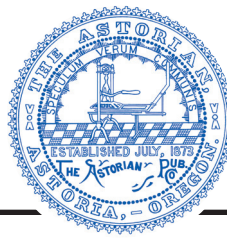


# OPINION



# the Astorian

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## GUEST COLUMN

# Tribes need to be at the table

**T**reaty tribes have been working for decades to get federal support for our essential wildlife programs.

We're counting on the U.S. Senate to pass the Recovering America's Wildlife Act to finally make it happen. The time is right. The U.S. House of Representatives passed the bill in June with rare bipartisan support.



**ED JOHNSTONE**

The federal government has a trust and fiduciary responsibility to protect our fish and wildlife for future generations and to make sure that tribes have the capacity to manage all aspects of our wildlife programs. And yet, despite our treaty-protected rights, previous legislation left tribes out of the equation, directing funding only to states.

The legislation would provide long term and dedicated resources to both tribal and state law enforcement, fish and wildlife programs, habitat management and other conservation and recovery efforts. When tribes are at the table, everyone benefits. We are the original caretakers of the land.

The legislation would provide \$97.5 million to tribes and \$1.3 billion to states to co-manage species of greatest need. Tribal natural resources managers will be able to determine which species those are and what actions are needed to protect, restore and enhance them.

At least 15% of the money would be spent on species already listed under the Endangered Species Act or considered threatened or endangered under tribal law. We could invest this in their recovery and eventual delisting. In addition, we'll be able to take action to protect other species before they become threatened or endangered. This will save us effort and money in the long term.

Tribes shouldn't have to piecemeal together funding to protect threatened species across tribal lands. We know that 12,000 species are in need of conservation actions in this country. Because of insufficient funding, natural resources managers have to limit their focus to conserve just a few species of concern, while many others deteriorate in num-



Nic Coury/AP Photo

The Recovering America's Wildlife Act is pending in Congress.

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bers. The legislation could help all of us reintroduce imperiled species, restore lost habitat and fight invasive species such as European green crab.

Tribal wildlife managers have an additional role that also lacks sufficient

funding. We have a treaty-protected right to manage the wildlife we hunt and the plants we gather for spiritual and traditional purposes. Right now, there are more programs for invasive, endangered and nongame species than there are for

tribes to manage animals we harvest for cultural and subsistence use. The legislation could help fill that funding gap.

The bill was introduced by U.S. Rep. Debbie Dingell, a Michigan Democrat, and co-sponsored by all the House Democrats from Washington state. When it passed the House in June, it received 231 votes, including 16 from Republicans.

The Senate needs to bring this bill to a vote as soon as possible. This bipartisan support gives us the opportunity now to take action to reduce the number of species in decline and prevent their listing under the Endangered Species Act. The Recovering America's Wildlife Act finally will give tribes access to our share of the funding we need to manage wildlife.

*Ed Johnstone is the chairman of the Northwest Indian Fisheries Commission.*

## LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

### Perverse

**O**n Aug. 14, a perverse and vulgar display was erected in Warrenton. Waving in the wind like some obscene appendage, the banners displayed racist slurs, a desecration of the American flag, and anti-American sentiment toward elections and the Constitution. I don't know what was intended by this erection, but it was offensive and an embarrassment for Warrenton.

These flags were not red, white and blue, but a yellow call to arms against the U.S. itself because this crowd does not believe in democracy. To repeat the lie that your election officials cannot be trusted to produce an honest and accurate vote count is to suggest that elections themselves are meaningless.

While our electoral system is rife with gerrymandering and voter suppression, balloting and election security is something we have proven to be quite good at. And what is the alternative to an election? To abandon democracy altogether?

The people who erect this kind of obscene messaging apparently consider themselves patriots (and cute racist rhyme-makers), but they're always calling for an erection of a Soviet-style Iron Curtain and a return to the good ol' days when women were kept barefoot and pregnant, and only white men enjoyed legal protections and rights.

