Gov. Kate Brown endorsed Measure 97, the highly controversial ballot measure that would create a 2.5 percent tax for some corporations on gross sales of more than \$25 million, rather than taxing those corporations on their profits as now is the case.

Supporters of the measure say it would raise an additional \$3 billion and help Oregon fix long-standing problems and avoid a looming \$1.4 billion deficit. Supporters also say the tax revenue would be spent only on schools, seniors and health care. Opponents point out the regressive nature of the tax and say corporations would simply pass the tax on to customers who can afford it least. The measure, they say, would curb private sector growth while boosting public sector hiring. They also point out that lawyers for the Legislature say tax dollars raised by Measure 97 could be spent however lawmakers please. In her endorsement, though, Brown said she would make sure the money goes to those areas.

### The mandates

The first mandate came in early August when the state Treasury announced that the bill for schools, cities, state agencies and other public employers in Oregon will rise by \$885 million next biennium to fund the state's public employee pension system. The \$885 million is much higher than was forecast and represents a 44 percent increase from what public employees are currently paying into the pension plan to support it.

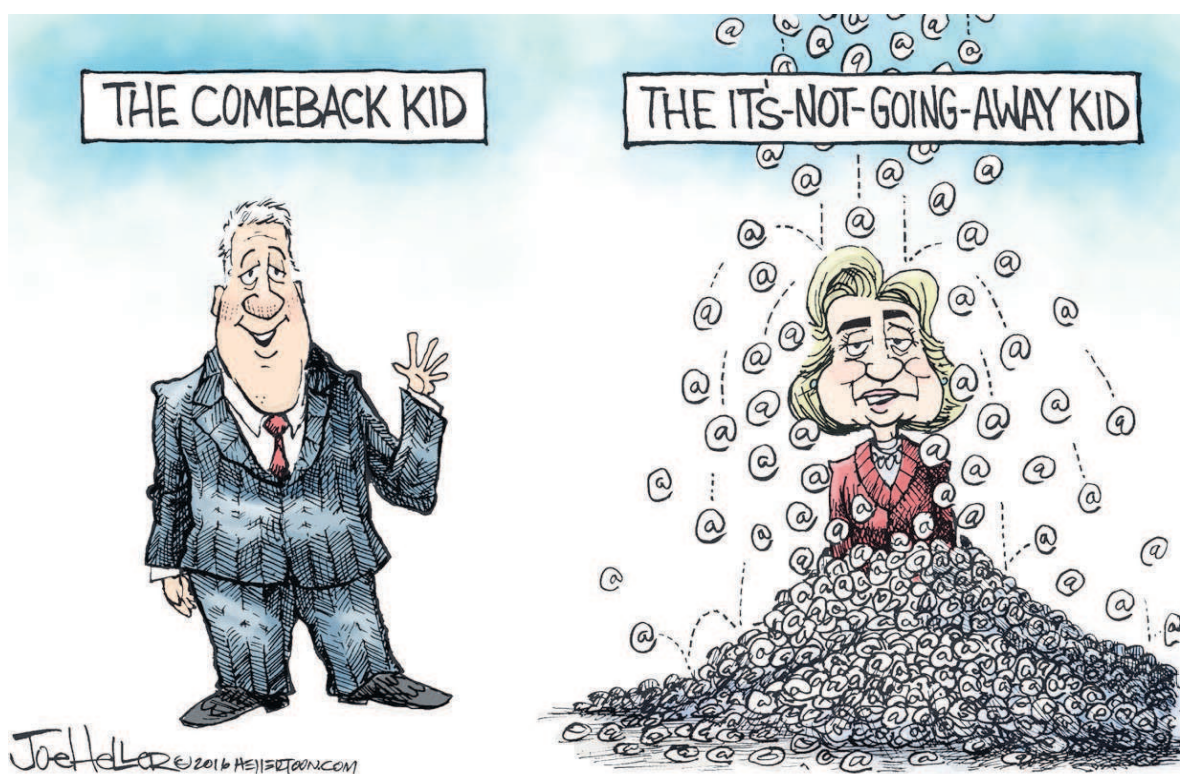
Next came an order from the Oregon Board of Education after it adopted a new, fast-tracked rule at the behest of the governor that requires testing for lead and radon in schools, public disclosure of problems that are found and the elimination of each problem when discovered. School districts are required by the mandate to have a preliminary plan in place by October and a finished plan by January. While parents and educators all agree that fixing those problems needs to happen and happen quickly, the order came without a funding mechanism in place. The state School Boards Association predicts the mandate could cost districts hundreds of millions of dollars statewide. Fortunately, districts on the North Coast have been proactive and only a handful of problems have surfaced so far.

