

'I have a dream'

This is the conclusion of the speech delivered by the Rev. Martin Luther King, Jr., on the steps of the Lincoln Memorial in Washington, D.C., Aug. 28, 1963:

I say to you today, my friends, that in spite of the difficulties and frustrations of the moment I still have a dream. It is a dream deeply rooted in the American dream.

I have a dream that one day this nation will rise up and live out the true meaning of its creed: "We hold these truths to be self-evident; that all men are created equal." I have a dream that one day on the red hills of Georgia the sons of former slaves and the sons of former slave owners will be able to sit down together at the table of brotherhood.

I have a dream that one day even the state of Mississippi, a desert state sweltering with the heat of injustice and oppression, will be transformed into an oasis of freedom and justice.

I have a dream that my four little children will one day live in a nation where they will not be judged by the color of their skin but by the content of their character.

I have a dream today.

I have a dream that one day the state of Alabama, whose governor's lips are presently dripping with the words of

interposition and nullification, will be transformed into a situation where little black boys and black girls will be able to join hands with little white boys and white girls and walk together as sisters and brothers.

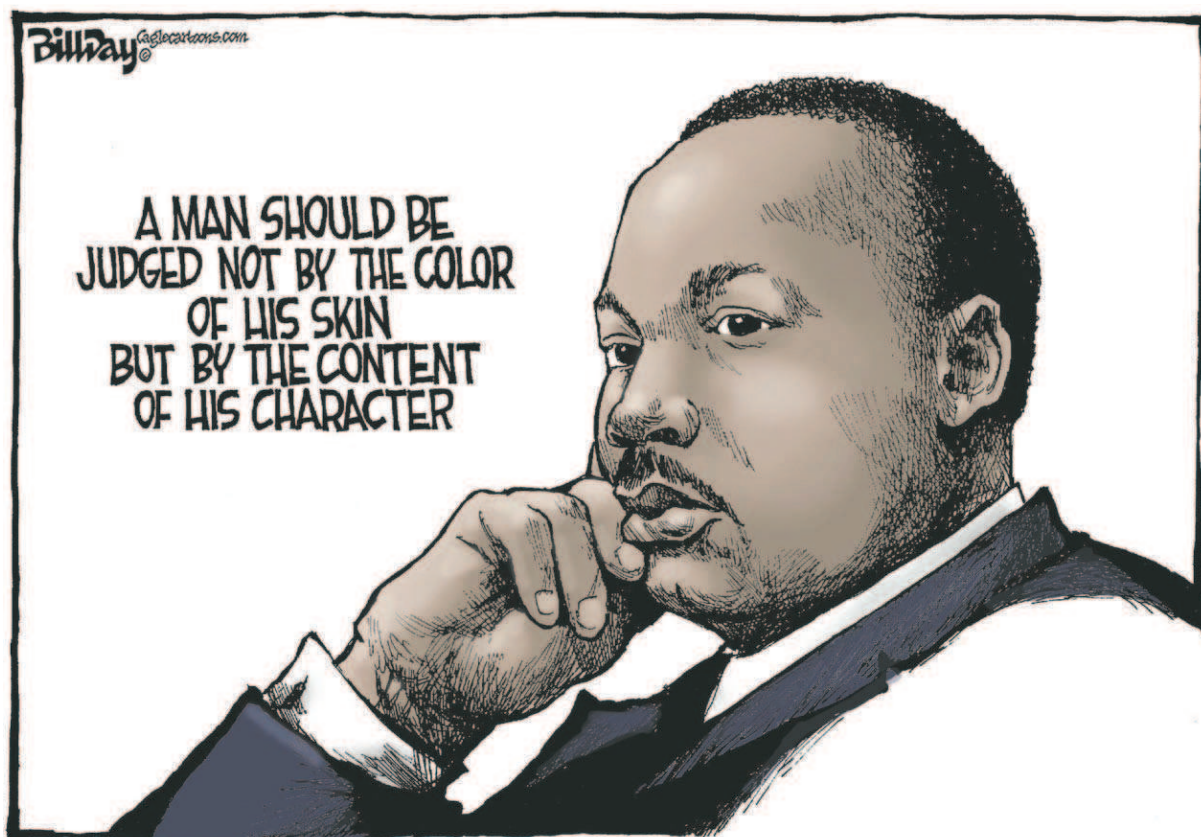
I have a dream today.

