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KATHRYN B. BROWN
Publisher

DANIEL WATTENBURGER
Managing Editor

JENNINE PERKINSON
Advertising Director

TIM TRAINOR
Opinion Page Editor

OUR VIEW

AP Photo/The Register-Guard, Kevin Clark

This 2008 file photo shows former Oregon attorney general and University of Oregon president Dave Frohnmayer at his office in Eugene. Frohnmayer died Monday at home after a five-year battle with prostate cancer. He was 74.

The last progressive Republican leaves us

The Oregon GOP long ago left Frohnmayer

Like the death of Sen. Mark Hatfield, Dave Frohnmayer's passing Monday night reminds us of when Republicans were the mainstream, progressive party of Oregon.

Hatfield and Frohnmayer are an interesting pair, because both retooled universities. Hatfield funneled millions in federal appropriations into the University of Oregon Medical School, making it into the research giant we know as Oregon Health and Sciences University. During his years as president of the University of Oregon, Frohnmayer raised around $1 billion — a jaw-dropping financial jolt that transformed that institution.

In Frohnmayer's 1990 campaign for governor, one sees the undoing of the Oregon Republican Party. A religion-based Republican splinter candidate Al Mobley took 13 percent of the vote in Frohnmayer's race against Barbara Roberts. We've not had a GOP governor in the 25 years since. No Republican holds statewide office today.

Oregon is poorer because it's a one-party state. We miss the richness of legislative experience that produced landmark legislation such as the Bottle Bill and Senate Bill 100, establishing statewide land use planning.

A less observed aspect of Frohnmayer's legacy was his 10 years as Oregon attorney general. Clatsop County District Attorney Josh Marquis says that legacy was principally two things: "Frohnmayer remade the Criminal Division, making high-quality assistance available to district attorneys. He also created a really elite appellate unit." Arguing before the U.S. Supreme Court, the winning percentage of that unit was very high, with Frohnmayer himself winning six of seven cases.

> "He worked tirelessly to make Oregon a better place and he will be sorely missed by all of us who came to depend on his wise counsel."
> **— Ron Wyden**
> U.S. Senator

"He worked tirelessly to make Oregon a better place and he will be sorely missed by all of us who came to depend on his wise counsel and selfless nature," said U.S. Senator Ron Wyden, Democrat, in a statement.

In describing Dave Frohnmayer and paying tribute to his very consequential life, we find ourselves sounding quaint, using words that are out of fashion in our poisonously partisan public arena. Character is one such word.

Unsigned editorials are the opinion of the East Oregonian editorial board of Publisher Kathryn Brown, Managing Editor Daniel Wattenburger, and Opinion Page Editor Tim Trainor. Other columns, letters and cartoons on this page express the opinions of the authors and not necessarily that of the East Oregonian.

OTHER VIEWS

Lobbyists must disclose work

The (Bend) Bulletin

Search your memory. Is there a worse time in Salem for lobbyists to want less disclosure of their activities?

But that's indeed what they are pushing for with House Bill 2058. It would make permanent the exemption from reporting to the state ethics commission when one lobbyist lobbies another lobbyist.

Your first question might well be: What are lobbyists doing lobbying other lobbyists?

They apparently do that sort of thing to build coalitions behind legislation and policy matters. And they also might do quite a bit of it.

The Oregon Capital Insider reported that in 2014, "companies, interest groups and other entities reported spending $26 million on lobbyists but lobbyists only reported spending $92,000 on the people they lobbied."

There is something — or several somethings — missing.

The fact is, lobbyists currently report spending only on lawmakers and other people who fall under the category of legislative and executive officials. They did not believe they had to report lobbyist-to-lobbyist lobbying until 2013, when the Oregon Government Ethics Commission issued an advisory opinion, The Oregon Capital Insider reported.

