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OUR VIEW

Tip of the hat;
kick in the pants

A tip of the hat to the Pendleton School District and its current proposal for new elementary school boundaries.



And while those boundaries are still just a proposal, we think they deserve support. No lines drawn on a map are going to make everyone happy (see the Middle East), but the current proposal is simple, thoughtful and informed by citizen engagement. As a Pendleton elementary student, what more could you want? You don't even have to go to stinkin' Lincoln anymore. (The current school will be turned into district offices.) We printed a whole story about the boundaries, map included, and if you missed it you can find all the juicy details at www.eastoregonian.com. And if for some reason you hate the current plan, you can do your best to persuade your fellow citizens and the school board that the boundaries are bunk. But to our elementary educated eyes, the map lines look fine.

Tip of the hat to Vern Kube, the remarkable U.S. Navy veteran we profiled in Thursday's paper.

We're happy Kube got the opportunity, thanks to Heroes Foundation, to take an honor flight to the nation's capital. Kube, now 87, made his impact on World War II. He served a seaman in the Pacific and even witnessed the underwater testing of two hydrogen bombs.



It's a noble endeavor to bring men like Kube to Washington and allow the country to say thanks for all these fine veterans have done. That many of these men and women are modest and appreciative make it all the more fulfilling to those who honor them. As veterans of the terrible war become increasingly rare — they are dying at a rate of 492 per day — it's imperative that we connect to those we have left. And it is imperative we tell them we appreciate their toil and sacrifice, and that this is the great country that it is because of them.

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

Wild ride toward legalization
has only just begun

Albany Democrat-Herald

If you've been baffled trying to figure out what's going on in the Oregon Legislature regarding marijuana, you're not alone.

But the outlines of the issues legislators have been grappling with are coming into focus — although it's still not clear how those issues will be resolved in the closing weeks of the session.

One thing is for certain: Even though much of the marijuana action in this session has revolved around medical pot, all of those debates also involve the shape of the state's recreational marijuana market, when that finally starts to take shape next year. (Remember that, even though recreational use of marijuana becomes legal on July 1, recreational pot retail outlets won't be in place until next year.)

Two issues have proven to be major stumbling blocks for the Legislature. One probably could have been predicted just by watching local governments grapple with whether they wanted to allow medical marijuana dispensaries in their communities. As for the other issue, you can file that away in your "who knew" category: Because Oregon turns out to offer ideal conditions to grow large amounts of marijuana, lawmakers are trying to do what they can now to limit the amount of pot that goes into the black market.

If the black market thrives, that could undercut all the work Oregon has done to create marketplaces for both medical and recreational pot — and, of course, the state doesn't get any kind of tax cut from black-market sales.

Senate Bill 964, which passed the Senate this week, imposes limits on the number of plants allowed on medical marijuana farms and requires regular reporting by growers. Urban growers would be limited to 12 plants; those outside cities would be limited to 48 plants. Existing growers could have twice as many plants, but only to serve current customers.

