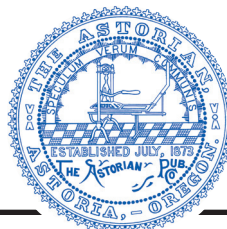


# OPINION



# the Astorian

editor@dailyastorian.com

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## GUEST COLUMN

# Going big to attract large industries

Twenty years ago, Janelle Bynum arrived in Oregon intending to work in the semiconductor industry while her husband learned the ins-and-outs of running McDonald's restaurants from his mom, who was retiring.

The job search didn't pan out, despite Bynum's track record as a General Motors engineer. Today, Mark and Janelle Bynum own four Portland-area McDonald's restaurants. As a legislator, she now will lead a committee focused on expanding economic development and business opportunities across the state.



**DICK HUGHES**

Bynum, D-Happy Valley, has been in the news as chair of the House

Judiciary Committee and her bipartisan work on police reform. But, she told me, "My real skills are as an engineer and a businessperson. Economic justice has always been to me where I lead on the social justice front. ...

"All the ills of society infiltrate when people don't have good jobs and a future to look forward to."

State House Speaker Dan Rayfield, D-Corvallis, has appointed Bynum to chair the House Interim Committee on Economic Development and Small Business. The committee will meet during Legislative Days in September and December, including preparing potential bills for the 2023 session. She's already gathering ideas for how the Legislature might help businesses that suffer vandalism and graffiti.

Her new role comes months after Intel, the state's largest private employer, stunned Oregon's business and political establishment by announcing it would build a \$20 billion semiconductor manufacturing complex in Ohio.

Bynum believes the House committee can help through long-term vetting of incentives for attracting and retaining industries, making sure communities have the tools to make sound decisions, and identifying roadblocks that the state should



Intel Corp.

Intel, which has a plant in Hillsboro, has announced that it will build a \$20 billion semiconductor manufacturing complex in Ohio.

clear.

Despite the shockwaves from Intel's announcement, exciting opportunities exist in the sports economy and other arenas. "I want to encourage more of those types of big thinking, energetic, aggressive ideas that will prevent us from sliding deeply into a recession," she said.

Bynum's appointment is among a slew of committee shifts Rayfield announced on June 20 that include giving stronger roles to some newer lawmakers. First-term Rep. Jason Kropf, D-Bend, will take over Judiciary but Bynum will remain a member.

In early May, Bynum had proposed creation of a "Semiconductors, Sports, and

Strategic Industries Committee" to support and expand key industries in Oregon. Instead, Rayfield renamed the Economic Recovery and Prosperity Committee that had been led by Rep. John Lively and made Bynum the chair. Lively, D-Springfield, will replace Kropf as one co-chair. Rep. Jami Cate, R-Lebanon, remains the other.

"I pitched a new committee to the speaker because I was really interested in rebuilding our economy and rebuilding it on terms that Oregonians value," Bynum said.

"I wanted a place where we could have conversations about those businesses and

there was a direct linkage to what Business Oregon (the state's economic development department) is charged with doing, and the business community and Oregonians in general knew that there was a place in the Legislature where we could actually talk about those things and small businesses had a committee that they could go to actually be taken seriously."

That still can happen, she said. Among the initial items she'd like the committee to take up: "How do we build a force of ambassadors that says Oregon is open for business and we want you here?"

*Dick Hughes has covered the Oregon political scene since 1976.*

## GUEST COLUMN

# The time to support local news is now

Congress has an opportunity to pass legislation that benefits all local citizens, businesses and even protects our democracy.

The Local Journalism Sustainability Act should be included as part of any upcoming reconciliation bill that Congress is considering. The legislation is a well-thought-out bill that would provide needed support to local news organizations, including local newspapers, to ensure their viability as they continue to make progress toward a digital future.

Many members of Congress have seen what happens when a newspaper closes in their district, and they see the impact it has on the community. That is why many

of our leaders, including U.S. Sen. Maria Cantwell, a Washington state Democrat; U.S. Senate Majority Leader Chuck Schumer, a New York Democrat; U.S. Sen. Joe Manchin, a West Virginia Democrat; and U.S. Sen. Ron Wyden, an Oregon Democrat; have stepped up in support of

the bill. And while others in Congress may not have signed on as co-sponsors of the bill yet, many recognize the importance and the need to maintain strong local news organizations in their communities.

To understand what the Local Journalism Sustainability Act is, it is important to understand what it is not. This is a temporary measure to help newspapers at this critical time, and it sunsets after five years. The bill won't help national news organizations, but it will support local news organizations and help them invest in their newsrooms in order to continue to cover the issues that impact local cities and towns.

The result is a bill that provides a bridge for local newspapers as they continue to evolve their business models.

So why is it so critical for Congress to pass the bill now? Quite simply, the future of local newspapers in many areas of the country hangs in the balance. In the past 15 years, more than a quarter of all newspapers have disappeared, and many more have been forced to make staff reductions that have diminished the coverage of topics that impact local citizens. The way people get their information and advertise



Joshua Bessex/The Astorian

The future of local newspapers in many areas of the country hangs in the balance.

their local businesses is quickly moving to digital, and local newspapers continue to be impacted by the Big Tech companies that use their original content without fair compensation. To make matters worse, newspapers, like many other industries, were financially impacted by the pandemic, even though the coverage provided by local newspapers was more vital than ever.

The current economic challenges have only hastened the need for Congress to act on the bill quickly. As inflation is impacting everyone, it has made the environment for local newspapers even more challenging. The cost of retaining employ-

ees has gone up. The cost of newsprint has increased 30% over last year, and the cost of gas used to deliver the newspaper is up more than 50% in the past two years. Many newspaper carriers drive hundreds and even thousands of miles each week. These increases have driven many local newspapers closer to making further reductions or even ceasing operations.

Who wins with the passage of the Local Journalism Sustainability Act? Clearly, local newspapers win by obtaining the support needed to continue their investments in reporting on local news. But the real winners are the communities that keep their local newspaper. From watching the

actions of local government, reporting on the state of local schools, tracking local health trends or providing the latest restaurant reviews and sales information, local newspapers keep a community connected and informed.

We encourage everyone to reach out to their representatives in Congress and ask them to support local journalism. Whether it is inclusion of the legislation in the budget reconciliation bill, or a stand-alone bill, the time for action is now. It's a rare opportunity for government to act on something that benefits us all.

*Dean Ridings is the CEO of America's Newspapers, an advocacy group.*