

EAST OREGONIAN
Founded October 16, 1875

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OUR VIEW

Tip of the hat; kick in the pants

A tip of the hat to the Hermiston School Board for giving the go-ahead to open a wellness center at the high school.

This isn't a glorified school nurse's office, with a cabinet full of Band-Aids and Tylenol and a place to wait for your mom to come pick you up. The clinic will serve teachers and students alike with a variety of services, from flu shots and other vaccinations to physicals and referrals for more advanced care.



It's a big barrier buster for students who otherwise may not get the baseline medical care they need. It's not a replacement for a primary care provider, but another entry point to medical care.

Hermiston, like the rest of the state, struggles with chronic absenteeism. If a trip

down the hall to the clinic can curb some lingering health issue and allow a student to avoid a lengthy hiatus from the classroom, that's great for the school, the student and society. If exclusion day is coming up and a student can get a quick vaccination rather than being sent home, that's excellent. If a student is having trouble seeing to the front of the class or hearing the teacher, and a visit to the wellness center gets them referred to a sight or hearing specialist, all the better.

It's not about taking control from parents, it's about giving students access to basic care. And as a side effect, staff at the school can also take advantage. How nice would it be if your employer opened a clinic at your office?

The wellness center is slated to open the first week of 2016 on a part-time basis, and expand hours when the need arises.

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

Protecting Oregon children

The Oregonian

The decision late Wednesday by Gov. Kate Brown to order an independent review of core functions of the Oregon Department of Human Services was correct. Yet it followed by less than a day a newspaper's extensive review of DHS' oversight of children in a Portland foster care setting — and the galling revelation DHS brass had long known of allegations that some children were being neglected. As a result, Brown's homily about putting kids first fell flat, and missing from her remarks was the only appropriate emotion: outrage.

DHS' former director, whose constellation in state government shone with accolades from all quarters of the statehouse, resigned in July after releasing a letter written with the help of a Brown staffer, *The Oregonian/OregonLive's* Denis C. Theriault reported. More than a year ago, however, it was made known to attorney Errin Kelley-Siel, who oversaw the agency, that the situation was grim and allegedly abusive to children at the foster care provider Give Us This Day, *Willamette Week* found after reviewing hundreds of agency emails. Among the emails was notice, in February 2014, of a "sustained allegation of abuse," or an instance verified by investigators.

Upon Kelley-Siel's resignation, Brown appointed Jerry Waybrant, Kelley-Siel's deputy who had received the same troubling emails about Give Us This Day.

In announcing the DHS investigation, Brown correctly sidelined Waybrant and named a departed DHS veteran, Clyde Saiki, to run the agency as a new chief is sought and as a probe unwinds the agency's inner workings. The investigation, if it is to be consequential, must go beyond overbooked caseworkers and lay bare the agency's apparent incapacity to deal with problems in real time.

"It's easy to be outraged when something comes to light, and it shouldn't take a newspaper article to do

it," Sen. Sara Gelser, D-Corvallis, told the editorial board of *The Oregonian/OregonLive* on Thursday. "If I sound like I'm mad, it's because I am."

As chairwoman of the Senate Human Services Committee, Gelser knows the testimony of a former Give Us This Day worker who reported some kids went without clean bedding and had withstood mold and vermin. But Gelser finds the revelations about Give Us This Day particularly vexing in that they emerged in the course of a financial probe by the state's Department of Justice, which in February reported the waste or diversion of about \$2 million, some for personal use by Give Us This Day's director on trips to Jamaica and Las Vegas as well as home improvements and lingerie and luggage purchases. It's no wonder food and bedding were scarce.

It is a wonder, though, that nobody acted. On this point Gelser is flummoxed.

"I can't think of any reasonable explanation that Erinn (Kelley-Siel) didn't act," she told the editorial board. "There are so many people in the system that knew. I am deeply troubled by that." Gelser paused a moment, adding: "I am not convinced that there aren't other providers who also fail to meet standards."

Real work lies ahead. But real people — children, typically from broken homes and sometimes a handful to manage — are in need now.

As investigators unravel the Give Us This Day mess, lawmakers weary of hearing about DHS' chronic problems should ready themselves for the 2016 short session, in which they must ask: What is Oregon willing to do to meet the needs of children in foster care? What is Oregon willing to pay? Most of all, how can DHS be reimagined and rebuilt so that it can react to ugly situations in real time?

Anything less is to invite problems. Anything less is to play pretend. Anything less is enabling, expressions of concern by the governor notwithstanding.



OTHER VIEWS

Don't laugh: Jeb Bush victory scenario

The conventional wisdom that Jeb Bush is dead has become so unanimous it's only natural to suspect it's wrong.

Yes, the polls are atrocious. Bush, now seeking traction with a New Hampshire tour, is at 4 percent in a recent Fox News national survey and a weak fifth in the RealClearPolitics average of polls. The trend, for the moment, seems to be down, down, down.

Yet there is a not-crazy scenario in which Bush could rise again, not to dominate the race but to be in the running when the four candidates ahead of him self-destruct, kill each other, or run out of gas.

JebWorld held a focus group in New Hampshire the day after Bush's disastrous performance at the Republican debate in Boulder on Oct. 28.

