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**OUR VIEW**

# Legislators ignore impact of minimum wage hike

Supporters of minimum wage hikes pooh-pooh critics who warn that increased labor costs lead to lower employment.

They suggest that employers, notorious for sitting on bags of money, are able either to absorb increased labor costs, or increase prices to offset costs without negative impacts to employees.

It's political claptrap Oregon legislators spouted this month when they passed a three-tiered wage hike scheme. The people who run Oregon's public universities quickly proved it a fallacy.

The law hikes the current statewide minimum wage of \$9.25 to \$9.75 in July.

Under the law, the state is divided into three regions. Over six years the wage increases by different rates in each region, based on population, median income and cost of living. In Portland, the minimum wage will reach \$14.75, in rural and coastal counties with struggling economies it will top out at \$12.50, and \$13.50 in the rest of the state by 2022.

State budget analysts couldn't begin to calculate how much this would cost government, let alone private businesses, in extra wages and benefits. But no worries, supporters said, because studies show that increasing minimum wages has no impact on employment and hiring.

The people who run Oregon's public universities must not have received the memo.

Universities typically hire students at minimum wage to fill a variety of jobs around campus. The wages of

students in the federal work study program are picked up by the federal government, but hundreds of others are paid out of university coffers.

Shortly after Gov. Kate Brown signed the measure into law, *The Oregonian* reported that the wage hikes will cost the seven universities millions in additional labor costs, and force them to look at cutting hundreds of jobs held by student workers to cut costs.

Officials at Oregon State University told the paper that the hike would increase the cost of the more than 7,800 students it pays by \$4.8 million in the next biennium. At the University of Oregon, the tab will be an extra \$2.3 million in the same period, and rise to \$6.1 million extra when the wage hits the top rate. Portland State University is looking at \$2.5 million in extra costs in the 2017-2019 cycle.

A spokesman for OSU said the hike could cost 650 to 700 students their jobs. PSU said it would likely make budget cuts and raise tuition.

It probably came as no surprise to freshmen economics majors that a multi-million dollar hike in labor costs has to be offset either by an increase in revenues — tuitions and fees — or a reduction in expenses — job cuts. Unfortunately, legislators skipped that class.

If caught off guard that public universities, agents of the state, are talking job cuts in light of hikes in the minimum wage, imagine their surprise when local retailers, restaurants, hotels, nurseries, orchards, packing houses and processors start doing the same.

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**

## Trump mischaracterized by this paper

I strongly object to your March 16 Our View reference to a person running for the presidency; calling him a "vicious racist" is in very poor taste for your newspaper. This is not news reporting, this is slander. If you can't say something nice about someone then don't say anything. This man is spending most of his own money to run, not like the other people, and I believe that he has the guts to make America strong again.

**James Tiede Hermiston**

## Obama's legacy and Cuba

I have a question for all the Barack Obama haters out there: Are the people of Cuba better off with the United States inside the tent urinating out, or outside the tent urinating in? We have spent 50 years being bellicose and thumping our chest with the Castro government and accomplished nothing. Now, Raul Castro is discussing Cuba's human rights record with the President of the United States. Our foreign policy toward Cuba has been nothing short of stupid for half a century and the people that have suffered the most for that policy are the people of that island nation. We are practically "besties" with