I have a dream that one day every valley shall be exalted, every hill and mountain shall be made low, the rough places will be made plains and the crooked places will be made straight and the glory of the Lord shall be revealed and all flesh shall set it together.

This is our hope. This is the faith with which I return to the South. With this faith we will be able to hew out of the mountain of despair a stone of hope. With this faith we will be able to transform the jangling discords of our nation into a beautiful symphony of brotherhood. With this faith we will be able to work together, to pray together, to struggle together, to go to jail together, to stand up for freedom together, knowing that we will be free one day.

This will be the day when all of God's children will be able to sing with new meaning: My country, 'tis of thee, Sweet land of liberty, Of thee I sing: Land where my fathers died, Land of the pilgrims' pride, From every mountain-side Let freedom ring.

And if America is to be a



great nation this must become true. So let freedom ring from the prodigious hilltops of New Hampshire. Let freedom ring from the mighty mountains of New York. Let freedom ring from the heightening Alleghenies of Pennsylvania!

Let freedom ring from the snowcapped Rockies of Colorado!

Let freedom ring from the

curvaceous peaks of California!

But not only that; let freedom ring from Stone Mountain of Georgia!

Let freedom ring from Lookout Mountain of Tennessee!

Let freedom ring from every hill and molehill of Mississippi. From every mountainside, let freedom ring.

When we let freedom ring,

when we let it ring from every village and every hamlet, from every state and every city, we will be able to speed up that day when all of God's children, black men and white men, Jews and Gentiles, Protestants and Catholics, will be able to join hands and sing in the words of the old Negro spiritual, "Free at last! Free at last! Thank God almighty, we are free at last!"

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OUR VIEW

Years of no growth should be an alarm

Residents of Harney County have been described as the hostages of the armed protesters who took over the Malheur National Wildlife Refuge Jan. 2.

By most accounts the protesters, largely out-of-state agitators, have harassed and generally run roughshod

over the local community for three weeks and have worn out their welcome.

But the government land management policies that at least partially underpin the protest have constrained the Harney County economy for 40 years.

Once upon a time, Harney County's economy was strong. Thirty-one percent of the jobs, 768 in all, were in the wood products industry. But since 1978, that number has dropped to 6, according to a recent report from the Oregon Office of Economic Analysis.

And while the rest of the state increased jobs 74 percent since the late 1970s, the number of jobs in Harney County dropped by 10 percent. Since 1980, when the population was 8,314 and the job losses began, the county has lost nearly 1,200 people.

"Relative to the late 1970s — just before the state went into the severe early '80s recession and timber industry restructuring — the number of jobs today in Harney County is 10 percent below back then," Josh Lehner, the analyst who prepared the report, said. "Clearly, that is a really long time with essentially no growth."

A lot of things have changed since the 1970s. The timber industry has restructured, and there's more automation in the mills. So, not all of the wood product job losses can be attributed to federal logging policies.

But community leaders and residents say that in a county where more than 70 percent

of the land is controlled by the federal government, those policy changes, along with stricter grazing restrictions, increased regulation and the ever-present threat of environmental lawsuits that attend any dealing with government agencies have huge impacts.

"It's continued rules and regulations that do everything to make it more difficult to make a living, to pay your bills, educate your kids, pay your mortgage and lead a good life," retired rancher Bill Wilber said.

County Judge Steven Grasty said the job losses in the community have led to a general feeling of despair. His friends, neighbors

and their families can no longer depend on the natural resource jobs that once sustained the county.

Many of those jobs have been replaced by lower-paying service sector jobs supporting tourists and the large contingent of government workers who manage the public lands.

Government employment now accounts for 40 percent of the jobs in the county. Those jobs are welcomed, and are vital to the community. In many cases, those employees are longtime residents with deep local ties.

Still, there is a sense that something has been lost.

"We believe the wealth of a nation is based on its natural resources," Grasty said. "We've lost access to natural resources, in particular, timber."

The partner that once encouraged these enterprises has grown distant and unresponsive.

Sooner or later the protesters will decamp the refuge and life in Harney County will return to normal.

But there and in a hundred places across the West, they will wait for the federal government to loosen its grip.