Public schools are also facing another challenge that was mandated by the Legislature in 2007. It requires they provide a minimum of 150 minutes of physical education instruction per week for kindergarten through fifth grade and 225 minutes for sixth through eighth grade. Schools must meet the standard by 2017, but less than 10 percent of 1,080 public schools with some or all grades K-8 are in compliance. School advocacy groups are asking lawmakers to either push back the 2017 deadline or to allow a phase-in. Funding for additional PE teachers is one of the reasons the advocacy groups have cited for the poor compliance rate.

### Leadership and reforms

Real leadership is needed in addressing each of these problems. PERS in its present form simply isn't sustainable, and there are a number of reform options available. The governor and legislators, however, have been reluctant to attack the problem head on. Lead in drinking water at schools is curable, and the fact that there was no statewide requirement for even testing until 2016 says the state Board of Education and those who oversee the board from the governor's office were asleep at the wheel. The problem of physical education for children in K-8 is even more curable with innovation and creativity at the local level and the proper leadership and focus at the state level.

Each of those problems have their own individual solutions, and state leaders, especially those at the top, should be just that. They should be visible to the public and transparent with their motives and actions instead of using unfunded mandates as their method of operation. And importantly, they should quit looking for the easy cure-all fixes for problems the state faces. They should know from experience that easy fixes aren't always the right fixes.



# Finding the boundary for bribery standards

By CHARLES KRAUTHAMMER  
*Washington Post Writers Group*

WASHINGTON — Bernie Sanders never understood the epic quality of the Clinton scandals. In his first debate, he famously dismissed the email issue, it being beneath the dignity of a great revolutionary to deal in things



so tawdry and straightforward. Sanders failed to understand that Clinton scandals are sprawling, multilayered, complex things. They defy time and space. They grow and burrow.

The central problem with Hillary Clinton's emails was not the classified material. It wasn't the headline-making charge by the FBI director of her extreme carelessness in handling it.

That's a serious offense, to be sure, and could very well have been grounds for indictment. And it did damage her politically, exposing her sense of above-the-law entitlement and — in her dodges and prevarications, her parsing and evasions — demonstrating her arm's-length relationship with the truth.

But it was always something of a sideshow. The real question wasn't classification but: Why did she have a private server in the first place? She obviously lied about the purpose. What exactly was she hiding?

### Paranoia

Was this merely the prudent paranoia of someone who habitually walks the line of legality? After all, if she controls the server, she controls the evidence, and can destroy it — as she did 30,000 emails — at will.

But destroy what? Remember: She set up the system before even taking office. It's clear what she wanted to protect from scrutiny: Clinton Foundation business.

The foundation is a massive family enterprise disguised as a charity, an opaque and elaborate mechanism for sucking money from the rich to be channeled to Clinton Inc. Its purpose is to maintain the Clintons' lifestyle (offices, travel, accommodations, etc.), secure profitable connections, produce favorable publicity and reliably employ a vast entourage of retainers, ready to serve today and at the coming Clinton Restoration.

### Favors

Now we learn how the whole machine operated. Emails began dribbling out showing foundation officials contacting State Department counterparts to ask favors for foundation "friends." Say, a meeting with the State Department's "substance person" on Lebanon for one generous Lebanese-Nigerian billionaire.

Big deal, said the Clinton defenders. Low-level stuff. No involvement of the secretary herself. Until — drip, drip — the next batch revealed foundation requests for face time with the secretary herself. Such as one from the crown prince of Bahrain.

To be sure, Bahrain, home of the Fifth Fleet, is an important Persian Gulf ally. Its crown prince shouldn't have to go through a foundation — to which his government donated at least \$50,000 — to get to the secretary. The fact that he did is telling.

Now, a further drip: The Associated Press found that over half the private interests who were granted phone or personal contact with Secretary Clinton — 85 of 154 — were donors to the foundation. Total contributions?