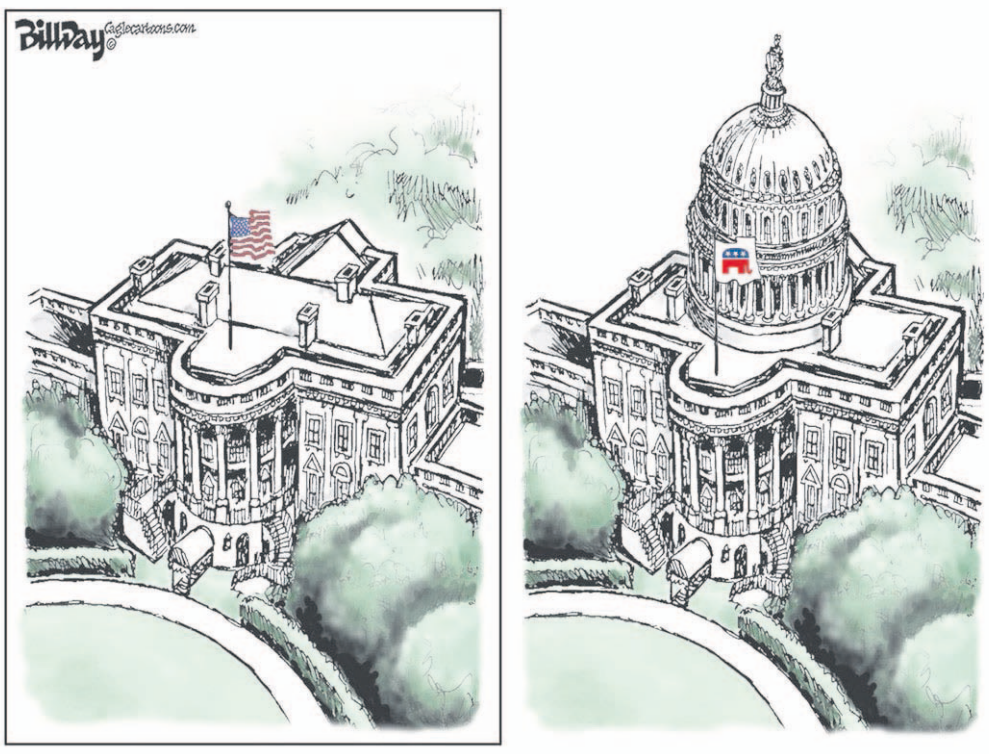
> Kitzhaber's problems don't give the impression that Oregonians should know less about lobbyists.

Lobbyists got a temporary break from reporting in 2013. That exemption is to expire this year. That's why House Bill 2058 was introduced.

Reporting on the spending of lobbyists is a tremendous improvement on the lack thereof. It's really helpful to Oregonians, though, only if it gives them a good picture of how the money is sloshing around in Salem and around the state. Rules for lobbying at the federal level attempt to capture lobbying effort more broadly than Oregon's laws would if HB 2058 were passed.

We don't know what was going on with the influence and lobbying that was coming out of former Gov. John Kitzhaber's office and from his fiancee, Cylvia Hayes. But it doesn't give the impression that Oregonians should know less.

Ron Bersin, the executive director of the Oregon Government Ethics Commission, says lawmakers should vote no on this bill. And so do we.



OTHER VIEWS

The cost of relativism

DAVID BROOKS
Comment

One of America's leading political scientists, Robert Putnam, has just come out with a book called "Our Kids" about the growing chasm between those who live in college-educated America and those who live in high-school-educated America. It's got a definitive collection of data about this divide.

Roughly 10 percent of the children born to college grads grow up in single-parent households. Nearly 70 percent of children born to high school grads do.

There are a bunch of charts that look like open scissors. In the 1960s or 1970s, college-educated and noncollege-educated families behaved roughly the same. But since then, behavior patterns have ever more sharply diverged. High-school-educated parents dine with their children less than college-educated parents, read to them less, talk to them less, take them to church less, encourage them less and spend less time engaging in developmental activity.

> The health of society is primarily determined by the habits and virtues of its citizens.

Interspersed with these statistics, Putnam and his research team profile some of the representative figures from each social class. The profiles from high-school-educated America are familiar but horrific.