According to a source deep inside JebWorld, the result was not only not terrible, it pointed to five areas of promise for Bush:

- 1) A large majority of group members were undecided and felt no rush to decide anything. It's not even time to narrow their list of favorite candidates.
- 2) After all that has happened, the New Hampshire voters still had a positive, or mostly positive, impression of Bush. They see him as smart, mature and dull.
- 3) They like Donald Trump, think he's fun, but are concerned about giving Trump the vast powers of the presidency.
- 4) They love Ben Carson as a non-politician with a gentle bedside manner, but are a little discomfited by his offbeat views on a number of topics.
- 5) They see Marco Rubio as a perfect vice president and wonder if he is too young, and has too few accomplishments, for the top job.

JebWorld came away feeling that if Bush does better in the next debate — not home-run better, but better better — he can stop the slide. But stopping a devastating decline does not equal winning. There's no avoiding the fact that at this point in the game, the Jeb success scenario depends on other candidates falling.

Four of them, specifically. First, Trump. JebWorld continues to believe the New York billionaire doesn't have what it takes for a long, grueling campaign. But if Trump does last, the still-rich Bush super political action committee Right to Rise will have the ability to unleash millions of dollars worth of negative ads to exploit the doubts voters already have about him.



BYRON YORK
Comment

Next Carson. JebWorld believes Republicans are drawn to him because of his natural likeability and because he stands so far outside the political system. But they believe Carson's support is particularly soft, with 80-plus percent of Carson supporters saying they might eventually vote for someone else. That, plus Carson's own weaknesses and the heightened scrutiny he will inevitably receive atop the polls, will eventually bring him down.

That leaves Rubio and Ted Cruz, who could emerge as the two leaders after a Trump-Carson fadeout. One good-for-Jeb scenario would be that Rubio and Cruz then engage in an internecine battle so vicious, bitter and bloody that Republican voters come to believe neither is suited for the presidency.

The nicer way to put it is that Bush needs a lot of planets to align.

In that case, Republicans look around and see Carly Fiorina, Chris Christie, Mike Huckabee, John Kasich, Rand Paul, Rick Santorum, Bobby Jindal,

and Lindsey Graham, and ask: Now why was it we didn't like Jeb?

The other good-for-Jeb scenario, JebWorld believes, is that Cruz slays Rubio. Despite Rubio's solid progress in recent weeks, JebWorld believes he is all talk and is just beginning to face media scrutiny. Cruz — sharp, aggressive, a formidable debater — is coming up fast.

Even after that ruinous moment in Boulder, Bush is still taking shots at Rubio, but JebWorld would clearly be happy to have Cruz take up the fight. In the careful-what-you-wish-for category, JebWorld believes Bush would do well in a one-on-one against Cruz, and the Bush super PAC will still be there to carpet-bomb the last opponent standing.

All this could well turn out to be a total fantasy. The nicer way to put it is that Bush needs a lot of planets to align. And he could really use a break. That leads to JebWorld's last point: It's been said over and over, but Bush really believes longevity will be the key to victory — who can stay in the race through the inevitable shakeups of December, January, and February?

The bottom line: Conventional wisdom says it's already over — just Google "Jeb Bush" and "death watch" — but conventional wisdom can always change.

Byron York is chief political correspondent for The Washington Examiner.

YOUR VIEWS

Walden missing the mark on Owyhee Monument plan

The Nov. 7 *East Oregonian* printed Greg Walden's op-ed on the proposed Owyhee National Monument. Although the tone of the editorial was more Obama bashing than a substantive justification for disallowing the monument, I am really disappointed in your analysis of the situation.

As an Eastern Oregonian for over 40 years, I have marveled over the Owyhees while hiking the canyons and viewing the unique geological features from the upper reaches of Lake Owyhee. I suspect your opposition stems from ignorance of what is being proposed and whose administration is making the proposal.

Your argument that cattle grazing will help prevent wildfires is particularly misleading considering that grazing practices and other existing use will continue in the monument.

Apparently, you do not acknowledge the economic benefit from national monument designation. My wife and I have visited national monuments across the nation that are far less impressive than the Owyhees, yet draw large numbers of visitors from all over the world. Dinosaur National Monument in Utah and Great Basin National Park in Nevada give testimony to the compatibility of grazing and other farming while providing some protections to a national treasure.

Your closing with "the Obama administration has done enough damage to the West" strikes me as your preference to lash out at President Obama rather than acknowledging what could be a good thing for our region and our national park, monument and historical site system.

If your actual view of the proposed

monument is truly that of your editorial, it is short-sighted and lacking vision of the benefits. If your op-ed was strictly to bash Obama and please some local residents, then that is at the expense of diversifying the Eastern Oregon economy and acknowledging a national treasure.

Aw come on Congressman Walden, you're missing the boat on this issue.

Patrick Dunham Pendleton

Parents should care for sick children, not schools

I wish to thank Hermiston School Board member Don Rankin for voting for a great number of our citizens. He voted no on the proposed Hermiston High School "wellness" clinic. Many parents and grandparents see this proposed "wellness" center as one more takeover of parental rights and responsibilities. Once again the government tries to solve a problem that they themselves create by the elite's agreement that "parents are irresponsible and incapable of being parents."

It continuously reminds me and my friends of the naysayers who thought the masses were too stupid to vote. And, perhaps, some of us citizens have become too stupid in letting government take over our fundamental responsibilities. The price we pay for irresponsibility is increased irresponsibility and more government intrusion into personal and family life.

I realize that the heartstrings are plucked by sick children. Sick children don't need to be in school. Sick children belong at home.

Marge Rolan Hermiston

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