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OUR VIEW

The moon shot

Although many are already arguing about "Clinton v. Trump: The Reckoning," another November vote may have an even bigger impact on our lives in Oregon.

Now that enough signatures have been gathered, it looks certain that a significant initiative will come before all Oregonians.

How big could this thing be? It alone would increase the entire state budget by about 25 percent by bringing in about $3 billion per year. Yes, that's billion with a B.

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Right now it is known as Initiative Petition 28, but will surely receive nicknames from both sides before ballots are printed out. We suggest "The Moon Shot Measure" — it'll either send the state into a new stratosphere or blow up Oregon's economic engine at liftoff.

Once the signatures are verified, the "petition" will drop from the title. This initiative — which would require a majority of Oregon voters to pass — would place a 2.5 percent tax on corporate gross receipts sales from the 1,000 or so largest businesses in the state.

The extra dollars in the state budget would then be shoveled toward education, public safety and heath and human services. Oregon's struggling education system is currently 39th in the nation, and the tax dollars it receives per student is a measly 38th. Proponents of the measure argue that it is no coincidence that those two numbers are so similar, and that additional dollars would be sure to increase results.

But such a windfall clearly has a downside: A recent nonpartisan study showed that the measure would amount to a $600 per person increase in state taxes next year, and would depress the job market and population growth. The net loss of jobs would be about 20,000 by 2022, according to the analysis as well as reporting by Paris Achen from our Capital Bureau. The private sector jobs would see fewer jobs and the public sector would see more.

Although its not technically a "sales tax" — something Oregon voters have voted down time and time again — this initiative would have similar effects on state revenue and cost to residents.

Proponents will make the case that giant corporations aren't paying their fair share of taxes in the state, while opponents will describe the dire consequences of taking more money from the private sector and handing it to the state government. And both sides will spend millions to get the point across.

There are months ahead to study and report about the wide-ranging effects of this measure. This newspaper will surely do so.

Pay attention when you see those headlines. Read closely and carefully. Be informed and educated about the importance of this decision and how it could drastically affect the future of this state — for good and for ill.

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.

OUR VIEW

Obama's new overtime pay rules change the overall mission

St. Louis Post-Dispatch

The Obama administration's new plan to require overtime pay for salaried workers earning up to $47,000 is an understandable but unrealistic reaction to the problem of stagnating wages and a diminishing American middle class. People are working longer hours for comparatively less pay, and something needs to happen to jostle the system back into alignment.

But the tight deadlines to implement the new rules don't match the reality of the American workplace. The Labor Department plans to double previous income limits on overtime pay and impose new rules on employers as of Dec. 1. Instead of receiving a financial windfall from higher overtime pay, many salaried employees could wind up making less as they go on the time clock.

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Americans frustrated by the multimillion-dollar salaries being paid to corporate chief executives might react: Heck yeah, it's about time they had to share the wealth. But there are thousands of small employers — retailers, nonprofits and, yes, even local newspapers — that simply cannot afford what this policy demands.

The measure comes as President Barack Obama pushes a congressional proposal to gradually increase the minimum wage to $12 an hour by 2020 from its current federal level of $7.25.

Note the key difference here: He's not recommending such a drastic increase all at once. He recognizes that American employers couldn't withstand the shock. Yet his administration seeks to impose draconian rules on overtime pay, giving employers only six months' advance notice.

The newspaper industry is hardly unbiased on this issue. Across the board, we face a constant struggle to stay in business, whether it's *The New York Times* or the *Peoria Journal Star*. Our staffers push themselves hard, putting in long hours to fulfill a demanding mission that serves a public good.

The National Newspaper Association, like other industry groups, has long embraced the need for salary adjustments on a graduated basis. "The Labor Department failed to do its job for a decade by creating more graduated adjustments that small businesses could live with. Then it decided to try to force the small-business economy to leap the whole chasm in a single bound," says association President Chip Hutchison, publisher of *The Times-Leader* in Princeton, Ky.

Under the new rules, the mission will no longer take priority, whether it's keeping the public informed or performing nonprofit work to house the poor or fight cancer. The time clock will dominate all other considerations. And if employers can't afford it, they'll either have to reduce salaried full-time employment or go out of business.

People running, say, fast-food restaurants who make less than the $47,000 threshold could soon have to adjust their résumés. The hours they accept as an investment to attain valuable management experience could soon disappear. The term "hourly employee" will take on a whole new, and not terribly impressive, meaning.

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

Is it true what Democrats say about Republicans and voting?

BYRON YORK
Comment

As New York Republicans went to the polls for their primary April 19, some opponents of Donald Trump clung to the hope that Ted Cruz, or perhaps John Kasich, might deny Trump a few delegates in some of the state's congressional districts. One reason for that hope was New York's highly restrictive voter registration rules, which required party-changers to register as Republicans many months earlier in order to be eligible to vote in the GOP primary. Some crossovers who intended to vote for Trump, the thinking went, would discover when they arrived at the polls that they could not do so.

The #NeverTrumpers were hoping, in other words, that rules limiting voter participation might help their cause.

> Poll taxes, literacy tests and other impediments to voting have been ruled unconstitutional by courts.

