

OPINION



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We Oregonians

We Oregonians are in a time of transition.

“We Oregonians” means all of us: indigenous peoples, multi-generational residents and the newly arrived. It means rural, urban, frontier and suburban folk. It means all genders, all ethnicities and all ages. It means those with adequate and stable income and those without. It spans those living unsheltered and those with one or more housing spaces.



LIANNE THOMPSON

It means everyone is living in a time of transition. Circumstances are changing, whether or not we’re comfortable or uncomfortable. We may be driving one kind of change and fighting passionately to oppose another kind of change, but we Oregonians are dealing with a time of transition and change.

The question we see is, “How do we negotiate living in transition, dealing with change, in a way that protects our shared humanity and the one planet we have?”

What we often see is a warfare mentality that demonizes differences and seeks to silence or destroy differing points of view. Facts and data are assembled like snowballs with sharp and unyielding stones that pelt perceived opponents into submission.

Every side of every argument has science and facts used to support its position and subdue divergence from its “rightness.” Believe what I say, do as I demand, or I’ll hurt you.

What if we were all curious to understand each other, learn from each other, negotiate our differences into common ground and shared purpose? Could we, must we, proceed as members of the same team? We say we can and must.

We did not see a curious and collaborative approach taken by the proponents of HB 2020 in the last legislative



Claire Withycombe/Oregon Capital Bureau
Log truck drivers rallied at the state Capitol to protest House Bill 2020, which would have implemented a cap-and-trade program.

session. Instead, we saw a bill with an emergency clause, meaning the voters couldn’t have a say about it. That’s fear and suspicion in action.

We’re talking about saving the planet and our own and other species from extinction. How can it be a bad idea to slow down, listen to each other and work together? That means before, during and after any such far-reaching laws. That’s the way to build trust, respect and affection.

If we do not build trust, respect and affection into our social discourse and legislative process, we are left with warfare in the political domain, played by whatever political operatives wield the money and influence to shape our future.

Warfare is a blunt instrument, whether it means guns, tanks and missiles or words spoken and solidified into laws passed without a fully adequate consideration of the costs and benefits. That includes costs to individual families, small and large businesses and communities in proposing measures

they fear will bankrupt them and force them into poverty and despair.

Whose costs and whose benefits? Who has readily available alternatives, and who doesn’t? Mass transit and charging infrastructure are much rarer outside metro areas of Oregon, just as an example.

Almost every single person we know, regardless of political bent, believes that we need to address climate change in some way. How we do it remains unanswered and weaponized.

We’re tired of warfare that tries forcing a desired outcome. We see those smiling partisans when they “win” and snarling when they “lose.” What we’re asking for is curiosity and collaboration, hearing all sides in a considered and thoughtful way. The alternative is angry insistence on ideologies and ignoring the costs. It costs us our shared and loving humanity as well as the remediation of forces driving worldwide climate and economic changes.

If we fail to both honor the people and save the planet, we’ll do neither.

We’ll fail at all of it.

HB 2020 was a long “Hail Mary” pass for climate change that we are glad bounced off the ground in the end zone. The cost of energy would have gone up, the cost of manufacturing would have gone up and inflation would have resulted.

The cost of waste disposal would have increased because of the emission tax on landfills. The cost of mitigating landfill gas and biogas from wastewater facilities would have increased.

The Oregon Department of Energy publishes that transportation creates 40% of carbon. Government’s job is to prioritize investments in efficient roads and let industry offer market solutions for innovative transportation options like electric and natural gas.

Diesel trucks, buses and heavy equipment are very important in the economy. Let’s not vilify heavy machinery. Moving many yards of rock with one scoop from a loader is like moving two or three small cars at a time. Loading and moving a shipment of fresh cut timber is as heavy as most houses.

Outright taxing carbon is not the way to celebrate the urban-rural relationship. Food and fiber are created in the far reaches of Oregon, and it takes many hours to drive across the state. Improved power and efficiency have been designed into cars and trucks for the last 125 years, as well, optimizing electricity generation and consumption.

