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OUR VIEW

Your vote can change the world

We can learn something from Britain, which this week shocked the world by voting to leave the European Union.

It's a reminder that our votes mean a lot, and in a democracy it is the public that has the power. It's always good to remind the government and the elites of that fact — but it's also good to remind ourselves.

When we wield our votes as punishment or protest, we must be careful who we aim at. When we try to punish the government and its institutions, we often punish ourselves as well.

Perhaps leaving the European Union will be a good thing for Britain. More likely, it will cause years of protracted disentangling that will leave it isolated and the European Union weakened.

It's no wonder the Donald Trumps and Vladimir Putins of the world cheered the vote. When powerful but clearly flawed democratic institutions weaken, authoritarians look to fill in the vacuum.

It seems clear that Scotland will soon leave the United Kingdom (and join the EU) and ever more likely that Ireland will unify, leaving

England and Wales a decidedly minor player on the world scene. That's to the detriment of the United States, Europe and defenders of democracy everywhere.

The European Union is a bureaucratic tangle, but you cannot argue that Europe has ever been richer or more peaceful during the last 50 years.

Yet this country, the good old U.S.A., made our Brexit a long time ago — way back in 1776 — when we eschewed rule from afar for local control.

It worked out well for the United States. The future of the "United States of

Europe" is in doubt.

For now, we must let the machinations of the global political and economic systems play out, and let John Maynard Keynes and Winston Churchill roll in their graves.

But looking toward November, we can learn a lesson. A vote is a powerful thing that can change the course of nations and the world.

As German-American journalist H.L. Mencken put it in the last century, "Democracy is the theory that the common people know what they want, and deserve to get it good and hard."

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OTHER VIEWS

Legislature continues to add business regulations

The Oregonian/OregonLive

State lawmakers have thrown a lot at Oregon businesses lately. Last year, they required all but the smallest businesses to provide paid sick leave to employees. Earlier this year, they hiked the state's minimum wage, which already was among the nation's highest. Looming on the horizon, meanwhile, is a public vote on a tax hike that would cost big businesses — and small businesses and consumers, too — billions of dollars every year.

Having been forced to swallow so much so quickly — and in anticipation of a potential megatax — you can understand the fear with which businesses look forward to the 2017 legislative session and the possible consideration of additional mandates. Of particular concern to many is something called predictive scheduling. Never heard of it? You will.

Generally speaking, predictive scheduling refers to regulations that compel businesses to provide greater certainty about the hours their employees are expected to work. The movement springs from a desire to help people for whom last-minute shift adjustments present big problems: parents struggling with child care, students with rigid class schedules, people with second jobs, and so on. But good intentions don't necessarily lead to good policy, as numerous business groups explained to lawmakers considering predictive-scheduling legislation last year.

One of last year's proposals, House Bill 3377, received a public hearing and work session before dying in committee. Among other things, it would have penalized employers for adjusting

schedules less than three weeks in advance. For each shift changed, a business would have had to pay an employee for one additional hour in addition to the compensation for time worked. And for each shift changed with less than 24 hours' notice, a business would have had to pay an employee for four extra hours in addition to the compensation for time worked.

Certain kinds of businesses are more prone to such uncertainty than others, and the consequences for employees, as unpleasant as they may be, aren't necessarily the result of insensitive management.

HB3377 did go belly up, fortunately, but the push for predictive scheduling did not. Rather, lawmakers hit "pause."

A work group on "schedules that work," led by Sen. Michael Dembrow, D-Portland, and Rep. Paul Holvey, D-Eugene, met for the first time late last month. Business groups quickly dropped out. They also alluded to the recent piling on of mandates, including the minimum wage, paid sick leave and an employee retirement program. Saying they simply couldn't take any more, the industry groups said they'd ask lawmakers to extend the 2015 pre-emption of local work-schedule requirements. Lawmakers should do so.

The Legislature has not been particularly sympathetic to businesses in recent years, to be sure. But that's exactly why it should be now. Pushing any discussion of predictive scheduling to 2019, or later, will give businesses a chance to adjust both to recent mandates and to whatever response November's vote on Initiative Petition 28 requires. To press on in 2017, on the other hand, will do more harm to employers — and, inevitably, to their employees.



OTHER VIEWS

At the edge of inside

In any organization there are some people who serve at the core. These insiders are in the rooms when the decisions are made. Hillary Clinton, for example, is now at the core of the Democratic Party.

Then there are outsiders. They throw missiles from beyond the walls. They are untouched by internal loyalties and try to take over from without. Donald Trump is a Republican outsider.

But there's also a third position in any organization: those who are at the edge of the inside. These people are within the organization, but they're not subsumed by the group think. They work at the boundaries, bridges and entraceways. Sen. Lindsey Graham, for example, is sometimes on the edge of the inside of the GOP.

