

# EAST OREGONIAN

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## OUR VIEW

# Tip of the hat; kick in the pants

**A kick in the pants to Umatilla County residents, who are once again among the least healthy in the state.**

It feels like we unload this kick every year, but the county continues to struggle in the bottom rungs of the state when it comes to health rankings. This year we finished 26th. More than a third of us are obese and more than a quarter don't exercise. Teen birth rates are almost double the state average and the percentage of uninsured residents is high, too.

Morrow County did much better, finishing as the tenth healthiest. But it has solvable problems that it still hasn't overcome, including a smoking rate of 23 percent, much higher than the 16 percent state rate.

Why do we in northeast Oregon struggle in these metrics?

We like to think of rural areas as more active and in shape — we're out building and rebuilding fence until the sun goes down, hunting and fishing on the weekends and eating tomatoes from the garden all summer long. Unfortunately, for many of us that is an outdated stereotype.

Some of it has to do with a lack of health care advisors and specialists, and a lack of healthy food options when the watermelons and local greens aren't ripe. Also, it is no surprise that many of Oregon's most unhealthy counties have large American Indian populations — Klamath took the top spot. Large percentages of tribal populations across the West have health issues that have not been seriously tackled. Now is the time to do so.

But overall, it will take a cultural change that all of us need to buckle down on. So let's make it a summer plan to walk more and drive less, throw out those cigarettes for good, wear our seatbelts and cut down on red meat. Then we'll live up to our handsome cowboy and cowgirl mystique.

If a good percentage of the county takes up our challenge and Umatilla County shores up some of our unhealthy habits, we're happy to turn around and let you return the kick next year. In fact, start training now (High knees! High knees!) and we look forward to being on the receiving end of a powerful wallop come next spring.

**A tip of the hat to our pals on the Pendleton Mounted Band, who were named grand marshals of the Westward Ho! Parade.**

You would be hard-pressed to find anyone streetside in September who doesn't think those drummers and woodwinders and brass blowers are anything less than the optimal highlight of a highlight-filled parade.

They were making music on the streets of Pendleton as early as 1911, but disbanded for more than 50 years in the middle of the century. They got back in the swing in 1985 and have been merrymaking every year since.

The dozens of bandmembers come from all walks of life and from towns and cities across the Pacific Northwest.

They even tour the region, playing at rodeos and fairs and parades and spreading the good name of the Pendleton Round-Up.

They deserve the grand marshal accolade as one of the authentic aspects of Pendleton Round-Up week. Now, play yourselves out!

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

# Public should have access to police body cameras

(Madford) Mail Tribune

Oregon lawmakers are considering a bill that would standardize the use of body cameras worn by police officers and strictly limit the public release of the video recordings. Those limits are reasonable for the most part, but when a recording involves the use of force by an officer, the presumption should be to release the video, not restrict it.

Police use of deadly force against citizens, armed and unarmed, is an issue of growing concern, and lawmakers across the country are grappling with how to respond to those concerns while allowing law enforcement officers to do their jobs and protecting the public at the same time. Many police departments have responded by equipping officers with body cameras that take video recordings of their interactions with suspects and others.

The Oregon measure, House Bill 2571, does not require police departments to use the cameras, but sets out guidelines if they choose to do so. Among other things, departments using cameras would have to require the camera to be turned on as soon as an officer had probable cause or reasonable suspicion that a crime had been committed and leave it on until the police action was complete, and retain the recordings for at least six months.

HB 2571 would exempt the recordings from disclosure under public records laws except in two narrow instances: If the recording was part of

a court proceeding or if it involved the use of force by an officer and the public interest required its release.

Elements of court proceedings already are public records, and ought to remain so. The desire to protect the privacy of individuals who interact with police is understandable, and most of the recordings likely would be of little interest to anyone not directly involved.

But any time an officer uses force, especially when injury or death results, releasing the recording should be presumed to be in the public interest, not subject to the discretion of the department.