Please let university researchers and private industry invest to reduce the carbon content in the energy system. If government mandates and defines the path without inviting everyone to participate, we will miss opportunities.

Let us all set the vision of renewable energy from solar, geothermal, biomass and battery technology with the goal of not irreversibly harming this planet or our economy. We see the wisdom in “Everything in moderation” as technology catches up with essential social policy changes.

Lianne Thompson is a Clatsop County commissioner. Tony DeBono is a Deschutes County commissioner.

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Storm warning

A Category 3 hurricane with winds of 70 mph hit New England on Sept. 21, 1938. More than 700 people died, and more than two billion trees were felled (bit.ly/2qoEOdT). There weren’t weather satellites or an established science of meteorology.

Now, thanks to dedicated scientists and other experts, we are warned, and can prepare and protect ourselves from much more dangerous storms.

Fortunately, we’re also better informed these days about threats to our democracy. We know to pay attention to those who attack and injure institutions, specific groups of people, and shared values.

As historian Timothy Snyder says in his book, “On Tyranny: Twenty Lessons from the Twentieth Century”: “Human nature is such that American democracy must be defended from Americans who would exploit its freedoms to bring about its end.”

The good news is that many people are working to actively oppose authoritarianism, bigotry and corruption in the U.S. Each of us has a role to play in protecting our country and our democracy.

I’m thrilled many people are defending democracy by standing with our state representative, Tiffany Mitchell. A few people want to recall Mitchell because they don’t like some of her votes in the Legislature.

Imagine if Americans tried to recall everyone they disagree with. We’d have a political hurricane that would destroy good governance.

Perhaps the recall promoters don’t realize they are undermining democracy by misusing recall. Perhaps they forget that they can run for office and support candidates they like in 2020.

LAURIE CAPLAN
Astoria

Squelch

The attempt to recall our state representative, Tiffany Mitchell, is an attempt to squelch the will of the people. She is part of, and was elected by, a majority of the current electorate of Oregon House District 32. That electorate is comprised of individuals with the knowledge that their future is in jeopardy.

New legislation is needed to ensure

that their, and their children’s, future existence has even a chance. The failure of HB 2020 to even be brought to the floor and voted on in the Oregon Senate suggests that the current gray- and white-haired members of that body are not paying attention to, or care about, the well-being of future Oregonians.

The concepts of “cap and trade” and “carbon sequestration” are only the beginning foundations of what is necessary to ensure the continued existence of humanity.

Supporting one’s family with a job that undermines the health and safety of others is not a recipe for civil success. I certainly don’t have many of the answers, however removing our well-educated, young and energetic, newly-elected House District 32 representative is not one of the answers.

Please educate yourself, and don’t support any reckless recalls. Spend your time trying to better the lives of the humans living around you.