I borrow this concept from Richard Rohr, a Franciscan priest who lives in Albuquerque. His point is that people who live at the edge of the inside have crucial roles to play. As he writes in his pamphlet "The Eight Core Principles," when you live on the edge of any group, "you are free from its central seductions, but also free to hear its core message in very new and creative ways."

A person at the edge of inside can see what's good about the group and what's good about rival groups. Rohr writes, "A doorkeeper must love both the inside and the outside of his or her group, and know how to move between these two loves."

A person at the edge of inside can be the strongest reformer. This person has the loyalty of a faithful insider but the judgment of the critical outsider. Martin Luther King Jr. had an authentic inner experience of what it meant to be American. This love allowed him to critique America from the values he learned from America. He could be utterly relentless in bringing America back closer to herself precisely because his devotion to American ideals was so fervent.

A person on the edge of the inside knows how to take advantage of the standards and practices of an organization but not be imprisoned by them. Rohr writes, "You have learned the rules well enough to know how to 'break the rules properly,' which is not really to break them at all, but to find their true purpose: 'not to abolish the law but to complete it.'"

When the behavioral economist Richard Thaler uses the lessons of psychology to improve economic modeling, he is operating



DAVID BROOKS
Comment

just inside the edge of his own discipline and making it better.

The person on the edge of inside is involved in constant change. The true insiders are so deep inside they often get confused by trivia and locked into the status quo. The outsider is throwing bombs and dreaming of far-off transformational revolution. But the person at the doorway is seeing constant comings and goings. As Rohr says, she is involved in a process of perpetual transformation, not a belonging system. She is more interested in being a searcher than a settler.

Insiders and outsiders are threatened by those on the other side of the barrier. But a person on the edge of inside neither idolizes the Us nor demonizes the Them. Such a person sees different groups as partners in a reality that is paradoxical, complementary and unfolding.

There are downsides to being at the edge of inside. You never lose yourself in a full commitment. You may be respected and befriended, but you are not loved as completely as the people at the core, the band of

brothers. You enjoy neither the purity of the outsider nor that of the true believer. But the person on the edge of inside can see reality clearly. The insiders and the outsiders tend to think in dualistic ways: us versus them; this or that. But, as Rohr would say, the beginning of wisdom is to fight the natural tendency to be dualistic; it is to fight the natural ego of the group. The person on the edge of inside is more likely to see the wholeness of any situation. To see how us and them, which seem superficially opposed, are actually in complementary relationship within some larger process.

Lincoln could see the divisions between North and South, but in his second inaugural he transcended these divisions and saw both North and South as actors and partners in a larger human drama.

When people are afraid or defensive, they have no tolerance for the person at the edge of inside. They want purity, rigid loyalty and lock-step unity. But now more than ever we need people who have the courage to live on the edge of inside, who love their parties and organizations so much that they can critique them as a brother, operate on them from the inside as a friend and dauntlessly insist that they live up to their truest selves.

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

YOUR VIEWS

Don't let tragedy make you numb —take positive action

There is so much tragedy in our world today. We constantly see it in the news, and cannot escape it. Worldwide, innocent people are killed on a daily basis. The events in Orlando are truly devastating. Locally, a woman was recently killed by her husband, another was stabbed when she stopped at the rest area, and the list goes on. At times I want to throw my hands in the air and give up because I feel like there is nothing I can do to stop the madness.

It is tempting to tune out all of this tragedy. Then some bad news hit me right between the eyes, so close to home. The death of an innocent baby belonging to a girl my kids had gone to school with. The young father arrested, with charges of murder. Could anything have been done to prevent it? As a society, what are we doing to counteract such tragedies?

There are local programs in place to

offer support to struggling families. One such program is Pregnancy Care Services with locations in Pendleton and Hermiston. The help goes way beyond a one-time visit and a free pregnancy test. Education, encouragement, and emotional support are offered to each client.

People have the opportunity to earn maternity clothes, diapers, car seats and other baby necessities while learning parenting skills, and getting the encouragement they need to succeed in parenting (all at no cost to them). It is possible that the death of the baby could have been prevented had the young family been involved in a care program like the one Pregnancy Care Services offers.

When you hear bad news, don't let it make you numb. Instead, may you be kicked into action. Find the local programs in your town and get involved. If there is no program, help get one started.

Sara Taylor, Pendleton PCS Director
Athena

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.

Correction

The June 23 "Tips and kicks" editorial had the incorrect date of a Union Pacific diesel train leak near Troutdale. The 300-gallon leak was Tuesday and it is not known that any diesel leaked into the water table. If you notice a mistake in the paper, please call 541-966-0818.