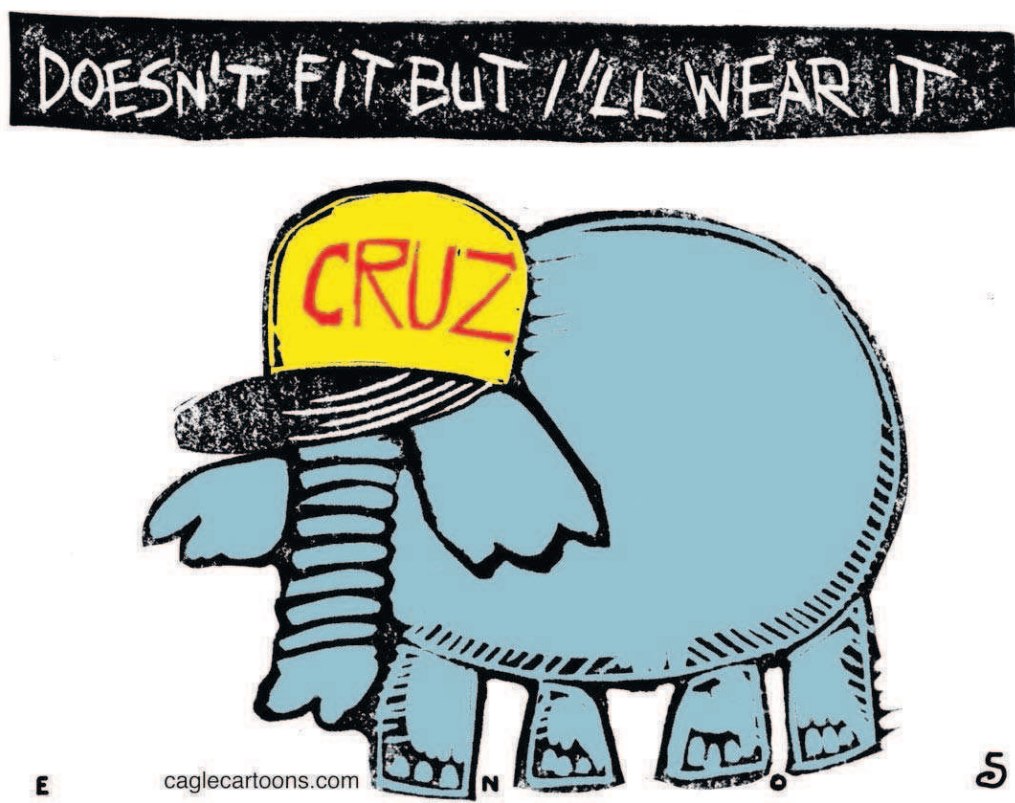
Vietnam, but certain people on the right want to keep up the fight against Cuba. Why? That power corrupted a one-time freedom fighter into a ruthless tyrant. That's never happened before in history. Time, albeit very short, has exposed the same brilliant strategic thinking of the people who opposed the nuclear agreement with Iran. None of the critics spend any time discussing their alternative to a "bad treaty." That is and always will be an unwinnable war against a country we don't want to go to war with in the first place.

Donald Trump has the answer to ISIS and the Middle East. He would "go in fast and hard." Why thank you general; I don't know why nobody thought of that before your stroke of genius.

The people on the right are going to be forced to admit that the Kenyan community organizer has done a very good job answering that early morning phone call Hillary Clinton talked about in 2008. In fact, our first president of color has done an excellent job overall. There hasn't been a hint of legitimate scandal and Barack Hussein Obama has done in seven years what Donald Trump claims he wants to do — make America great again.

It's too early to know for sure, but I think the history books are going to be kind to President Obama.

**Patrick J. Delaney Hermiston**



**OTHER VIEWS**

# Profiles in paralysis

When an old order is in crisis, something distinctive happens to the men who lead it.

A strange paralysis sets in, a curious mix of denial and resignation. W.B. Yeats' famous line about the best lacking all conviction captures part of this, but only part. What really goes missing isn't conviction itself but the capacity to act on it — to adapt swiftly, resist effectively, or both. Instead the tendency is to freeze, like mice under a hawk's shadow, and hope that stillness alone can save you from the talons.

For an unfortunate case study, in this year of Donald Trump's rebellion against the Republican Party as we've known it, look no further than the speaker of the House of Representatives, Paul D. Ryan.

Ryan is not some corrupt functionary, some time-serving Roman official eating grapes while the barbarians come over the wall. He is an intelligent, principled, ambitious, and effective political operator, with a clear vision for the party that he helps to lead.

That vision is close to the worldview of his late mentor, Republican Congressman Jack Kemp. Kemp was a famous tax cutter, but also thought of himself as a "bleeding heart conservative," a passionate believer in the power of free markets and free trade to lift up the poor and dispossessed. He championed an open door to immigrants, he campaigned for votes in blighted inner cities as well as Sun Belt suburbs, and he believed that conservative principles could ultimately build a pan-ethnic political coalition, purged of racialized appeals.

Ryan has zigzagged during his career, but his Kempian core is clear. He's a pro-immigration free trader, a supply-sider and an entitlement reformer. He favors optimistic rhetoric about the American promise, paired with warnings about the perils of identity politics and the enervating effects of the welfare state. He spent the time between his months on the Romney ticket and his ascent to the speakership in conversations with antipoverty activists, on a Kempian quest for a new, less polarizing welfare reform.

