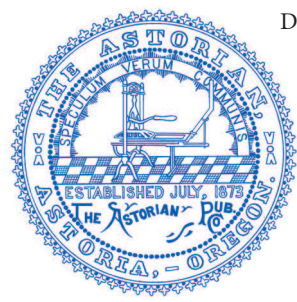


# THE DAILY ASTORIAN

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## OUR VIEW

# Scheduling laws have unintended consequences

Seattle last week joined San Francisco in requiring some employers to schedule shifts 14 days in advance and pay workers extra for certain last-minute scheduling changes, the Associated Press reports. This idea also has come up in Oregon. It is a kind-hearted step that comes with unintended consequences.

Initially applying to retail and fast-food companies with 500 employees globally and to full-service restaurants with 500 employees and 40 establishments, the Seattle law is the latest effort to improve the lives of workers. Others include phasing in a \$15 an hour minimum wage and requiring many firms to provide paid sick leave.

Each of these ideas has some merit. It is argued that they fall within the spectrum of much older reforms, such as ending child labor and requiring overtime pay when regular employees work more than 40 hours a week.

Irresponsible managers can make their workers' lives unnecessarily difficult, for example by shifting schedules in ways that make it hard to find childcare or by disrupting natural human rhythms in unhealthy ways. A study of irregular shift scheduling found about half of such workers report "serious psychological distress," Bloomberg reported on Sept. 19. Too much disruption also leads to constant uncertainty about income.

But laws like the new one in Seattle reach deeply into the sphere of internal business management. Faced with additional burdensome bookkeeping and fines for changing schedules, businesses confront a real prospect of having too many or too few workers on hand to deal with customers.

Employers don't make schedule changes for their own amusement, but because it is in the nature of economics that short-term fluctuations in supply and demand are unpredictable.

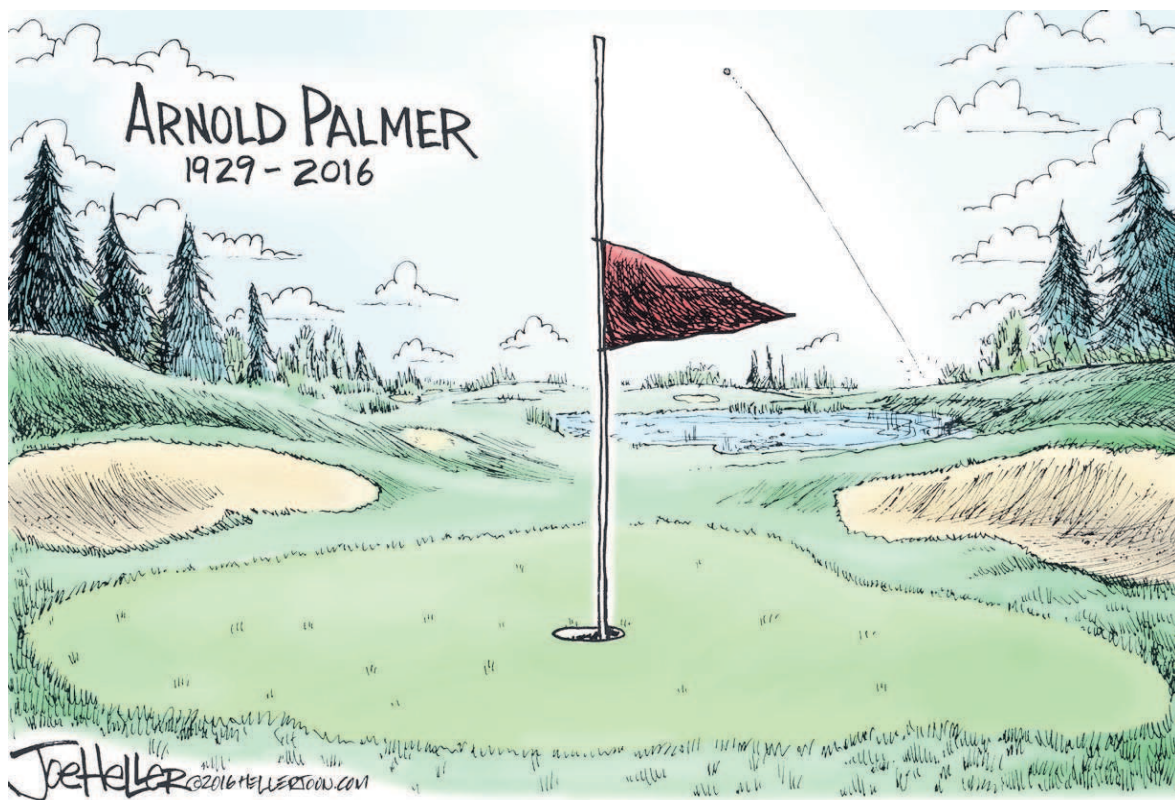
This month the U.S. Census Bureau reported that 3.5 million Americans were able to rise above the poverty line last year, an historic indication that the hangover from the Great Recession is really fading. "More than seven years after the recession ended, employers are finally being compelled to reach deeper into the pools of untapped labor, creating more jobs, especially among retailers, restaurants and hotels, and paying higher wages to attract workers and meet new minimum wage requirements," The New York Times said Sunday.