Likewise, during the primary season some anti-Trump Republicans paid close attention to the GOP delegate-selection process in Colorado, Wyoming, and North Dakota, the three states that chose not to have presidential preference votes in 2016. Winning there depended on the participation of a relatively small number of highly motivated Republicans who worked through precinct, county, district, and state caucuses. Yes, several thousand Republicans participated in conventions there, but there's no doubt Colorado, Wyoming, and North Dakota had less voter participation than nearly all states with primaries. For #NeverTrumpers, fewer voters equaled higher hopes.

Trump called the system in those states "rigged" and accused some Republican leaders of trying to frustrate the will of the voters. "It's about the voters, it's not about the bosses," Trump said the week of the New York primary, which he won with 60 percent of the vote. "We're going to show that it's about the voters. I win all of the time when it's up to the voters."

Now Trump has effectively clinched the Republican nomination, and one conservative voice against Trump has radically upped the ante on limiting voter participation. In a May 20 *Washington Post* op-ed, David Harsanyi, a senior editor at *The Federalist*, argued that millions of voters are so ill-informed that they cannot be trusted to make responsible decisions and must therefore be "weeded out" — barred from voting "for the good of our democratic institutions."

"By weeding out millions of irresponsible voters who can't be bothered to learn the rudimentary workings of the Constitution, or their preferred candidate's proposals or even their history, we may be able to mitigate the recklessness of the electorate," Harsanyi wrote.

Harsanyi proposed a test for voters along the lines of the test given to immigrants seeking to become United States citizens. The test would pass constitutional muster, Harsanyi said, because it would somehow "ensure that all races, creeds, genders and sexual orientations and people of every socioeconomic background are similarly inhibited from voting when ignorant."

Poll taxes, literacy tests, and other impediments to voting have been ruled unconstitutional by courts or outlawed by legislation for many years.

Harsanyi is by no means the first conservative to suggest a test for voting. After Harsanyi's article appeared, National Review's Jonah Goldberg tweeted, "I've been making a similar argument for years," linking to pieces from 2007 and 2014.

Others have proposed similar ideas. In March, National Review's Kevin D. Williamson, a determined Trump opponent, expressed his hope that the constitutional structure of checks and balances might somehow stop a Trump victory, since it is "designed to frustrate 'We the People' when the people fall into dangerous and violent error of the sort with which they are now flirting."

The various discussions of Trump and voting raise questions about the position conservatives and Republicans have taken on the most contentious voting-related issue of recent years, the fight over voter ID. For a long time, conservatives and Republicans have advocated commonsense measures to ensure the integrity of elections. Those measures boiled down to one thing: a voter should be able to prove who he or she is when voting. The solution, voter ID, was not only reasonable but publicly supported and approved by the courts — after all, if one has to present ID to board a plane or buy Sudafed, why is it overly burdensome to require the same to vote?

Democrats have long responded by accusing conservatives and Republicans of attempting to suppress the vote. Conservatives and Republicans strongly denied the charge. But now, with the new conservative/Republican arguments made in the context of Trump's rise — a test for voting, limited-participation elections, condemnations of democracy in general — it's hard not to wonder whether Democrats were right about the other side all along. There are clearly some conservatives and Republicans who dislike the voters' choice — Trump — so much that they would limit the voters' right to choose.

One last issue. The Democratic charge of GOP voter suppression almost always came with an allegation of racism — the accusation that Republicans were specifically trying to disenfranchise minority voters. Now, however, conservative and Republican voter-limitation talk comes in the context of Trump's victories in the GOP primaries, which mostly did not involve minority voters. So perhaps the best way to describe what is happening is that Trump's success has brought to the fore an anti-democratic streak that has long been present in some conservatives and Republicans.

■

Byron York is chief political correspondent for The Washington Examiner.

YOUR VIEWS

Good and evil switch places when people switch genders

"Woe to those who call evil good, and good evil; Who put darkness for light and light for darkness … woe to those who are wise in their own eyes." (Isaiah 5:20-21)

To force a policy on our youth where boys who in their own eyes think they are girls are encouraged to use girls' bathrooms and locker rooms (or visa versa) is to call evil good. This is the policy currently dictated by our president and encouraged by the *East Oregonian*. According the *EO* we need to get used to "students stating their gender instead of having it stated for them."

This what happens when we fail to stand for truth and allow the government or the newspaper to call evil good. Our conscience will be compromised. We will no longer know the difference between right and wrong. Darkness will begin to set in and evil will proliferate.

This will be the result: Our children will have no protection and confusion will shroud the light of truth, especially sexual confusion in young impressionable adolescents.

The most vulnerable, especially those facing gender issues, will be devastated by the social engineering programming of those "wise in their own eyes." Those convinced to have sex change operations (no other counseling is allowed) are 20 times more likely to commit suicide.

You can call evil good and you can call male female, but in the end we are what we are and no amount of social engineering or double talk will change that fact.

These are our children, our heritage and our birthright. Time to say "over my martyred body will we allow you to destroy our kids and their future."

Stuart Dick
Irrigon

Be heard!
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