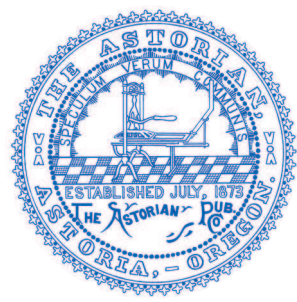


# THE DAILY ASTORIAN

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## OUR VIEW

# Fishermen should look for smart ways to survive

As spring Chinook salmon congregate in the ocean around the mouth of the Columbia River in anticipation of their ancient migration to upriver spawning grounds, this spring also sees a swirling conglomeration of politics in Oregon and Washington state over how to allocate salmon among different interests.

In some ways nothing new, in other respects the fight over salmon is rising to a higher pitch. Increasingly involving elected leaders, the outcome is becoming even less predictable. Also unclear is where a majority of Oregon and Washington state voters stand on the issue.

The key point of recent news in the matter is the Oregon Fish and Wildlife Commission's unanimous vote to curtail gillnet fish harvests, altering an earlier decision that was more favorable to commercial fishermen. Bullied into the decision by Gov. Kate Brown, the commission backed away from its earlier acknowledgment that the states have so far failed to keep a promise made by the Oregon Legislature to ensure the continuing economic viability of the commercial fleet. Alternative fishing methods have proven ineffective, alternative fishing grounds are in short supply, and money has been slow to arrive to aid transition away from the decadeslong gillnetting tradition.

Commission members still held with some concessions to gillnetters, attempting to allow their use in upstream zones of the Columbia River to harvest fall Chinook. Oregon commissioners also would permit tangle nets — alternative gear that allows fishermen to sort between hatchery and naturally spawned salmon, returning the latter to the water with a better chance of survival. Oregon also wants the commercial share of fall Chinook to be 30 percent, compared to 25 percent in Washington waters.

Washington's regulators promptly rejected all this, leaving regulations for the shared water body in ambiguity. The undeniable bottom line, though, is that 70 to 80 percent of harvestable fish — depending on the season — are allocated to sport fishermen.

The Washington Fish and Wildlife Commission's intransigence has not gone unnoticed in the Washington Legislature, where a key Senate committee chairman is proposing a thorough overhaul of Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife management. Calling it an agency in crisis, the Republicans who lead the Washington Senate want to protect hatchery operations — a step that would reverse the agency's current inclination to withdraw from the region's longstanding practice of augmenting natural runs with hatchery fish. These fish are central to both the commercial and sport fisheries.

Fish and wildlife agencies in both states face budget problems, driven in part by a generational decline in the numbers of people buying hunting and fishing licenses. Washington has planned a major fee increase, something the state Senate legislation would roll back, in part by giving the agency \$5 million more in dedicated funding in the next two-year budget cycle. Oregon is in even worse straits, with a task force last year seeing a need for an additional \$43 million a year in taxes to support agency conservation programs, maintenance and outreach.

Underlying all this controversy and strife is the fact that salmon struggle more and more against erratic rainfall and a warming ocean that is drastically altering the survival equation. Returns are predicted to be impacted by the warm-water/low-nutrition waters young salmon encountered when they hit the Pacific in "The Blob" years of 2014 to 2016.

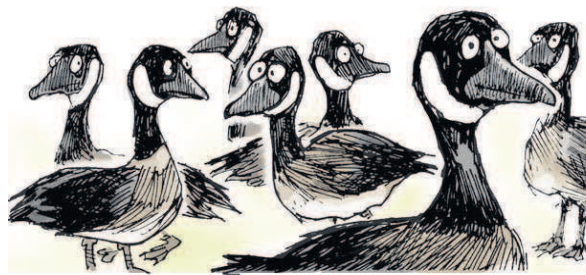
This chaos and enmity among people who are all, in their separate ways, zealous supporters of salmon is highly counterproductive. It is tempting to suspect that the real goal of those who sew this discord is to wreck once-effective alliances among different fishing groups, perhaps to ease industrialization of the Columbia River or to avoid costly conservation measures. How much easier would life be for big-money interests if salmon simply went extinct, or at least became only a hobby for a diminishing number of voters?