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OTHER VIEWS

Crackpots in cowboy hats, and Congress

Most of the ranchers I know are decent folks, men and women of a few well-chosen words, slow to rouse, distrustful of a show horse on four legs or two. And then there's the armed gang who seized an Oregon bird sanctuary — Y'all Qaeda, as the twittersphere has dubbed them.

The leader, Ammon Bundy, is the son of Cliven Bundy, the deadbeat rancher and Fox News hero who still owes more than \$1 million in unpaid grazing fees. The elder Bundy says he doesn't recognize the government. The younger Bundy recognized it enough to get a federal loan guarantee for his fleet repair business in the rugged sprawl of Phoenix.

Ammon Bundy says God drove him to break into the offices of an agency that works on behalf of pileated woodpeckers, yellow warblers and other avian wonders. Bundy's not leaving, he says, until land that we own — that is, every American citizen — is taken from us and given to some unnamed private entity.

Yes, it's comical — white privilege mixed with a "Hee Haw" parody. The only thing Bundy and his fellow burglars have accomplished thus far is to leave behind enough evidence for prosecutors to file numerous criminal charges against them.

But this Gang That Can't Protest Straight is not far removed from a better-dressed crowd in Congress pushing for radical change in the nation's public land endowment. The locked-and-loaded crazies in the Oregon high desert are using the same language as Republican legislators who want to take away an American birthright.

On Wednesday, leading Republicans in Washington expressed sympathy for the ideas behind the criminal takeover. "You have a frustration that they feel the federal government is not listening to them anymore," said Representative Raúl Labrador of Idaho, a Tea Party favorite.

The goal of Labrador and other far-right politicians from the West is similar to the demands of the Bundy gang. Earlier this year a group led by Representative Rob Bishop, the Utah Republican who is chairman of the House Natural Resources Committee, announced plans to "develop a legislative framework for transferring public land to local ownership and control."

Bishop said he wanted to find a way "to return these lands back to their rightful owners." It's the identical language used by the militants. "We have research teams finding out who this land was taken from and who it needs to be sent back to," said one of the occupiers, Jon Rizheimer.

Um, the Indians? Well, yes, Paiutes had been living on the well-watered desert sanctuary for at least 6,000 years, until



TIMOTHY EGAN
Comment

whites kicked them off. This week the Paiutes told the Bundy gang to go away, and said they looked to the federal government as protectors of their cultural artifacts.

"It just rubs me in the wrong way that we have a bunch of misinformed people in here," said Charlotte Rodrique, the tribal chairwoman. "They're not the original owners."

It's beyond the historical literacy of the anti-public-lands crowd to understand that. But they do understand the greater stakes. "The idea is power," said Ryan Payne, another one of the occupiers in Oregon. "Land is power."

Let's talk about that power. The media shorthand for this staged event is an outdated stereotype of a Sagebrush Rebellion. In

truth, an overwhelming majority of Westerners enjoy their public lands for all the things that the federal government protects for them — recreation, wildlife, history, open space, clean water.

The 47 million bird watchers in this country spend \$40 billion a year to follow creatures whose lives are dependent on federal wildlife refuges. Imagine if a bunch of birders, lathered in sunscreen, their heads covered in floppy hats, took over a federal facility to protest the innumerable predations of wildlife habitat by cattle ranchers.

Birders generate 660,000 jobs, through trips and retail sales, according to the Fish and Wildlife Service. By contrast, grazing allotments on federal public land number a bit more than 20,000. For those ranchers, the deal is a steal — about 90 percent cheaper than the market rate on private land in 16 Western states. We subsidize the ranchers, while a majority of our public land users generate hundreds of thousands of jobs, and never threaten to kill a forest ranger.

That's why only a handful of ranchers — Cliven Bundy being the best-known culprit — refuse to pay what most others do. But why, then, the push to privatize our great open spaces? It goes back to power.

Teddy Roosevelt framed the struggle in terms of the people against the exploiters. It was Roosevelt who created the wildlife refuge in Oregon, angering white squatters. The Supreme Court twice upheld the right of the government to protect the high desert.

The extremists, in Congress and the snows of Oregon, want to return to a 19th century world where blunt force — against Indians, wildlife, the public good — prevails. It's a fantasy, costumed in western wear, except that the guns are real.

Timothy Egan worked for 18 years as a writer for *The New York Times*, first as the *Pacific Northwest* correspondent, then as a national enterprise reporter.

LETTERS POLICY

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