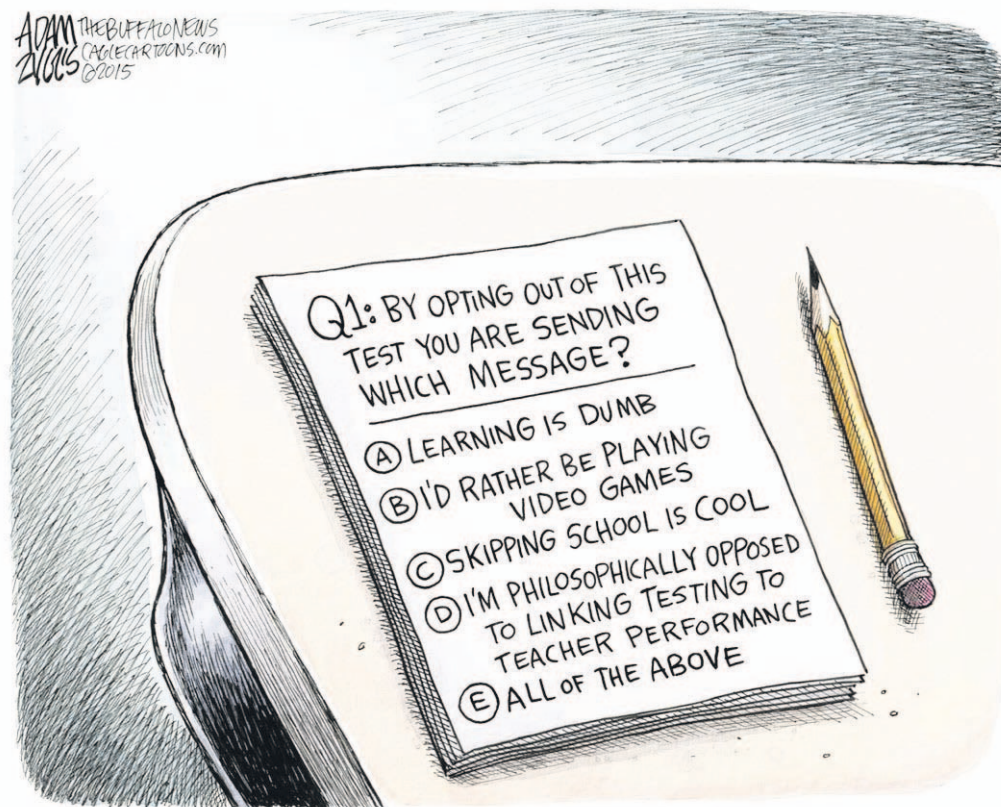
There is already an exemption for records involving active police investigations, and that would certainly apply when the use of force is being investigated. But once the investigation concludes, the recording should be released.

We would add a third instance when a recording should be a public record: when a complaint is filed against an officer alleging wrongdoing or misconduct, even if the matter does not become a court case. The public has a legitimate interest in how police officers conduct themselves on the job, and anyone questioning that conduct should be able to request a video recording of it.

Just as trust in government is strengthened when government records are available to the public, trust in law enforcement will be improved if recordings of police conduct are not hidden from public view.

## LETTERS POLICY

The East Oregonian welcomes original letters of 400 words or less on public issues and public policies for publication in the newspaper and on our website. Submitted letters must be signed by the author and include the city of residence and a daytime phone number. Send letters to 211 S.E. Byers Ave. Pendleton, OR 97801 or email editor@eastoregonian.com.



## OTHER VIEWS

# Jeb Bush was quiet when it counted on Obamacare

For many conservatives, the fight against Obamacare has been the defining battle of President Obama's years in the White House. For them, and probably a majority of the Republican base, fighting first against the passage of the Affordable Care Act and later pressing to repeal it have been so important because: A) they strongly oppose the substance of the law, and B) they see opposition to Obamacare as the best way to resist the president's overall expansion of government.

That the struggle has so far been a losing one has not changed the fact that conservatives require their presidential candidates to have solid anti-Obamacare bona fides.

Recently a well-known conservative activist, recalling the GOP effort to stop the Affordable Care Act in 2009 and 2010, asked: Where was Jeb Bush? I don't remember him being there when we were doing everything we could to derail Obamacare.

"A big vulnerability for the governor, when the debates start, is to remind us again, where were you during the battle over Obamacare?" noted that activist, Gary Bauer, of the conservative group American Values. "I don't recall much (from him) during those years. I don't think not being a veteran of those wars is a plus for Gov. Bush."

Bauer is basically right. In 2009 and early 2010, as Obamacare made its troubled way through Congress, Bush — a respected former two-term Republican governor of Florida with solid conservative credentials — remained mostly silent about the biggest public policy fight in a generation.

Bush statements that even tangentially touched on the Affordable Care Act were few and far between. In March 2009, for example, as the battle was just beginning, Bush penned an op-ed calling for conservatives to be the "loyal opposition" in the face of far-reaching Democratic initiatives. He added: "Simply opposing the massive encroachment of government into health care won't solve the problem of affordability of health insurance for many Americans."

