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OUR VIEW

Brown's stance on immigration risky but right

From agriculture to medicine to technology, Oregon thrives on the work of immigrants.

Caught between state law and Trump administration policy, Gov. Kate Brown has acted responsibly by upholding Oregon as a place that “embraces, celebrates and welcomes its immigrant and refugee residents.”

On Thursday, Brown signed an executive order expanding a 1987 state law that prohibits law enforcement agencies from using taxpayer money to investigate or arrest Oregonians due only to their immigration status.

That prohibition will now apply to all state agencies. They still must follow state and federal laws; for example, only citizens can become voters or obtain certain welfare benefits. But state employees must not discriminate based on immigration status or — because Brown worries about a potential “Muslim ban” — on religion.

Her point: Oregon agencies and Oregon law enforcement should focus on Oregon, and leave federal immigration enforcement to the feds.

“I want to make it very clear that here in Oregon, where thousands have fought for and demanded equality, where millions have put down roots and become integral to our economy, to our culture, and to our way of life, we cannot retreat,” Brown said. “As governor, it is my duty to uphold the civil and human rights of all who call Oregon home.”

President Donald Trump issued executive orders that halted resettlement of refugees from Syria and temporarily blocked citizens of seven predominantly Muslim countries from entering the U.S.

That is his political prerogative, although subsequent lawsuits are challenging the constitutionality of his orders. Brown wants Oregon to join the litigation.

The Trump orders, which canceled tens of thousands of visas until a federal judge intervened, directly affect Oregon. In one high-profile case that incensed politicians nationwide, an Iranian infant was blocked from traveling to Oregon Health & Science University for life-saving heart surgery. The federal government has now granted a waiver allowing Fatemeh Reshad and her family to enter the U.S.

Oregon's largest private employer, Intel, has thousands of foreign-born employees who are here on work visas. So do many other employers, from doctors who practice at clinics and hospitals to IT contractors who serve state government. Oregon universities constantly have scholars and students traveling from abroad to collaborate on study and research. And certainly, Oregon's farm sector is dependent on the agricultural skills of thousands of immigrants.

Oregon's 1987 law had national influence but has not always been followed locally. Clackamas County ran afoul of the U.S. Constitution for holding a woman on a federal immigration detainer after her arrest for allegedly violating a restraining order. That 2014 federal court ruling led many sheriff's departments to require that the feds have a warrant or court order when they want a foreign-born individual held for immigration purposes.

That is reasonable, despite the inflammatory rhetoric about Oregon and other places being “sanctuaries” for undocumented immigrants.

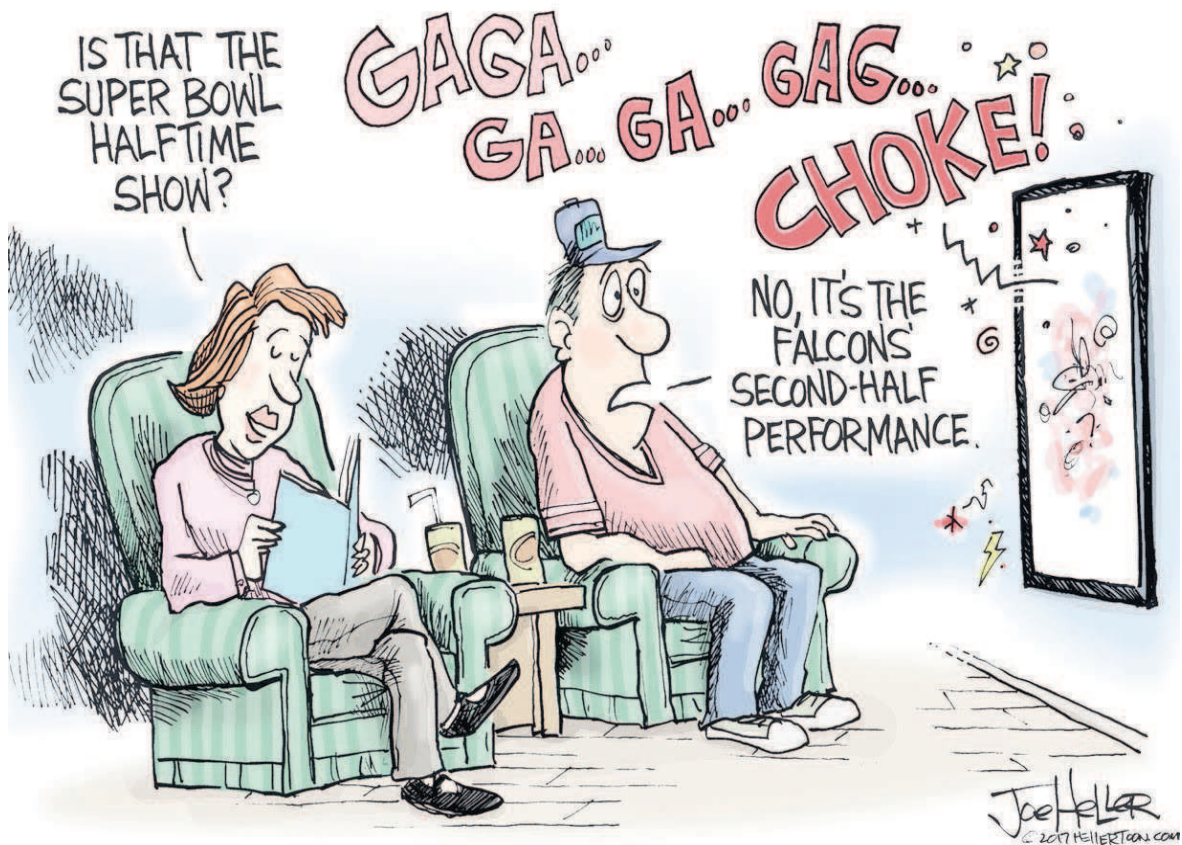
Oregon pursues, prosecutes and punishes criminals regardless of their immigration status. Oregon law enforcement also honors federal warrants.