This news tells us that capitalism is working, and that employers who unfairly jerk their workers around will suffer as employees jump ship to take up better positions elsewhere.

Just as minimum-wage increases have extended farther into rural areas and into smaller business enterprises, there is a risk that scheduling requirements that start in big cities will migrate into our region's small-business sector.

It's important to let lawmakers know about the risks of doing so. At the same time, citizens need to bear all these factors in mind if they are asked to support ballot initiatives that may sound good, but burden ma-and-pa businesses with big-business obligations.

There is an old saying in the legal profession that "tough cases make for bad law." Mandatory scheduling laws are rooted in humanitarianism, but threaten to make life worse instead of better for workers.



# American epidemic, American consent

By CHARLES M. BLOW  
*New York Times News Service*

Another set of black men killed by the police — one in Tulsa, Oklahoma, another in Charlotte, North Carolina.

Another set of protests, and even some rioting.

Another television cycle in which the pornography of black death, pain and anguish are exploited for visual sensation and ratings gold.



And yes, another moment of mistakenly focusing on individual cases and individual motives and individual protests instead of recognizing that what we are witnessing in a wave of actions rippling across the country is an exhaling — a primal scream, I would venture — of cumulative cultural injury and a frantic attempt to stanch the bleeding from multiplying wounds.

We can no longer afford to buy into the delusion that this moment of turmoil is about discrete cases or their specific disposition under the law. The system of justice itself is under interrogation. The cultural mechanisms that produced that system are under interrogation. America as a whole is under interrogation.

## Trauma rises

We are in a new age in which the shroud has slipped and trauma has risen.

This is a video age, in which facts that were previously filtered through police accounts and media sources, that were previously whispered over shoulders at barbershops and across kitchen tables, have been buttressed by the immediacy and veracity of visual proof.

It is an age in which the language of resistance has been set and accepted, in which the mode of expression and resistance has been demonstrated and proved effective. It is an age of enlightenment and anger, of fear and frustration, of

activism and alertness. Black America is beyond the breaking point, a point of no return.

And in this era, the discussion around these issues must be broad and deep because the actions required to address the problems must be broad and deep.

This moment in our nation's history is not about how individual fears are articulated — in an emergency call, in an officer's response, in weapons drawn and fired, in black people's desire to flee for their lives, in black parents' anxiety about the safety of their children. This moment is about the enormous, almost invisible structure that informs those fears — the way media and cultural presentations disproportionately display black people, and black men in particular, as dangerous and menacing and criminal.

It's about the way historical policies created our modern American ghettos and their concentrated poverty; the ways in which such concentrated poverty and its blight and hopelessness can be a prime breeding ground for criminal behavior; the way these areas make poverty sticky and opportunity scarce; the way resources, from education to health care to nutrition, are limited in these areas.

## Context

We keep talking about choices, but we don't talk nearly enough about the fact that choices are always made within a cultural and historical context.

People didn't simply choose to live in neighborhoods with poor housing and poor schools and crumbling infrastructure and few grocery stores and fewer adequate health care facilities. There were many factors that created those neighborhoods: white flight, and the black flight of wealthier black people, community disinvestment, business lending practices and government policies assigning infrastructure and public transportation to certain parts of cities and not others.

And the people living in those

communities — sometimes trapped in those communities — make choices, sometimes poor ones, within that context.

We may say that a poor choice is simply wrong and the offending party must deal with the consequences. But poor choices made in a poor environment don't have the same consequences as those made in wealthy environments. For poor people, the same poor choices are punished more often and more severely, compounding their deficit.

Then America takes it further, imputing the poor choices of a few onto a whole race, and in so doing sets the stage for disaster. This creates the suspicion and fear that can lead to the deaths we're seeing, in which the person killed may have made no poor choices, in which the only poor choice was the pulling of a trigger.

This is what people mean when they talk about the impact of systemic racism in these cases and in these areas. It is not that the police harbor more racism than the rest of America, but rather that racism across society, including within our police departments and system of justice, has been erected in ways that disproportionately affect poor, minority communities. That is acutely clear in these killings.