All who care about salmon, for whatever reason, will do well to remember that there are figuratively "bigger fish to fry" in this struggle. Recreational fishermen would do well to remember there is no one more passionate and expert in the ways of salmon than the gillnetter who spends endless nights on the river. And commercial fishermen must count the number of votes represented by sportfishermen and conservationists, and continue looking for smart ways to survive in a changing world.

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## Birds of a Feather

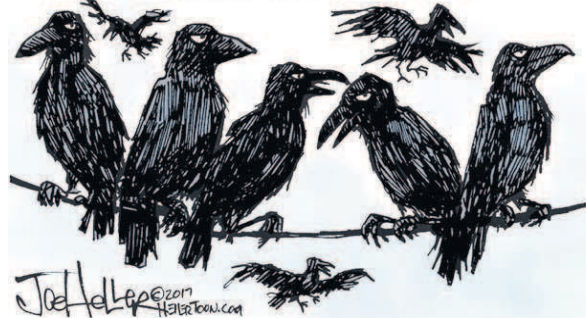
### A GAGGLE OF GEESE



### A PARLIAMENT OF OWLS



### A MURDER OF CROWS



### A WHOPPER OF TWEETS



# The Trump Elite: Like the old elite, but worse

By DAVID BROOKS

*New York Times News Service*

Legislation can be crafted bottom up or top down. In bottom up you ask, What problems do voters have and how can they be addressed. In top down, you ask, What problems do elite politicians have and how can they be addressed?



The House Republican health care bill is a pure top-down document. It was not molded to the actual health care needs of regular voters. It does not have support from actual American voters or much interest in those voters. It was written by elites to serve the needs of elites. Donald Trump vowed to drain the swamp, but this bill is pure swamp.

First, the new Republican establishment leaders needed something they could call Obamacare repeal — anything that they could call Obamacare repeal.

It became clear as the legislative process rushed forward that there was no overarching vision in this legislation on how to reform health care or even an organizing thought about how to improve the lives of voters. There was no core health care priority that Republicans identified and were trying to solve.

There were just some politicians who wanted a news release called Repeal.

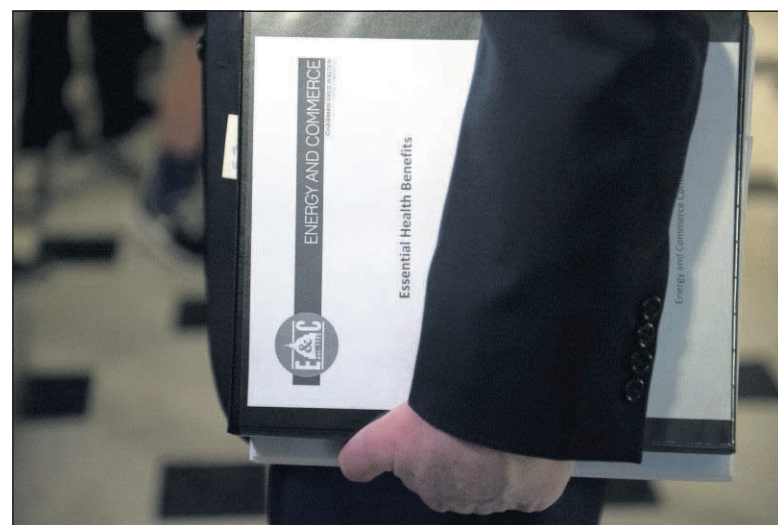
Second, Donald Trump needed a win. The national effects of that win seemed immaterial to him.

His lobbying efforts for the legislation were substance-free. It was all about Donald Trump — providing Trump with a pelt, polishing a credential for Trump. His lobbying revealed the vapidness of his narcissism. He didn't mind caving to the Freedom Caucus on Wednesday night on policy because he doesn't care about policy, just the publicity win.