A couple of months later, in May 2009, when Bush joined fellow Republicans Eric Cantor and Mitt Romney on a "listening tour" Bush said: "It's time for us to listen first, to learn a little bit, to upgrade our message a little bit and to not be nostalgic about the past. You can't beat something with nothing, and the other side has something. I don't like it, but they have it and we have to be respectful and mindful of that."

That's pretty much it for 2009 and early 2010, as the health care battle raged on Capitol Hill.

"He wasn't in Congress," Bush spokesman Tim Miller said when I asked what the former governor was doing in 2009 as far as Obamacare was concerned. "He did not have a very big footprint as a guy on the cable news circuit in the years after he left the governor's



BYRON YORK  
Comment

office. He was focused on business." One part of Bush's business was a lucrative seat on the board of directors of the hospital giant Tenet Healthcare. Bush joined the company after leaving the governor's office and was paid more than \$2 million for his services between 2007 and last year, when he resigned to run for president. Tenet strongly supported the passage of Obamacare and has profited enormously from it.

I asked Miller whether Bush's near-silence on Obamacare was the result of his place on the Tenet board. "Absolutely not," Miller said. "He forcefully advocated against it in board meetings, to the point that it bubbled up in public. When asked about it, he was very clear that he was in opposition to it."

What Miller meant by "bubbled up in public" was a line in a *New York Times*

article in 2014 — years after Obamacare became law — which reported: "Tenet's chief executive, Trevor Fetter, said Mr. Bush had made no secret of his objections to the health care overhaul at company meetings. But (Fetter) suggested that Mr. Bush understood the difference between 'personal views and what is best for the

company.' Mr. Fetter predicts that in 2014, the Affordable Care Act will deliver up to \$100 million in new earnings for Tenet."

Bush did not remain silent forever. On March 22 — the day after Obamacare finally, officially passed the House and Senate and headed to the president's desk for signature — Bush spoke out forcefully against the new law. Appearing on Fox News, he called Obamacare a "major overreach" and a "huge new entitlement" and a "massive tax increase" that would "play out in the future by giving up our own freedom and put it in the hands of government." With the 2010 elections approaching, Bush predicted "a massive uprising against this government takeover of our lives."

It was a tough, far-ranging indictment — delivered the day after the bill had been safely passed into law.

Later in 2010, Bush campaigned, raised money for, or endorsed several Republican candidates who advocated repealing Obamacare — among them Jim DeMint, Pat Toomey, Rand Paul, Rob Portman, Raul Labrador, Brian Sandoval, John Kasich, Mary Fallin, Nikki Haley, Scott Walker, and others, according to Miller.

More recently, as a presidential run has neared, Bush has sharpened his critique of Obamacare. In a late 2013 appearance on ABC, he called the health law "flawed to its core." This month, in Iowa, he called it a "monstrosity."

But that is now. Back when it was all on the line, and Republicans were gathering their forces in a desperate attempt to stop Obamacare, Jeb Bush mostly held his tongue.

Byron York is chief political correspondent for *The Washington Examiner*.

## YOUR VIEWS

### Still plenty of questions about Trans-Pacific Partnership

A few days ago there was a letter to the editor supporting the Trans-Pacific Partnership. Our own Senator Wyden is a key vote on the fast track for this bill. I have a couple of questions whose answers must be considered before the vote on TPP.

If the TPP is going to be so good for the regular people in Oregon and elsewhere, why is the text of the bill a state secret? In my experience, when government works in secret, the voters better watch out.

Why should we put such a comprehensive bill on the "fast track"? Seems to me that a bill of this much impact should be considered carefully, not just pushed through.

Why are the large corporations giving so much money to get this bill passed if it is good for you and me?

Why did Senator Wyden recently hold a fundraiser where he took several very large contributions from corporations while considering TPP, a bill that looks like it will

benefit them? This looks like bribery to me and it probably is.

Why is so little of the text of this bill dedicated to the trade agreement while so much is dedicated to its enforcement which, by the way, sets up a separate judiciary that trumps local, state and national laws passed by the people?

It is logical and sensible to fully explore the possibilities of new legislation, especially when it is deemed as important as the TPP. The above questions are some of the thoughtful questions that should be answered before this bill is passed and signed into law.

The discussion of this bill has been done in secret and, except for the parts that have thankfully leaked out, we have had little opportunity to question it.

You wouldn't buy a car behind a curtain without examining it so why pass a bill that is so secret we can't know what is in it? A pig in a poke is what you'll get.

Ira White  
Pendleton