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OUR VIEW

State rules in a federalist land

The United States, most of us learned in our elementary civics classes, employs a federal system of government.

Oregon, being the progressive state that it has been for the last 50 years, has been ahead of federal action on some issues. But that presents problems.

Take marijuana.

The state has decriminalized possession and use for adults, but it remains illegal at the federal level. That means adults are free to grow in Oregon soil and smoke under Oregon sky, but aspects of the industry that step beyond state lines quickly become mired in a murky legal quandary. Insurance and banking systems have been wary of getting involved in something that is legal in the state, but illegal under federal law.

From our view in Eastern Oregon, drug policy needs federal directive. The U.S. should either enforce federal law on the books that regards marijuana as illegal, or it should change that federal law so the marijuana industry can be as efficient and safe as possible in states that allow it.

Or take immigration.

State Sen. Bill Hansell's driver's card plan way back in 2014 was a small, state-level fix of one tiny issue in the larger environment of the country's broken immigration policy. The law allowed illegal immigrants to get a driver's license and car insurance.

Yet voters, in a ballot initiative, repealed it by a significant margin. The thought was that the bill made life easier for people who were breaking federal law. It may have been a pragmatic fix of an evident problem — but in the face of such blatant disregard for federal law, it wasn't going to fly.

At the same time, multiple attempts at immigration reform, led by presidents of both parties, have failed to gain traction in a divided Congress. Immigration policy remains a mess at the federal level and voters clearly don't want states to try to nickel-and-dime short term solutions. They want a consistent national approach to what is clearly a national issue, and they'll live with the broken system until a complete overhaul or crackdown can be

accomplished.

Take minimum wage.

That may be the most timely discussion, since a bill was signed into law by Oregon Governor Kate Brown this week.

Earlier this session, the Legislature approved the highest statewide minimum wage in the nation, and became the first to differ by geographic area. By 2022, wages will rise to a minimum of \$14.75 an hour in Portland, \$13.50 in Oregon's mid-size counties and \$12.50 in rural areas, which includes all of Eastern Oregon.

President Barack Obama praised the state for its action, but Obama has been unable to persuade the Republican-led Senate from bumping up the federal minimum wage past \$7.25, which he was able to put into practice in 2009.

The problem with raising minimum wage at the state level will be most devastating in places like Ontario, a town that borders Idaho, where minimum wage still comes in at \$7.25.

As wages rise on the Oregon side of the state line, will industry that relies on unskilled labor — like agriculture — move over to Idaho? If you own a restaurant or a farm in Ontario, you are right to be nervous about the long-term financial viability of your business in an environment where labor rules are so dramatically different just a stone's throw away.

We understand and support state rights. Clearly, people in California and people in Alabama want to live under a different set of laws — and that's what makes the U.S. such a flexible and healthy democracy. Those laws must be Constitutional, and basic rights of Americans must be respected from sea to shining sea.

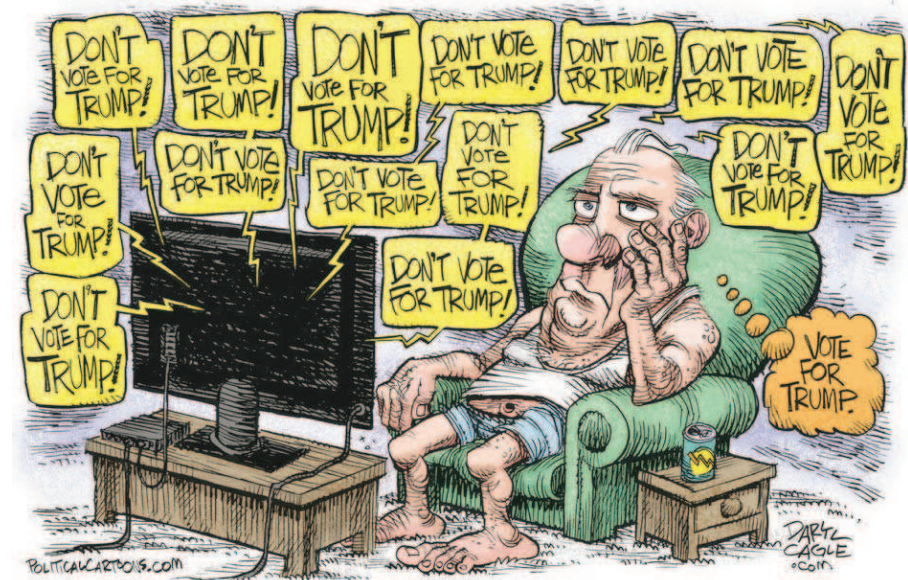
But sometimes we need federal law to take the lead and solve the complex, national problems we are facing.