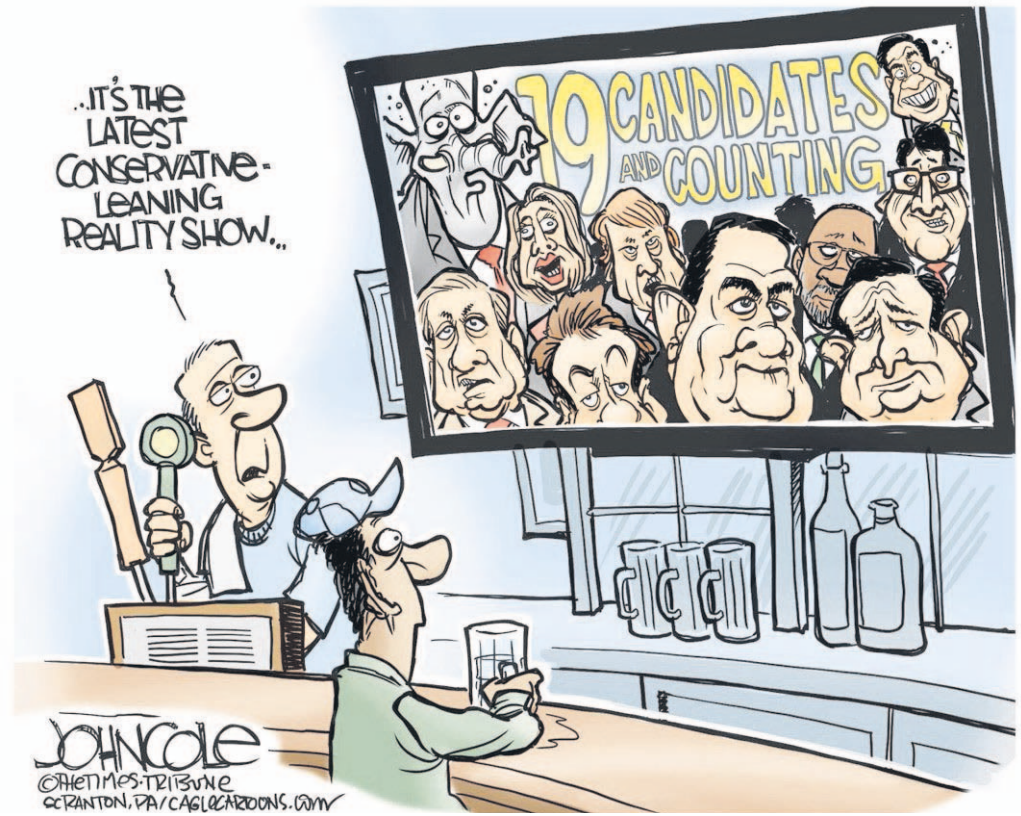
As you might imagine, growers and patients aren't particularly happy with those restrictions, so there's no saying how the limitations will play in the House.

But a big split continues to brew between the House and Senate on the local control issue. So it's no surprise that Senate Bill 964 contains a provision that allows local governments to ban dispensaries if they so choose, but also establishes a relatively easy initiative process by which citizens can challenge the bans.

House members of the joint committee on marijuana argued that only voters should be allowed to implement a ban. At first glance, we prefer the Senate plan, which places the first decisions on whether to implement a ban in the hands of an elected body — and offers a reasonable way for engaged voters to challenge those decisions.

The decisions the Legislature makes on these issues in the next few weeks will help shape how the state designs a system for the retail sale of recreational marijuana. But one increasingly gets the sense that plenty of details will be unsettled by July 1, when recreational use becomes legal.

It's been a wild ride thus far on marijuana. It's likely to get a lot wilder in the months to come.



OTHER VIEWS

If Hillary becomes president,
who will make her obey the law?

Last year, before Hillary Clinton's secret email system became publicly known, Congress passed a law to keep presidents from trying the same trick. If Clinton wins the White House, the law could well be put to the test.

The statute is the Presidential and Federal Records Act Amendments of 2014. It recognizes that government officials sometimes (or in Clinton's case, all the time) want to use private email accounts — in the words of the law, "non-official electronic messaging accounts" — to conduct government business. Such communications are still federal records, Congress declared, and must be preserved in accordance with existing laws requiring not just the president but all federal officials to preserve their documents.

This is what the new law says about emails: "The President, the Vice President, or a covered employee may not create or send a Presidential or Vice Presidential record using a non-official electronic message account unless the President, Vice President, or covered employee (1) copies an official electronic messaging account of the President, Vice President, or covered employee in the original creation or transmission of the Presidential record or Vice Presidential record; or (2) forwards a complete copy of the Presidential or Vice Presidential record to an official electronic messaging account of the President, Vice President, or covered employee not later than 20 days after the original creation or transmission of the Presidential or Vice Presidential record."

That's pretty clear. All presidential communications must be preserved in a timely fashion.

The next paragraph of the law stipulates that federal employees who intentionally violate the Presidential Records Act are subject to "disciplinary action" as determined by the "appropriate supervisor." Such punishments can include suspensions and cuts in pay and rank.

