

# EAST OREGONIAN

Founded October 16, 1875

**KATHRYN B. BROWN**  
Publisher

**DANIEL WATTENBURGER**  
Managing Editor

**JENNINE PERKINSON**  
Advertising Director

**TIM TRAINOR**  
Opinion Page Editor

## EO MEDIA GROUP

East Oregonian • The Daily Astorian • Capital Press • Hermiston Herald  
Blue Mountain Eagle • Willowa County Chieftain • Chinook Observer • Coast River Business Journal  
Oregon Coast Today • Coast Weekend • Seaside Signal • Cannon Beach Gazette  
Eastern Oregon Real Estate Guide • Eastern Oregon Marketplace • Coast Marketplace  
OnlyAg.com • FarmSeller.com • Seaside-Sun.com • NorthwestOpinions.com • DiscoverOurCoast.com

**MIKE FORRESTER**  
Pendleton  
Chairman of the Board

**STEVE FORRESTER**  
Astoria  
President

**KATHRYN B. BROWN**  
Pendleton  
Secretary/Treasurer

**CORY BOLLINGER**  
Aberdeen, S.D.  
Director

**JEFF ROGERS**  
Indianapolis, Ind.  
Director

## OUR VIEW

# Dementia takes costly toll on rural Oregon

While our nation faces a tsunami of rising care costs for people suffering from dementia, these challenges threaten to be even more overwhelming in rural areas here in Eastern Oregon.

A study released in recent days found dementia care to be economically devastating for Medicare patients in the last five years of life — far more costly than treatment for cancer or heart disease. End-of-life costs for Americans facing these three top killers totaled

\$287,038 for dementia, \$175,136 for heart ailments and \$173,383 for cancer.

Medicare currently ends up paying about the same amount for all three diseases, nearly \$100,000. When it comes to cancer and heart disease, supplemental policies often pick up much of the balance of drug, surgery and hospitalization bills. But with dementia, private coverage for long-term care is expensive and rarely purchased. As a result, dementia expenses are especially punishing to patients, their spouses and families.

“On average, the out-of-pocket cost for a patient with dementia was \$61,522 — more than 80 percent higher than the cost for someone with heart disease or cancer,” according to a story in *The New York Times*. “The reason is that dementia patients need caregivers to watch them, help with basic activities like eating, dressing and bathing, and provide constant supervision to make sure they do not wander off or harm themselves. None of those

costs were covered by Medicare.”

Spouses who themselves may be in poor health often are the front-line caregivers for dementia sufferers. Children also assume care roles, which take them away from jobs or time with their own children. Professional dementia care costs thousands of dollars a month, swiftly denuding savings. Driven to destitution, people with dementia finally may qualify for Medicaid-funded institutional care.

All these issues are magnified in rural areas like ours. Incomes and savings tend to be lower in the first place. Nursing and assisted-living facilities are less available. Options like adult family homes are scarce and often fully booked. Children and grandchildren may be living far away in pursuit of jobs. Rural counties have among the highest percentages of older residents in the Pacific Northwest.

What to do? This is not an issue that can be fixed by minor adjustments in Medicare and Medicaid. We must re-envision all our concepts for caring for dementia patients and the elderly in general. Federal tax policy needs to do a far better job of helping families cope with care costs, while federal spending priorities must be redirected to aiding vulnerable citizens. What business does Congress have funding new bombers when millions of senior citizens and their families are engaged in silent struggles for life, dignity and financial solvency?

The issue of elder care deserves top billing on our national agenda.

## Elder care is an outsized issue in Eastern Oregon.

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.

## YOUR VIEWS

### Cancer Society making strides against disease

The American Cancer Society and the signature annual fundraising event, Relay For Life, are actively fighting the battle against all types of cancer, including breast cancer. The bulk of the money raised, 72 percent, goes directly to research, prevention, detection, education, and patient support. The rest — about 28 percent — fuels supporting services for our lifesaving work to manage and fund those programs. ACS's administrative costs are in line with the industry standards set by the Better Business Bureau. But, if you want to really measure the ACS, look to its results. We have a business model for saving lives that is based on evidence and accomplishment. Since the early '90s, more than 1 million lives have been saved that otherwise would have been lost to cancer. That's real progress in the effort to finish the fight against cancer. Most of the fundraising efforts are done by volunteers.

Some of the services that ACS provides are:

- Rides to and from treatment and medical appointments;
- Toll-free line for cancer info and support: 800-227-2345
- Website for cancer info and support: www.cancer.org
- Lodging when travel is necessary for treatment
- Cancer Action Network, advocacy organization to ensure that lawmakers make cancer a top priority
- Look Good Feel Better Program,

which helps patients deal with the physical effects of treatment

• Free wigs, through Pantene's Beautiful Lengths wig program

For our Pendleton readers, the Kick'n Cancer New Beginnings program provides emotional and practical support to all cancer patients who need it. It meets once a month. The Tough Enough to Wear Pink campaign raises funds to combat breast cancer. Relay For Life raises money to fight cancer. Together, the three groups raised over \$60,000 this past year.

During the last year, there has been amazing genetic testing in breast cancer, to determine what type of treatment is indicated, customizing the treatment to the patient's history and makeup.

Carol Preston, event chair  
Gert Hawthorne, mission delivery chair  
Pendleton Relay For Life

### Improving city roads improves Pendleton pride

Citizens of Pendleton, it is in all of our best interest to improve and preserve our properties.

This not only adds value to our properties, but at the same time shows pride of ownership in our community. Let's show newcomers to our town that we care about the infrastructure of Pendleton and make an investment in our future.

Let's get Pendleton out of the potholes!