As much as \$156 million.

Current Clinton response? There was no quid pro quo.

### Last line of defense

What a long way we've come. This is the very last line of defense. Yes, it's obvious that access and influence were sold. But no one has demonstrated definitively that the donors received something tangible of value — a pipeline, a permit, a waiver — in exchange.

It's hard to believe the Clinton folks would be stupid enough to commit something so blatant to writing. Nonetheless, there might be an email allusion to some such conversation. With thousands more emails to come, who knows what lies beneath.

On the face of it, it's rather odd that a visible quid pro quo is the bright line for malfeasance. Anything short of that is deemed acceptable. As Donald Trump says of his own donation-giving days, "when I need something from them ... I call them, they are there for me." This is considered routine and unremarkable.

It's not until a Rolex shows up on your wrist that you get indicted. Or you are found to have dangled a Senate appointment for cash. Then, like Rod Blagojevich, you go to jail. (He got 14 years.)

Yet we are hardly bothered by the routine practice of presidents rewarding big donors with cushy ambassadorships, appointments to portentous boards or invitations to state dinners.

The bright line seems to be outright bribery. Anything short of that is considered — not just for the Clintons, for everyone — acceptable corruption.

It's a sorry standard. And right now it is Hillary Clinton's saving grace.

## GUEST COLUMN

# Teens bound up for North Coast Food Web

By SUSAN CODY  
*For The Daily Astorian*

Teenagers over at the North Coast Food Web are inside cooking, while other teens paint a mural on the side of the building. Yet more teens are creating a play to present at the Performing Arts Center. All three groups are part of Upward Bound, a federal program to prepare students for college.

The local Upward Bound program serves Seaside, Warrenton and Astoria high school students from low-income families as well as those families in which neither parent holds a bachelor's degree.

Through field trips to colleges, farms, Powell's Books, Columbia Sportswear and Mount St. Helens, students broaden their horizons and learn of different career opportunities.

"The six-week summer academy is experiential learning," says Moria Golub, an adviser for Upward Bound. "They are not put through testing standards. They get out of it what they put into it."

The cooking group is studying "Food Systems, Food Conversations." They have seen films and listened to speakers about nutrition, food access and food deserts. They visited a local organic farm and picked berries in the wild and on a U-pick farm.

"This is awesome," says Asia Lambert, one of the students. "I like cooking with all natural ingredients that are good for you."

As they look over the fruits, vegetables and salad they have prepared, one boy yells, "This is what I live for



Rachel Najera poses next to her creation on the wall at the North Coast Food Web.

Susan Cody For The Daily Astorian

— hummus and pita bread!"

Wendy D'Agostino, cooking instructor at the Food Web, says, "In the fifth week, they are making more thoughtful food choices, even at home. Today they all took everything. That is better than in the past. Early on, they wanted their BLTs without the L and the T. The only second helpings they asked for were bread and mayonnaise. Now they are eating fruits and veggies."

In the kitchen or outside, teamwork is essential to these projects. "They worked together as a team, evaluating recipes and figuring out how to approach the task," D'Agostino says.

The mural painters also studied food and farms, looking at plans, drawing and sketching. After drawing the outlines on the Food Web wall, it became like a "coloring book project," says project leader Miki'ala Souza.

She says, "I want them to do everything — make the decisions, create designs, themes and submit colors. We started with some inspiration and rules, but the students made all the decisions."

"I love it," says Sadie Wooldridge.

"None of the work was decided for us. It's a great opportunity to do something for our community."

"We got to make our own choices, which we don't get to do in school," says Brittany Virgillo.

As they paint, the students discuss some of the opportunities they have experienced. Adam Morse loved seeing the play, "In the Heights," written by the same man who wrote the Broadway hit, "Hamilton."

"It was different, but you could recognize some of the music similarities," he says.

Visiting different college campuses was a big plus. Several students were impressed with Portland State University, while others leaned toward Linfield and Western Oregon.

Upward Bound offers stipends for reaching college-related benchmarks, Golub says. Applying for scholarships or meeting GPA goals are ways to earn the stipends. MONICA ALWARD says the stipends can pay for the ACT and SAT tests, which are expensive.

Susan Cody is the communications lead for the Clatsop County Way to Wellville. She is also a former deputy managing editor for The Daily Astorian.