And he has consistently critiqued Trump's most demagogic forays — the proposed ban on Muslim travel to America, the footsie with white supremacists, the violent climate at his rallies — as betrayals of what American conservatism ought to be.

But Trump isn't just a random demagogue promoting bigotry in some haphazard way. He has an agenda and a message, and it's a dagger aimed directly at Ryan's vision for the party. On issue after issue, from trade to immigration to entitlement reform, a Trumpized party would simply bury Ryanism/Kempism under white identity politics, and swing as far from Kemp's enthusiastic minority outreach as the party could get.



**ROSS DOUTHAT**  
Comment

One reasonable response to this kind of stark challenge, this incipient revolution, would be soul-searching and a course correction. Trump would not have gotten this far, would not have won so many votes — especially working class votes — if the Kempian vision had delivered fully on its promises, if mass immigration, free trade, deregulation and upper-bracket tax cuts had really been the prescription for all economic ills.

Another reasonable response would be clear defiance, in the style of the "never Trump" movement, based on a recognition that in this election conservatism as we've known it could be fighting for its very life, and that if Trump is not repudiated then the American right could be remade in his authoritarian image.

Personally I would favor both: a Republican Party that adapts to Trumpism by absorbing the legitimate part of its populist critique, while also doing everything in its power to resist Trump himself. But if you watch or read Ryan's recent CNBC interview with my colleague John Harwood, you'll see a man who seems unable to go down either path.

Repeatedly Harwood presses him on whether the party needs to change to address the concerns of the blue-collar Republicans who are voting for Trump. And every time, as The Week's James Pethokoukis pointed out afterward, Ryan simply returns to a 1980s-era message: cut spending, cut taxes, open markets, and all will be well. Asked about the possibility that some voters might see those policies as "taking care of people at the top more than you're taking care of me," he responds dismissively: "Bernie Sanders talks about that stuff. That's not who we are."

Yet when he's asked about the threat that Trump obviously poses to "who we are," the speaker — despite his admirable willingness to condemn specific Trumpian outrages — can't bring himself to make a counterendorsement, or voice explicit opposition to Trump's progress.

"I have to respect the primary voter," he says. "It's not my decision, it's their decision." And, "We're going to have to work with whoever our nominee is."

So in sum, faced with a potentially existential threat to his vision of conservatism (not to mention his House majority), Ryan's answer is first, change nothing; second, do nothing.

Sit still. Just sit still.  
Everyone might return to normal.  
The hawk might pass. It might.  
It might.

Ross Douthat joined *The New York Times* as an Op-Ed columnist in April 2009. Previously, he was a senior editor at *The Atlantic* and a blogger for *theatlantic.com*.

**OTHER VIEWS**

# Non-affiliated voters still have time to make ballot count

*The (Bend) Bulletin, March 19*

Nearly a quarter of Oregon's voters could have no say in important primary-ballot elections May 17, as things now stand. Because they're among the roughly 540,000 non-affiliated voters in this state, they will be unable to choose among the Democratic or Republican candidates for various offices in the state, including governor and secretary of state.

That's because the three major parties — Republican, Democratic and Independent — may decide for themselves who can participate in party primaries. Republicans and Democrats have opted for closed primaries — non-affiliated voters or those registered with other parties may not participate.

The Independent party, meanwhile, will allow non-affiliated voters to participate alongside its party's members. This is the first statewide election in which Independents are considered members of a major party in Oregon.

Non-affiliated voters need not sit on the sidelines, however. With more than a month to

go before the April 26 registration deadline, they have plenty of time to decide if they'd like to join a party, even temporarily.

If they choose between Democrats and Republicans, they will get ballots containing all their party's nominees, from president on down. Those who become Independents will vote on Independent Party candidates, generally running for state offices.

If non-affiliated voters opt to do nothing, they'll still get ballots, but those ballots will be smaller than most. Non-affiliated voters will be asked to cast ballots in nonpartisan races — the Crook County Commission, for example — and on any local ballot measures in their districts.

Party shopping is a problem for some voters, we know. If it is for you, pick a party, or no party, and stick with your decision. If not — if you see primary election registration as a tool used to favor a specific candidate, for example — then by all means, change. If casting a vote against Donald Trump is important to you, no matter how many delegates he's amassed, then change. But do so by April 26. That's the last day you can and still get to cast that ballot.

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