Yet the U.S. Congress has been ground to a halt by partisan bickering and infighting. Statehouses across the nation have taken on the bigger lift of legislating, but there are clear problems with that.

Places like Ontario, where states with dramatically different political philosophies rub elbows, suffer the most.

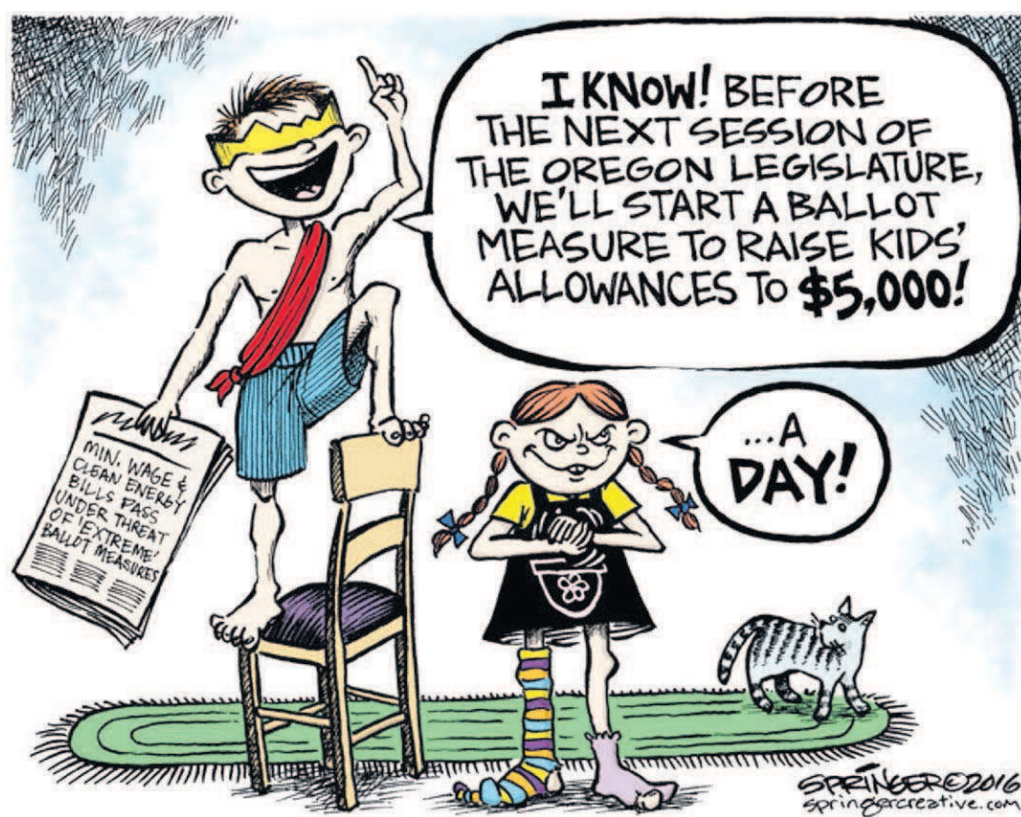
Addressing issues on a state-by-state basis has its problems, especially for border towns.

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.



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. Send letters to 211 S.E. Byers Ave. Pendleton, OR 97801 or email editor@eastoregonian.com.



OTHER VIEWS

Donald Trump, the great betrayer

Now, at long last, the big guns are being brought to bear. Now, at long last, some major Republicans like Mitt Romney are speaking up to lay waste to Donald Trump.

For months Trump's rivals and other Republicans have either retreated in silence or tentatively and ineptly criticized him for exactly those traits that voters like about him: for being a slapdash, politically incorrect money-hungry bully.

But now finally — at long last — major Republicans are raising their heads and highlighting Trump's actual vulnerability: his inability to think for an extended time about anybody but himself.

He seduces people with his confidence and his promises. People invest time, love and money in him. But in the end he cares only about himself. He betrays those who trust him and leaves them high and dry.

It's unpleasant to have to play politics on this personal level. But this is a message that can sway potential Trump supporters, many of whom have only the barest information on what Trump's life and career have actually been like.

This is a message that can work in a sour and cynical time among voters who already feel betrayed. This is a message that can work because it's a personality type everyone understands. This is a time when it is not in fact too late, when it may still be possible to prevent his nomination.

The campaign against Trump has to be specific and relentless: a series of clear examples, rolled out day upon day with the same message. Donald Trump betrays.

It can start with Trump University, where Trump betrayed schoolteachers and others who dreamed of building a better life for themselves.