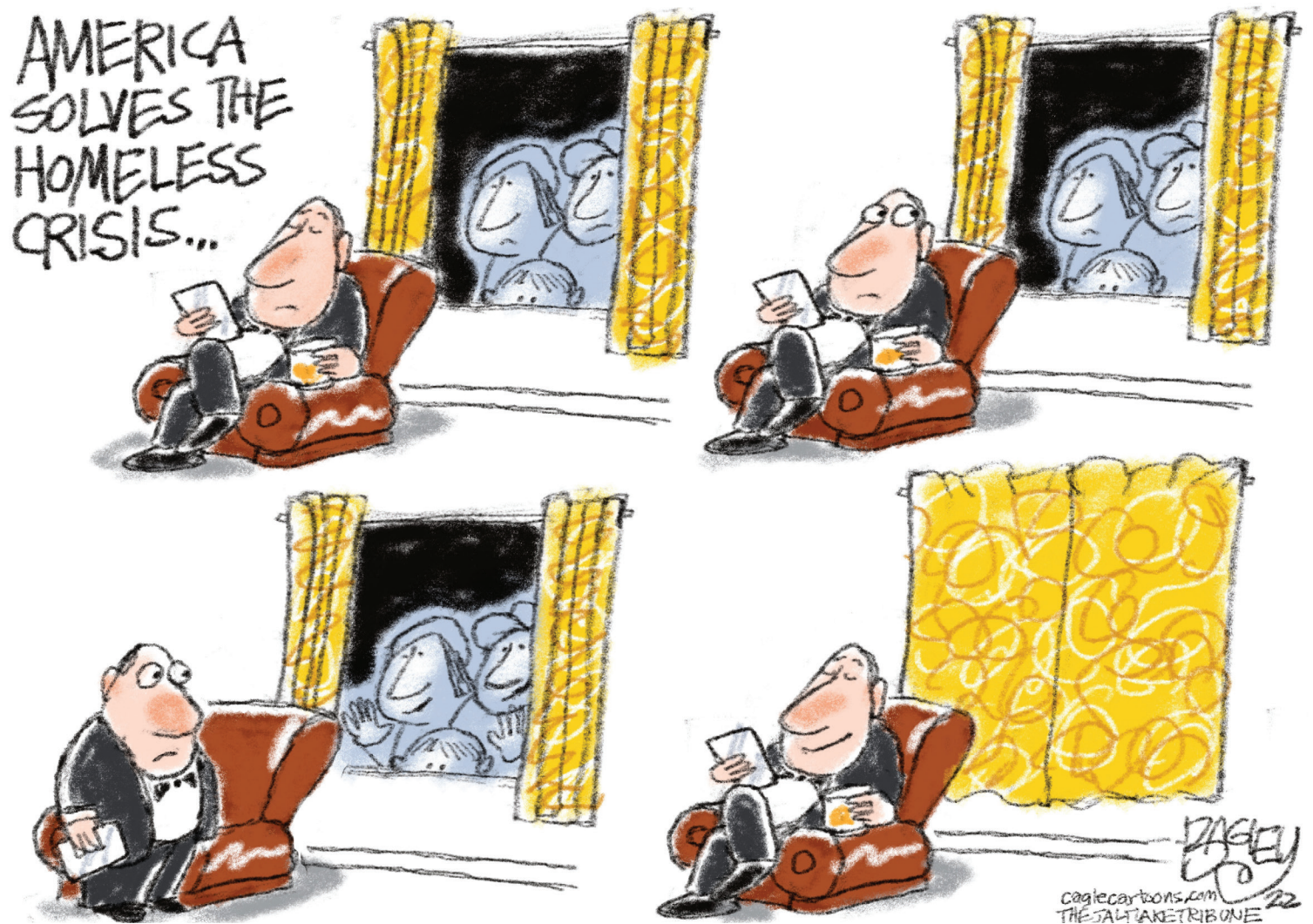
They would like the U.S. to cease functioning as a federal republic of states and, instead, function like a gaggle of independent states, constantly warring with each other and bending over in supplication to some unelected divine leader. That's un-American.

PAMELA CROMWELL  
Seaside

### For the people

**R**un, Betsy, run. See Betsy run. She really is for the people. She has helped our family twice. I am amazed that she cared enough to take the time to help us. We aren't big company donors. My daughter is disabled and on the Oregon Health Plan.

Her first help was with dental help.



## LETTERS WELCOME

Letters should be exclusive to The Astorian. Letters should be fewer than 250 words and must include the writer's name, address and phone number. You will be contacted to confirm authorship. All letters are subject to editing for space, grammar and factual accuracy. Only two letters per writer are allowed each month. Letters written in response

to other letter writers should address the issue at hand and should refer to the headline and date the letter was published. Discourse should be civil. Send via email to editor@dailyastorian.com, online at bit.ly/astorianletters, in person at 949 Exchange St. in Astoria or mail to Letters to the Editor, P.O. Box 210, Astoria, OR., 97103.

My daughter couldn't get into a local dental office for much-needed help.

I got frustrated with the lack of service available, and called Betsy Johnson, at that time the state senator. She

made one call to the dental office. They called immediately, and had an opening the next day. She got all her dental needs taken care of.

Our next dilemma was that my daugh-

ter fell and broke her right hip. She has a prosthesis on the left. She was life-flighted to a hospital in Idaho. After a week in the hospital, she was transferred to a rehab in Boise. She was to be discharged on July 22 after three weeks there. The Oregon Health Plan was struggling to get her transport back home.

I called Betsy. She called the top man, and got things rolling. She called each day to check on the progress. I truly believe that without Betsy's help, my daughter would still be waiting for transport. And, she called to make sure my daughter made it home OK.

Bottom line here: As busy as she is campaigning to be our next governor, she cared enough to help us.

ELAINE RITTER  
Warrenton