

THE DAILY ASTORIAN

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OUR VIEW

Trump is looking backward on U.S.-Cuba tourism

In a young presidency that is already middle-aged, last week's rollback of President Barack Obama's opening to Cuba was a reminder that this president is obsessively reactive, determined to blot out a past that he has demonized. In an initiative that has been deplored by the U.S. Chamber of Commerce, President Donald Trump changed the rules on how average Americans may visit Cuba.

Delivered in the last year of his presidency, Obama's Cuban diplomacy allowed Americans to visit Cuba on their own, without being part of travel groups whose movements were tightly defined and controlled by the Cuban regime. To go back to the way it was is a strange choice. President Trump said he didn't want money going to the Cuban military, which controls many hotels. But Obama's looser travel rules allowed Americans to spend money on nascent private enterprise in Cuba, to the tune of millions of dollars in just four months.

If you set aside the Russian taint that infects the Trump presidency and you look purely at what the president tries to accomplish, it is a curious mix of initiatives that are not fully formed and poorly thought out. This Cuba gambit fits the latter category.

Reflecting on the Cuba deal in a Saturday editorial, The New York Times argued that, "By now, Mr. Trump has perfected the art not of the deal but of dismantling what went before."

The columnist Timothy Egan made that point more colloquially when he described Trump as "a gasbag in a red cap pledging to turn back the clock."

Republicans and Trump are wasting months trying to repeal the Affordable Care Act — Obamacare. If they had invited Democrats to help them improve the health care law, the job could have been done more effectively and more easily. There is recognition among Democrats in Congress — such as U.S. Sen. Ron Wyden of Oregon — that Obamacare needs fixes.

Except for a promised massive infrastructure program, President Trump and the Republicans who control Congress are largely focused on a backward-looking agenda.

In addition to the damage the Cuba revision inflicts on the U.S. tourism business, the great setback is with the geopolitics of Latin America. Like Trump's baffling unwillingness to renew America's adherence to the bedrock of NATO — Article V of the charter — this lane change on Cuba tells our southern neighbors that what we say cannot be relied upon.

Trump is showing us that the translation between business leadership and the presidency is blurry. But it is useful to point out that business leaders in 2017 don't lose time yearning for the past. They know it is not coming back. They plan for a future they know is fraught with uncertainty.

With so many challenges facing America — climate change, cyber warfare and immigration among them — our president should be looking forward, not looking over the tailgate.

Patriot Hall opening shows all the signs of a success

The public got a first full glimpse of Clatsop Community College's newly redeveloped Patriot Hall on Friday when the college opened the cavernous building for graduation. The limited opening showed all the signs that the project's cost was money well spent.

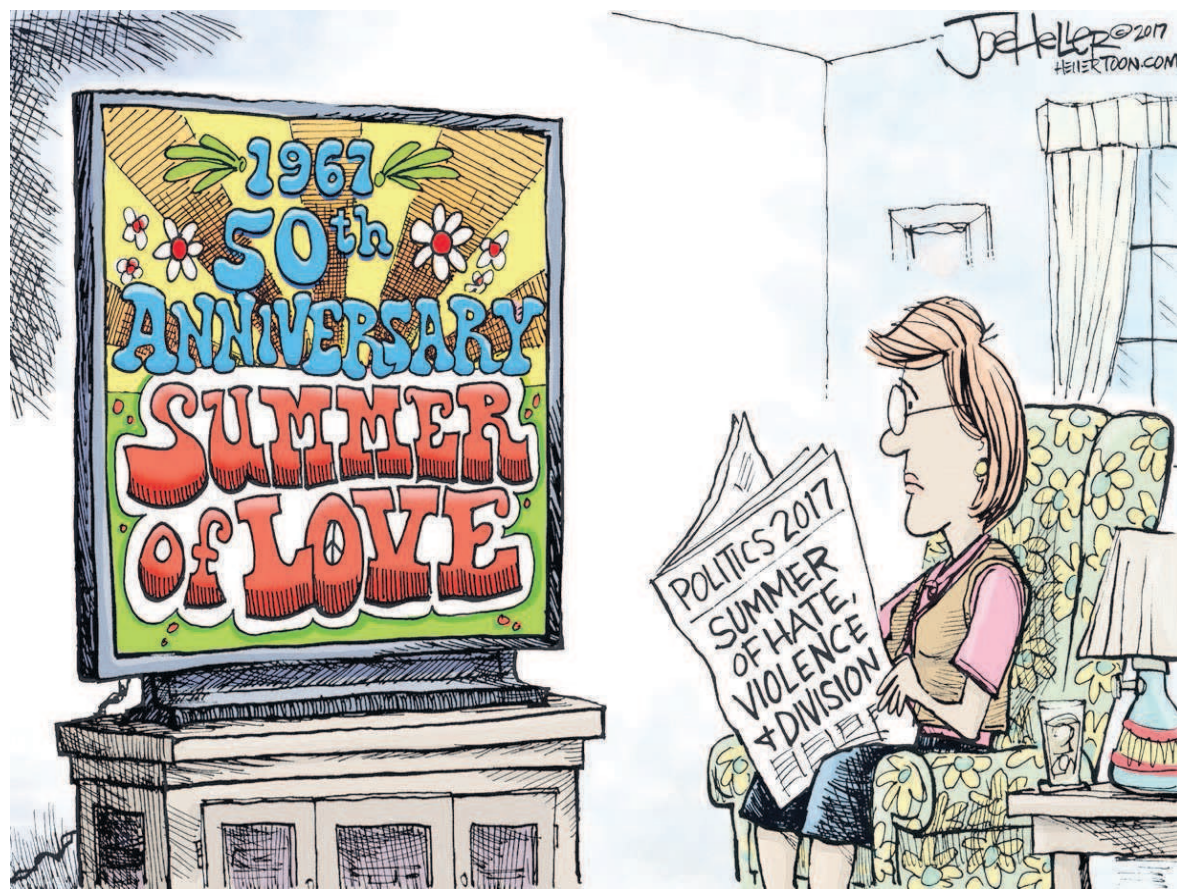
The ceremony in the \$16 million, 30,000-square-foot building occurred in its new 540-seat gymnasium and marked the first time in more than 40 years the college conducted commencement on campus. In addition to the gym, the building will feature several new studios and classrooms, expanded cardiovascular and weight training areas and a third-floor elevated running track looking out over the picturesque Columbia River.