JAMES COUGHLIN
Astoria

Troubling facts

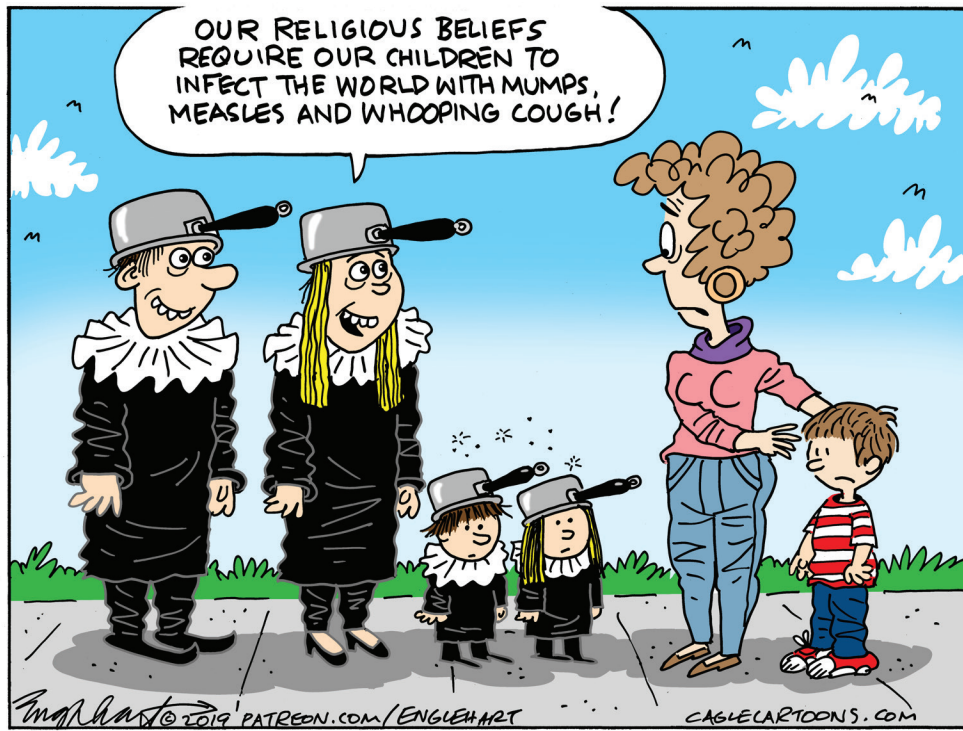
The current discussion regarding #TimberUnity ignores some troubling facts. To examine the complexities, one must follow the money. That search reveals the major funding comes from a rich lumber company president, whose motivation is to protect his cash flow.

As with many issues, politicians have jumped into the fray to use the working people to promote their own positions. The slick signage and well-funded media efforts don’t seem to be working, as reflected in recent comments to The Astorian. In short, Stimson Lumber Co. is using this issue to fight a political fight they already lost in 2018.

To claim #TimberUnity is a grassroots organization (formed in June) is disingenuous at best. Tiffany Mitchell is doing what she said she would do. Yes, the forest industry isn’t what it was. Yes, there will be pain as we go forward. An open and honest discussion is needed for resolution.

Creating an AstroTurf movement, and trying to buy the preferred outcome, isn’t how we do things in a democracy.

RICHARD McINTOSH
Astoria



Speaks volumes

State Rep. Tiffany Mitchell successfully donated one of her kidneys. That speaks volumes to us of a person who did her research, studied the consequences and made a decision that would benefit people.

We were not initial supporters for Mitchell, but we are pleased to have her as our state representative. She does her due diligence on issues that have impact and consequences. She makes, and has made, hard decisions as our state representative.

There is no reason for this recall effort: No malfeasance in office, and no dereliction of duty. If you are unhappy with her votes, support someone you can respect to do a better job for you at our next election in 2020.

This recall effort sure is damaging to those of us who have chosen to serve in public positions. The fear factor leads to no leaders, just payola and “yes men.” Please do not sign any petition for her recall.

SARA and CHUCK MEYER
Astoria

Keep Mitchell

Over the past several years, I have been in contact with many lawmakers in other states and in Congress on a variety of legislation. This past year, I contacted Rep. Tiffany Mitchell a few times about

bills under consideration by the Legislature. What surprised — and pleased — me was that in each case I did not receive in response a form letter from her office.

Instead, Rep. Mitchell responded with her analyses of the legislation and the points I’d made. In one case I told her a committee vote was imminent, and urged her to take action to oppose the bill. She responded immediately.

In another case she told me very honestly that she did not think she could vote as I wanted her to, but that she was doing more research. We exchanged a few more emails about the bill. This kind of accessibility and transparency is, frankly, unheard of.

Recently, I watched Rep. Mitchell approach and talk with Republicans at an event. She wanted them to know she represents them, too. She talked for some time, listening and explaining, looking for common ground.

Rep. Mitchell is professional and thoughtful in trying to strike a balance in the competing, and often opposing, interests in this district. We are lucky here in House District 32 to have such an energetic, dedicated and accessible representative.

Let’s keep Rep. Mitchell, and not let the dark money from special interests outside our district dictate whom should represent us.

LAURA ALLEN
Seaside