None of that, of course, applies to the president of the United States. As far as the chief executive is concerned, there's no enforcement mechanism in the law.

"The Presidential Records Act is set up on the notion — like all of our laws — that people are going to comply," notes a lawyer who follows these issues after service in the Justice Department in both the Reagan and George H.W. Bush administrations. "There isn't really a clear legal way to hold the president accountable for this stuff."

The Records Act gives the president entirely appropriate discretion to control the disposition of his or her records not only in the

White House but for a number of years after. There are plenty of areas — personnel decisions, for example — in which a former president might not want sensitive documents released for a long time. Within limits, it is the president who makes those decisions.

But that's assuming records are kept at all in some way that federal officials have access to them. The lesson of the Clinton email affair is that Hillary Clinton is inclined to set up secret, tightly limited and carefully controlled systems that are outside the reach of federal officials. When Congress expressed an interest in examining Clinton's server, her personal attorney told lawmakers to forget about it — the whole thing, backups included, had been erased.

What would happen in an entirely plausible scenario in which Clinton did something similar in the White House? After all, a President Hillary Clinton would have far more power to set up a secretive system of communications than a Secretary of State Hillary Clinton. Who could tell her no?

No one — at least until the story became a public issue. "Ultimately, this relies on the presence of some ethical people around the president, who feel obliged to blow the whistle on wrongdoing they can't rectify internally," says Bradford Berenson, who served in the George W. Bush White House counsel's office, "plus congressional overseers (dependent upon the opposite party having one house of Congress), and finally, the press."

The problem isn't entirely new. Barack Obama is the first president to use email, but it's been around the White House for years, and an email scandal of sorts broke out in the W. Bush years, mostly having to do with the CIA leak case. A President Hillary Clinton, if she behaved in a way similar to the way she behaved as secretary of state, could create a scandal of far bigger proportions.

Ultimately, the Presidential Records Act depends on the honesty of the president. That's not Clinton's strong suit. Recent polls have shown substantial numbers of Americans do not believe she is honest and trustworthy. After the State Department experience, they would have good reason to be suspicious of her in the White House.

Don't look for this to become a big campaign issue — compliance with the Presidential Records Act is not exactly the most critical issue facing voters in 2016. But as far as Hillary Clinton is concerned, it could be a harbinger of bigger problems to come.

Byron York is chief political correspondent for The Washington Examiner.

YOUR VIEWS

BLM sage grouse conservation
a step forward for bird, herd

As a native of Ontario, Oregon, a member of the Steens Mountain Advisory Council, an outdoor equipment company owner and avid hunter who appreciates the sage steppe in our state, I'm encouraged with the Bureau of Land Management's recent draft releases aimed at Greater Sage Grouse conservation in Oregon and the west. BLM lands contain the vast majority of sage grouse populations and if we are to avoid an endangered species listing for the bird, the BLM will be key in that effort, along with state and private conservation efforts.

It's been stated many times that "what's good for the bird is good for the herd." On a landscape scale, it's what's good for the entire sage landscape in Eastern Oregon and wildlife that occupy these lands. When the sage steppe is healthy, sage grouse populations will benefit. So will populations of mule deer, pronghorn and even elk, which migrate to the sage ecosystem in search of forage during

winter months. The BLM is constructing numerous fuel breaks to help contain wildfire into smaller units in an effort to avoid fires that build to hundreds of thousands of acres overnight. The BLM is also removing encroaching juniper, which consume much-needed water from the landscape making it difficult for both sage and the grouse to thrive.

We also encourage the BLM to review travel management on these lands. Too many roads encourage the spread of invasive weeds and fire. With vast lands this is a tough challenge. All it takes to establish a new road is for someone to leave a main road and drive through the sage. Such acts damage our desert landscape. Sage grouse need large tracts of unfragmented land to thrive and we encourage the BLM to not ignore this need.

Improving the sage landscape with focused conservation plans is a major win for our public lands and for all who use them.

Karl Findling, field representative
Backcountry Hunters & Anglers
Bend

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