What took centuries to grow may take a long time to fully chop down. You can't fight racism by plucking leaves from the top of the poisonous tree, but by taking an ax to the root.

Republican vice-presidential candidate Mike Pence said last week, "We ought to set aside this talk, this talk about institutional racism and institutional bias," calling it "rhetoric of division." That is exactly the opposite of what we should do.

The police are simply instruments of the state, and the state is the people who comprise it. The police are articulating a campaign of control and containment of populations and that campaign has the implicit approval of every citizen within their jurisdictions. This is not a rogue officer problem; this is a rogue society problem.

# And now, the presidential dog days

By GAIL COLLINS

*New York Times News Service*

I think it's time to talk about the presidential candidates' pets.

Look, you need a break. And everybody — or almost everybody — likes an animal story. I'm not quite sure about Donald Trump, but we'll get to him in a minute.

Pets, particularly dogs, pop up all the time in White House lore. Richard Nixon might never have even gotten there if he hadn't used Checkers the cocker spaniel as a diversion from a campaign finance scandal. Lyndon Johnson posed — for reasons we will never understand — picking up his beagle by the ears. The décor at one Obama White House holiday party was many variations on the theme of Bo. This tradition goes way back. James Garfield had a Newfoundland named Veto. Calvin Coolidge seems to have acquired four cats, seven birds, nine dogs, two lion cubs, a raccoon, a bear, a wallaby, an antelope and 13 ducks.



I used to enjoy occasionally pointing out that Mitt Romney had once driven his family to Canada with Seamus the Irish setter strapped to the roof of the car. A campaign consultant told me that the Seamus story elicited stronger reactions from focus groups than any other aspect of the 2012 campaign.

## Pet count

Donald Trump doesn't have any pets, and the animal anecdotes about him seem to be ... unsettling. Clinton has had a number of dogs and cats, but their stories are generally ... kind of boring. While she was first lady, Clinton wrote a book called "Dear Socks, Dear Buddy: Kids' Letters to the First Pets." In it, you can learn that Socks the cat's tail was one foot long.

Socks, the most famous of the Clinton pets, has since passed away. So has Buddy the Labrador retriever, who was replaced by another chocolate Lab named — yes! — Seamus. This is a total coincidence. Right now the Clintons have a couple of fuzzy little dogs

along the poodle line.

If Trump has ever in his life had a pet, his campaign doesn't know about it. There's some question, in fact, about whether he's ever even had an animal friend. For a while, there was a story about Trump begging for prayers for a Lab named Spinee who was undergoing major surgery. I am very, very sorry to tell you that this appears to be a total fabrication.

## In books

There are two colorful stories about Trump's previous encounters with animals in books written by ex-employees.

The first goes back to the 1980s, when Trump was in his first bloom of glitzy celebrity and acquired a promising 2-year-old racehorse named Alibi. John O'Donnell, a former Trump casino president, wrote that the colt fell apart when Trump insisted, despite the trainer's objections, that Alibi be worked out even though a virus was going through his barn. O'Donnell claimed Alibi got very sick as a result — so ill he eventually had to have some of his

hooves amputated and was retired. Then, O'Donnell said, Trump announced that he was not buying a defective animal and backed out of the sale.

"Jack O'Donnell is a disgruntled former employee, and this is a totally unsubstantiated and false claim," said a spokeswoman for the Trump campaign.

You decide who's right. The one thing we do know for sure is that when Trump first bought Alibi, he changed the poor horse's name to D.J. Trump.

The other, much less depressing story involves a chicken named Ginger, who once played tic-tac-toe with Trump at a casino near Palm Springs. Like so very many things in our world, the casino had Trump's name on it, but it was owned by someone else — in this case an Indian tribe.

Perhaps you have never seen a tic-tac-toe-playing chicken, but they've been around a long time. According to Gary Green, another former Trump casino executive who wrote a book, a computer under the board lit up a square, and if the

chicken pecked it, said bird got some corn. Hey, it's a job.

After the game was over — Trump won — Green ran an advertising campaign that featured Trump firing Ginger and starting a Chicken Apprentice contest for a replacement. While Ginger's fate was not described explicitly, the casino started serving chicken wings as part of the promotion.

Beyond that, connections between Trump and the animal kingdom seem pretty sparse — if you ignore Jane Goodall's recent comment to The Atlantic that his performances "remind me of male chimpanzees and their dominance issues." Bloggers have pointed out that Trump tweets a lot of unflattering dog references. ("... cheated on him like a dog ...") It is true that he does seem to specialize in insult via canine analogy. I once got a letter from him suggesting I resembled a dog. He did not seem to be thinking about my large, friendly eyes.

If he wins the election, we could have the first president in history to refuse to pardon the Thanksgiving turkey.