Trump billed his university as a place people could go to learn everything necessary about real estate investing. According to a 2013 lawsuit filed by New York's attorney general, Eric Schneiderman, more than 5,000 people paid \$40 million, a quarter of which went to Trump himself.

Internal Trump University documents suggest that the university wasn't really oriented around teaching, but rather around luring customers into buying more and more courses.

According to the New York lawsuit, instructors filled out course evaluations themselves or had students fill out the non-anonymous forms in front of them, pressuring them into giving positive reviews. During breaks students were told to call their credit card companies to increase their credit limits. They were given a script encouraging



DAVID BROOKS
Comment

them to exaggerate their incomes. The Better Business Bureau gave the school a D- rating in 2010.

"They lure you in with false promises," one student, Patricia Murphy, told *The Times* in 2011. Murphy said she had spent about \$12,000 on Trump University classes, much of it racked up on her credit cards. "I was scammed," she said.

The barrage can continue with Trump Mortgage. On the campaign trail, Trump tells people he saw the mortgage crisis coming. "I told a lot of people," he has said, "and I was right. You know, I'm pretty good at that stuff."

Trump's biggest lies are the ones he tells himself. The reality is that Trump opened his mortgage company in 2006. Others smelled a bubble, but not Trump. "I think it's a great time to start a mortgage company," he told CNBC. "The real estate market is going to be very strong for a long time to come."

Part of the operation was a boiler room where people cold-called clients, sometimes pushing subprime loans and offering easy approval.

Jennifer McGovern had trusted Trump and went to work for him. But she got stiffed in the end. In 2008 a New York state Supreme Court judge ordered Trump Mortgage to pay her the \$298,274 she was owed. The bill wasn't paid.

"The company was set up in a way that we could never recover what we were owed," she told *The Washington Post*.

The stories can go on and on. The betrayal of investors when his casino businesses went bankrupt. The betrayal of his first wife with his flagrant public affair with Marla Maples. The betrayal of American workers when he decided to hire illegals. The people left in the wake of other debacles: Trump Air, Trump Vodka, Trump Financial, etc.

These weren't just risks that went bad. They were shams, built like his campaign around empty promises and on Trump's fragile and overweening pride.

The burden of responsibility now falls on Republican officials, elected and nonelected, at all levels. For years they have built relationships in their communities, earned the right to be heard. If they now feel that Donald Trump would be a reckless and dangerous president, then they have a responsibility to their country to tell those people the truth, to rally all their energies against this man.

Since the start of his campaign Trump has had more energy and more courage than his opponents. Maybe that's now changing.

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

YOUR VIEWS

GOP is a grass roots party, there is no "establishment"

Political season is in full swing and I am hearing a lot of talk about outsiders and what the "establishment" is trying to do. These entities are real, but where do they get their power?

The Republican Party is a grassroots party and all of the power begins in our neighborhoods, or in political language known as precincts.

In Umatilla County there are 45 precincts, each with 2 to 6 precinct committee persons representing them on the county central committee — 168 PCPs total. Delegates elected by each of Oregon's 36 county central committees then make up the state central committee that meets 3 to 4 times a year.

In presidential election years all PCPs are asked to attend the state convention. The state central committee every four years elects one national committeeman and one national committeewoman. These two from each state and territory along with congressional leadership make up the Republican National Committee.

So who is the "establishment?" If you trace the line all the way back you will see that the establishment was put in place by you, the voter.

There are three areas where the results can turn out different than we would wish. First is that the criteria for being a Republican is a desire to register as one — that is it. It is not like your church where you have to subscribe to a set of beliefs to belong. Likewise, anyone

can register Republican and run for office, but that doesn't mean they subscribe to the party platform.

This brings us to the second area for disappointing results, and that is the shallow voter. There is no question that our culture is changing dramatically in America. Politics has transitioned for many from ideas to entertainment. Too many can tell you who is the quarterback of the Seattle Seahawks but can't tell you who their senator is, or list the last ten Taylor Swift hits but are hard pressed to list more than three of the Ten Commandments. Why do we get the results we get? Because we don't know the hard questions we should ask, let alone the answers.

The third area that leads to less than desirable results is your input to the process. Vote. It is deplorable when we have less than 40 percent of registered voters turn in a ballot on Election Day. Become involved in your community.

There are 168 Republican precinct positions in Umatilla County and currently less than 40 are filled. That means that those 40 are making the decisions for all 168 positions. This is an opportunity for your voice to be heard. This Saturday morning while you are drinking your coffee, go to <http://sos.oregon.gov/elections/Documents/SEL105.pdf> Print the form out, take it to the courthouse by March 8 and let your neighborhood elect you to the central committee this May.

Larry B. Moore, chairman
Umatilla County Republicans
Milton-Freewater