The redevelopment project began two years ago and was funded equally by a countywide bond measure and state bond money. While finishing touches are still being completed, the building didn't display any of the flaws that might typically show up prior to a project being completed. After commencement the three-story hall was closed for more work and will reopen later this summer.

The college intends to have a pilot opening of the building during the summer term with several physical education and community courses, followed by a more robust fall-term opening and a rededication of the building on Nov. 11, in honor of the old Patriot Hall's original dedication on the first Armistice Day in 1921.

College President Christopher Breitmeyer says he wants the new building to be a center of community engagement and that it will be a valuable resource for years to come.

It has all the signs it will.



GUEST COLUMN

With Roe in jeopardy, Oregon must take action

By FRANK GIBSON
 Special to The Daily Astorian

The United States was founded on the principles of individual liberty, personal privacy and equality, and these principles are meant to ensure that each individual is free to make the most intimate decisions without government interference and discrimination.

As an attorney — but also as a husband and a father — I support comprehensive reproductive health care for Oregonians, without unnecessary restriction. This includes access to contraceptives, screening for possible infections and cancer, and counseling regarding all reproductive health options.

One of the most intimate decisions a woman ever faces is the decision to choose adoption, end a pregnancy or raise a child. These deeply personal medical decisions must be left up to a woman, her family and her faith, with the counsel of her doctor or health care provider. Patients deserve accurate information about all of their options to make their own, fully informed health care decisions.

In 1969, Oregon became one of the first states to legalize abortion. In 1973, the U.S. Supreme Court ruled in *Roe v. Wade* that a woman's personal medical decision-making about pregnancy is a fundamental right. By a 7-2 majority, the landmark decision affirmed that the constitutionally protected right to privacy includes every woman's ability to make her own personal medical decisions, without the interference of politicians.

Since then, a recent Pew Research Center poll confirms that the majority of Americans believe abortion should be legal in all or most cases. About seven in 10 oppose overturning *Roe v. Wade*.

Nearly one-third of women in the United States decide to end a pregnancy, and every person's personal decision about their pregnancy should be respected and valued. No one can make that decision for someone else.

Unfortunately, if *Roe v. Wade* were overturned, there is nothing in Oregon law that protects the right to abortion. In the face of growing political attacks, the Reproductive Health Equity Act (House Bill 3391) addresses this problem, establishing the right to safe and legal abortion in Oregon. This bill also protects Oregonians against dis-



AP Photo/Susan Walsh
 Abortion rights protesters rally outside the U.S. Supreme Court in Washington, D.C., in 2016.

crimination in the provision of health care benefits and insurance on the basis of race, color, national origin, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity, age or disability and makes such discrimination a violation of state law.

The United States is one of the only countries in the world where maternal mortality rates have risen.

It is important for me to protect abortion access for future generations by codifying it clearly in our statutes. No matter who occupies the Oval Office or holds a majority in Congress, it is vital to Oregonians' health and well-being that abortion remain a safe and legal medical procedure for a woman to consider, if and when she needs it.

Prior to the *Roe v. Wade* decision, an estimated 1.2 million women per year in the United States were forced to resort to illegal abortions despite the known hazards, including unsanitary conditions, incompetent treatment, infection, hemorrhage, disfigurement and death. According to one estimate, prior to 1973, as many as 5,000 women died each year in the United States as a result of having an illegal abortion.

In states like Texas, where politicians have placed restrictions on access to abortion, we can already see the devastating consequences. Patients are traveling hundreds of miles, crossing state lines and waiting weeks to get an abortion, if they can at all. Researchers estimate that up to 240,000 Texans have tried to end a pregnancy on their own without medical assistance. This often has a disproportionate impact on communities of color, who already face systemic barriers in accessing quality health care.

Despite improvements in health care — and an overwhelming global trend in the other direction — the United States is one of the only countries in the world where maternal mortality rates have risen. In fact, according to a report in the journal *Obstetrics and Gynecology*, between 2010 and 2014, the maternal mortality rate in Texas has doubled. This is unacceptable.

In order to ensure abortion remains safe and legal for future generations, we must replace misinformation with facts and have honest conversations about abortion in Oregon today. Every Oregonian deserves professional, nonjudgmental and fully confidential health care — no matter who they are, where they live, where they were born, what they earn, how they're insured or how they identify their gender.

I believe deeply in the right of all people to make their own personal decisions about their bodies, their families and their life's path, without unnecessary governmental interference. Abortion has been safe and legal in the United States for nearly 45 years, and Oregonians refuse to go backward.

Frank Gibson is a board member for Planned Parenthood Advocates of Oregon.

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