Third, the bill was crafted by people who were insular and nearsighted, who could see only a Washington logic and couldn't see any national or real-life logic.

They could have drafted a bill that addressed the perverse fee-for-service incentives that drive up health costs, or a bill that began to phase out our silly employment-based system, or one that increased health security for the working and middle class.

But any large vision was beyond the drafters of this legislation. They were more concerned with bending, distorting and folding the bill to meet the Byrd rule, an arbitrary congressional peculiarity of no real purpose to the outside world. They



AP Photo/Cliff Owen

House Energy and Commerce Committee Chairman Rep. Greg Walden, R-Ore., one of the stewards of the Republican health care legislation, carries a binder labeled "Essential Health Benefits" as he leaves the Capitol Hill office of House Speaker Paul Ryan Friday.

were more concerned with what this internal faction, or that internal faction, might want. The result was a pedantic hodgepodge that made no one happy.

In 24 hours of ugly machinations, the Trump administration was willing to rip out big elements of the bill and insert big new ones, without regard to substance or ramification.

**So the Republicans have the politics driving the substance, not the other way around. The new elite is worse than the old elite — and certainly more vapid.**

House members were rushed to commit to legislation even while major pieces of it were still in flux, when nobody had time to read it, when the Congressional Budget Office had no time to score it, when the effect on health outcomes of actual Americans was an absolute mystery.

As the negotiating process has gone on, you've seen rank-and-file House Republicans caught between the inside game and the outside game. The logic of the inside game says vote for the bill. Support Speaker Paul Ryan. Don't defeat a Republican president. But the outside game screams: Oppose

This Bill. It's bad for most voters, especially Republican voters. And nobody likes it.

I opposed Obamacare. I like health savings accounts, tax credits and competitive health care markets to drive down costs. But these free-market reforms have to be funded in a way to serve the least among us, not the most. This House Republican plan would increase suffering, morbidity and death among the middle class and poor to provide tax cuts to the rich.

It would cut Medicaid benefits by \$880 billion between now and 2026. It would boost the after-tax income for those making more than \$1 million a year by 14 percent, according to the Tax Policy Center. This bill takes the most vicious progressive stereotypes about conservatives and validates them.

It's no wonder that according to the latest Quinnipiac poll this bill has just a 17 percent approval rating. It's no wonder that this bill is already massively more unpopular than Hillarycare and Obamacare, two bills that ended up gutting congressional majorities.

If we're going to have the rough edges of a populist revolt, you'd think that at least somebody would be interested in listening to the people. But with this bill the Republican leadership sets an all-time new land speed record for forgetting where you came from.

The core Republican problem is this: The Republicans can't run policymaking from the White House because they have a marketing guy in charge of the factory. But they can't run policy from Capitol Hill because it's visionless and internally divided. So the Republicans have the politics driving the substance, not the other way around. The new elite is worse than the old elite — and certainly more vapid.

## LETTER TO THE EDITOR

### 'Trail of Surprises'

I really enjoy my morning jaunts on what I call my "Trail of Surprises." It was a very cold and windy morning, as again I entered the Warrenton River Trail at Seventh Place and Main Avenue. The trail was covered with frost and broken branches from the gusting winds. It made it like a mini obstacle course.

As I moved gingerly down the trail, I glanced up at a tall fir tree.

Its branches were waving to and fro, and they seemed to be saying, "Blow, ye mighty wind, blow. The harder you blow, the deeper my roots will grow."

As the wind continued to nip at my cheeks and my hands (even in gloves, they were starting to ache), I thought what a message the tree was sending to me. When troubling winds blow in our lives — sickness, sorrow, challenges, all seemingly too tough to face — these winds were designed not to

destroy us, but to strengthen us, sending deeper our roots of faith and belief.

If our lives were never challenged by the troubling winds of life, why would there be a need for faith and belief? So blow, ye mighty winds of life, blow, that the roots of our faith and belief might even deeper grow. So I thank you, my "Trail of Surprises," for the message you have given to me.

JIM BERNARD  
Warrenton