Marsha Morgan  
Pendleton

## 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. The newspaper reserves the right to withhold letters that address concerns about individual services and products or letters that infringe on the rights of private citizens. Submitted letters must be signed by the author and include the city of residence and a daytime phone number. The phone number will not be published. Unsigned letters will not be published. Send letters to 211 S.E. Byers Ave. Pendleton, OR 97801 or email editor@eastoregonian.com.



## OTHER VIEWS

# The Ryan and Rubio moment

So after all the meshugas on the right over the past few years, the Republicans could wind up with two new leaders going into this election, Marco Rubio and Paul Ryan. That's a pretty excellent outcome for a party that has shown an amazing tendency to inflict self-harm.

Ryan is the new House speaker and right now Rubio is the most likely presidential nominee. The shape of the presidential campaign is coming into focus. It's still wise to expect (pray) that the celebrity candidates will fade as the shopping phase ends and the buying phase begins.

Voters don't have to know the details of their nominee's agenda, but they have to know that the candidate is capable of having an agenda. Donald Trump and Ben Carson go invisible when the subject of actual governance comes up.

Jeb Bush's problems are temperamental and thus most likely permanent. He would probably be a very effective president. And he would have been a very effective candidate — but in 1956. These are harsher times.

Ted Cruz looks likely to emerge as the candidate of the disaffected white working class — the noncollege-educated voters who are now registering their alienation and distrust with Trump. But there aren't enough of those voters in the primary electorate to beat Rubio, and Cruz just isn't likable enough to build a national campaign around. Rubio, meanwhile, has no natural enemies anywhere in the party, he has truly impressive natural skills and his greatest weakness is his greatest strength: his youth.

While other candidates are repeating the formulas of the 1980s and 1990s, Rubio is a child of this century. He understands that it's no longer enough to cut taxes and say bad things about government to produce widespread prosperity. In a series of major policy speeches over the past two years (he's one of the few candidates who actually gives them), Rubio has emphasized that new structural problems threaten the American dream: technology displacing workers, globalization suppressing wages and the decline of marriage widening inequality.

His proposals reflect this awareness. At this stage it's probably not sensible to get too worked up about the details of any candidate's plans. They are all wildly unaffordable. What matters is how a candidate signals priorities. Rubio talks specifically about targeting policies to boost middle- and lower-middle-class living standards.

For example, Rubio's tax policy starts where all Republican plans start. He would simplify the tax code, reduce rates and move



DAVID BROOKS  
Comment

us toward a consumption-based system by reducing taxes on investment.

But he understands that overall growth no longer translates directly to better wages. He adds a big \$2,500 child tax credit that is controversial among conservative economists, but that would make life easier for working families.

His anti-poverty programs are the biggest departure from traditional Republicanism. America already spends a fair bit of money aiding the

poor — enough to lift most families out of poverty if we simply wrote them checks. But

Rubio and Ryan would be an excellent outcome for a party that has shown a tendency to inflict self-harm.

the money flows through a hodgepodge of programs and creates perverse incentives. People are often better off over all if they rely on government rather than getting an entry-level job. As Oren Cass of the Manhattan Institute has pointed out, there are two million fewer Americans working today than before the recession and two million more receiving disabilities benefits.

Influenced by Cass' work, Rubio has tried to offer people who aren't working

some basic security, while also championing wage subsidies that would encourage people to get entry-level jobs. The idea is to reward people who get on the ladder of opportunity, and to compensate for the decline in low-skill wages.

Rubio would reform the earned-income tax credit and extend it to cover childless workers. He would also convert most federal welfare spending into a "flex fund" that would go straight to the states. Rules for these programs would no longer be written in Washington. The state agencies that implement welfare policies would have more freedom to design them. He'd maintain overall welfare spending, adjusting it for inflation and poverty levels, but he'd allow more room for experimentation.

Republican debates rarely touch on education for some reason, but Rubio also has a slew of ideas to reform it. He says the higher education system is controlled by a cartel of well-established institutions that block low-cost competitors from entering the market. He wants student loan costs to be based on a percentage of a person's income.

Of all the candidates, Rubio has done the most to harvest the work of Reform Conservatism, which has been sweeping through the think tank world. In a year in which many candidates are all marketing, Rubio is a balance of marketing and product.

If Ryan and Rubio do emerge as the party's two leaders, it will be the wonkiest leadership team in our lifetime. That's a good thing.

David Brooks became a *New York Times* Op-Ed columnist in 2003.

## CONTACT YOUR REPRESENTATIVES

### U.S. Senators

**Ron Wyden**  
Washington office:  
221 Dirksen Senate Office Bldg.  
Washington, DC 20510  
202-224-5244  
La Grande office:  
541-962-7691

**Jeff Merkley**  
Washington office:  
313 Hart Senate Office Building  
Washington, DC 20510  
202-224-3753  
Pendleton office:  
541-278-1129

### U.S. Representative

**Greg Walden**  
Washington office:  
185 Rayburn House Office Building  
Washington, DC 20515  
202-225-6730  
La Grande office:  
541-624-2400

### Governor

**Kate Brown**  
160 State Capitol  
900 Court Street  
Salem, OR 97301-4047  
503-378-4582

### Senator

**Bill Hansell, District 29**  
900 Court St. NE, S-423  
Salem, OR 97301  
503-986-1729  
Sen.BillHansell@state.or.us

### Representatives

**Greg Barreto, District 58**  
900 Court St. NE, H-38  
Salem, OR 97301  
503-986-1458  
Rep.GregBarreto@state.or.us

**Greg Smith, District 57**  
900 Court St. NE, H-482  
Salem, OR 97301  
503-986-1457  
Rep.GregSmith@state.or.us

Be heard!

Comment online at [eastoregonian.com](http://eastoregonian.com)