David's mother was basically absent. "All her boyfriends have been nuts," he said. "I never really got to see my mom that much." His dad dropped out of school, dated several women with drug problems and is now in prison. David went to seven different elementary schools. He ended up under house arrest and got a girl pregnant before she left him for a drug addict.

Kayla's mom married an abusive man but lost custody of their kids to him when they split. Her dad married a woman with a child but left her after it turned out the child was fathered by her abusive stepfather. Kayla grew up as one of five half-siblings from three relationships until her parents split again and coupled with others.

Elijah grew up in a violent neighborhood and saw a girl killed in a drive-by shooting when he was 4. He burned down a lady's house when he was 13. He goes through periods marked by drugs, clubbing and sex but also dreams of being a preacher. "I just love beating up somebody," he told a member of Putnam's team, "and making they nose bleed and just hurting them and just beating them on the ground."

The first response to these stats and to these profiles should be intense sympathy. We now have multiple generations of people caught in recurring feedback loops of economic stress and family breakdown, often leading to something approaching an anarchy of the intimate life.

But it's increasingly clear that sympathy is not enough. It's not only money and better policy that are missing in these circles; it's norms. The health of society is primarily determined by the habits and virtues of its citizens. In many parts of America there are no minimally agreed upon standards for what it means to be a father. There are no basic codes and rules woven into daily life, which people can absorb unconsciously and follow automatically.

Reintroducing norms will require, first, a moral vocabulary. These norms weren't destroyed because of people with bad values. They were destroyed by a plague of nonjudgmentalism, which refused to assert that one way of behaving was better than another. People got out of the habit of setting standards or understanding how they were set.

Next it will require holding people responsible. People born into the most chaotic situations can still be asked the same questions: Are you living for short-term pleasure or long-term good? Are you living for yourself or for your children? Do you have the freedom of self-control or are you in bondage to your desires?

Next it will require holding everybody responsible. America is obviously not a country in which the less educated are behaving irresponsibly and the more educated are beacons of virtue. America is a country in which privileged people suffer from their own characteristic forms of self-indulgence: the tendency to self-segregate, the comprehensive failures of leadership in government and industry. Social norms need repair up and down the scale, universally, together and all at once.

People sometimes wonder why I've taken this column in a spiritual and moral direction of late. It's in part because we won't have social repair unless we are more morally articulate, unless we have clearer definitions of how we should be behaving at all levels.

History is full of examples of moral revival, when social chaos was reversed, when behavior was tightened and norms reasserted. It happened in England in the 1830s and in the U.S. amid economic stress in the 1930s. It happens through organic communal effort, with voices from everywhere saying gently: This we praise. This we don't.

Every parent loves his or her children. Everybody struggles. But we need ideals and standards to guide the way.

■

David Brooks became a New York Times Op-Ed columnist in September 2003. He has been a senior editor at The Weekly Standard, a contributing editor at Newsweek and the Atlantic Monthly.

YOUR VIEWS

Pendleton council should stand firm on Requa location

I am writing this letter to encourage the city council to stand firm. The Requa bronze committee locked down the Brownfield Park location before they ever started their fundraising efforts.

The artist visited the location and designed the statue to fit it. In my mind, that is a contract.

I went to the Pendleton schools many years ago. I wasn't able to play football, but I would have loved to play for Req. He was the face of Eastern Oregon. Pendleton was known for the Round-up, the Pendleton Woolen Mills, and winning football. In his 36 years as a citizen of Pendleton, he influenced literally thousands of young people and their parents and grandparents who filled the stadium on game day.

Requa put Pendleton on the map. His accomplishments on the football field were unmatched at the time. These, however, are dwarfed by his overall contribution to the city of Pendleton. With his emphasis on self-discipline, respect for others, and hard work he made better citizens out of all of us.

If you combine all of Don Requa's military, teaching, coaching, and this influence for good work, I'd say this prominent location on Main Street in Brownfield Park is well-earned.

Jerry Huffman
New Orleans, La.

LETTERS POLICY

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