Public safety is enhanced by the legitimate separation between state law enforcement and federal immigration enforcement. Oregon's law encourages undocumented immigrants to trust police instead of fearing deportation for being a victim or witness to a crime. The law encourages immigrants to use the court system to resolve child custody and other issues. However, Oregon judges say Trump's orders already have had a chilling effect in that regard.

Oregon's position carries risks. One of Trump's orders would withdraw federal money from “sanctuary” states and cities. A greater risk, noted Republican state Sen. Brian Boquist of Dallas, is that Oregon will simply be left off the future recipient list when federal money is doled out for road construction and other projects.

It is a risky stance. It is the right stance.

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A lesson in black history



President Donald Trump held an African American History Month listening session attended by Ben Carson, his nominee to lead the Department of Housing and Urban Development, and Omarosa Manigault, the director of communications for the Office of Public Liaison, in the Roosevelt Room of the White House Wednesday.

By CHARLES BLOW
New York Times News Service

Last week at a supposed Black History Month “listening session” at the White House, Donald Trump made this baffling statement: “I am very proud now that we have a museum on the National Mall where people can learn about

Reverend King, so many other things. Frederick Douglass is an example of somebody who's done an amazing job that is being recognized more and more, I notice.”

It sounded a bit like he thought the inimitable Douglass, who died in 1895, was some lesser-known black leader who was still alive.

When press secretary Sean Spicer was asked what Trump meant by his Douglass comments, Spicer responded:

“I think he wants to highlight the contributions that he has made. And I think through a lot of the actions and statements that he's going to make, I think the contributions of Frederick Douglass will become more and more.”

Assuming that the “he” in that sentence refers to Douglass, these numbskulls are actually referring to him as a living person and have absolutely no clue who Douglass is and what he means to America.

Social media had a field day with this, relentlessly mocking the team, but for me the emotion was overwhelming sadness: How could the American “president” or a White House press secretary, or any American citizen for that matter, not know who Douglass is?

Let's be absolutely clear here: Frederick Douglass is a singular, towering figure of American history. The entire legacy of black intellectual thought and civil rights activism flows in some way through Douglass, from W.E.B. DuBois to Booker T. Washington, to the Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King Jr., to President Barack Obama himself.

Douglass was one of the most brilliant thinkers, writers and ora-

tors America has ever produced. Furthermore, he harnessed and mastered the media of his day: Writing an acclaimed autobiography, establishing his own newspaper and becoming the most photographed African American of the 19th century.

Put another way: If modern social media existed during Douglass' time, he would have been one of its kings.

Douglass also was a friend of Susan B. Anthony and an advocate for women's civil rights as well as the civil rights of black people, understanding even then the intersectionality of oppressions. In fact, the motto of his newspaper, *The North Star*, was “Right is of no Sex — Truth is of no Color — God is the Father of us all, and we are all Brethren.”

Trump would do well to study this history; he has much to learn from it.

But perhaps one of the best reasons Trump and Spicer need to bone up on Douglass is to understand his relationship with Abraham Lincoln and to get a better sense of what true leadership looks like.

Douglass was a blistering critic of Lincoln from the beginning. In Lincoln's first Inaugural Address, he quoted from one of his previous speeches in which he had said “I have no purpose, directly or indirectly, to interfere with the institution of slavery in the states where it exists,” and he went on to defend the Fugitive Slave Act, promising the slave states full enforcement of it as long as it was on the books.

This incensed Douglass, who said of the remarks: “Not content with the broadest recognition of the right of property in the

souls and bodies of men in the slave states, Mr. Lincoln next proceeds, with nerves of steel, to tell the slaveholders what an excellent slave hound he is.”

Although Douglass' cutting critique of Lincoln began to soften after Lincoln announced the preliminary Emancipation Proclamation, Douglass continued to be unhappy throughout the Civil War about the unequal treatment of black soldiers in the Union Army. But even in the midst of this criticism, Lincoln entertained Douglass at the White House.

Although Douglass wasn't fully satisfied with Lincoln's positions, Douglass remarked of the meeting: “Mr. Lincoln listened with earnest attention and with very apparent sympathy, and replied to each point in his own peculiar, forcible way.”

This stands in stark contrast to Trump's avoidance of black intellectuals and even any real critics. Trump's “listening session” seemed to be populated only by his black appointees and supporters.

Lincoln and Douglass would go on to develop a genuine friendship and Douglass would become something of Lincoln's conscience on the slave issue. In fact, Lincoln called Douglass “one of the most meritorious men, if not the most meritorious man, in the United States.”

That is what leadership and growth look like. Lincoln grew from the association with and counsel from his onetime critic, to become one of the greatest presidents America has ever known.

Indeed Black History Month began not as a month but a week: Negro History week, the second week of February. It was established in 1926 by noted black historian Carter G. Woodson, and choosing February was no coincidence: It honored the birthdays of Lincoln, who freed the slaves, and Douglass, who helped direct his conscience.

Trump would do well to study this history; he has much to learn from it. As historian Woodson's personal motto went: “It's never too late to learn.”

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