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OUR VIEW

What the parties mean for farmers

The two major political parties have approved their 2016 platforms.

While presidential candidates of both stripes have in the past freely diverged from specific points in their party's platform — and we would expect the same of Hillary Clinton and Donald Trump — the documents provide a point for comparison of the policy priorities of each party.

Have a look.

Each party promises to protect and advance the interests of farmers.

The GOP

says it will change capital gains and estate tax laws to ensure farms can stay in the family. Republicans favor ending direct payment programs in favor of risk-management programs, such as crop insurance.

Democrats promise unspecified programs to “protect and enhance family farms, a cherished way of life....” Democrats say they’ll do more to support young farmers and ranchers, and will promote “environmentally sustainable agricultural practices.” It favors a “focused” safety net for farmers.

Republicans say they want to rein in the Environmental Protection Agency. The platform demands “an end to the EPA’s participation in ‘sue and settle’ lawsuits, sweetheart litigation brought by environmental groups to expand the Agency’s regulatory activities against the wishes of Congress and the public.” It supports legislation giving the states a larger role in protecting the environment.

Democrats take note of EPA programs, particularly the Agricultural Worker Protection Standard, but say more needs to be done. The Democrats want to enlist farmers as “partners in promoting conservation and stewardship.” Republicans want regulators to shift from punitive enforcement to “a

spirit of cooperation” with producers, processors and the public.

The Democrats promise more and stronger regulation on just about every front. The GOP says it will reduce government regulation, and wants Congress to approve any regulation that will cost consumers more than \$100 million.

The Democrats oppose any attempt to “weaken” the Endangered Species Act. Republicans want to block attempts by the EPA and the Corps of Engineers to “expand jurisdiction over water, including water that is clearly not navigable.”

The Democrats’ platform wants to expand access to public lands, and at the same time “strengthen protections for natural and cultural resources.” It supports the creation of a trust fund to expand outdoor recreational opportunities. The Democrats want to create more jobs and billions of dollars in activity by doubling the size of the “outdoor economy.”

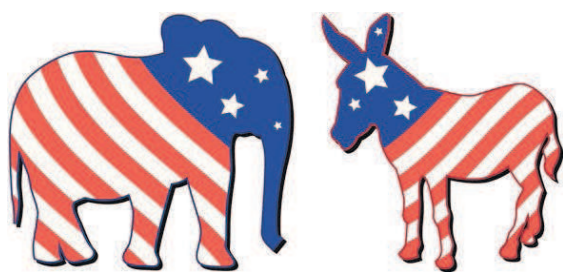
Republicans want Congress to explore transferring to ranchers, timbermen and miners some public land, arguing that private owners are the best stewards of the land because conservation serves their economic interests. It favors maximizing timber harvest on public land.

We think the GOP platform is better for farmers and ranchers. But we urge caution.

Platforms are gauzy documents long on ideology and short on specifics. They are points of departure for candidates up and down the ticket who are free to put their spin on policy.

By what mechanics will either party deliver its vision?

Details are important. Even ideas we agree with can turn sour if they are realized through objectionable means.



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.



OTHER VIEWS

Incandescent with rage

No one need ask me anymore about how to heal the racial divide in America. No one need inquire about the path forward beyond racial strife. You will not be put at ease by my response.

James Baldwin once said, “To be a Negro in this country and to be relatively conscious, is to be in a rage almost all the time.” Well, I am now incandescent with rage and at my wits’ end about how to responsibly aim it and morally marshal it.

I am at the screaming place.

Following three acquittals of officers in the death of Freddie Gray — which was ruled a homicide by the medical examiner! — Baltimore prosecutors on Wednesday dropped all remaining charges against the other officers awaiting trial.

Yet another black man’s body broken without anyone’s being called to account, another soul lingering on the other side of the grave without justice on this side of the living. No officer has been convicted in the deaths of Michael Brown, Eric Garner, John Crawford III, Tanisha Anderson, Tamir Rice, Sandra Bland and dozens more. Indeed, according to Mapping Police Violence, “only 10 of the 102 cases in 2015 where an unarmed black person was killed by police resulted in officer(s) being charged with a crime, and only 2 of these deaths (Matthew Ajibade and Eric Harris) resulted in convictions of officers involved.”

What are we to make of this? What are we to take from it?

In other killings — whether they be domestic or inter-community or directed at law enforcement officers — no matter how tragic the circumstances, or perhaps because of the tragedy, the full force of the law is brought to bear, and we can point to a track record of justice, at least to some degree.

But not in these cases.

Into what frame am I supposed to position this to make it palatable? How can I wrap my head around it in a way to make it rational and right?

It is impossible, and indeed unreasonable, to expect me to do so. I deserve to be angry. I deserve to survey the system that thrusts so many officers and black and brown people into contact in the first place, and be disgusted. I deserve to examine the biases that are exposed in officer/citizen encounters, and be disgusted. I deserve to take account of an utterly racially biased criminal justice system, and be disgusted.

America’s streets are filled with cries of “black lives matter,” and America continues to insist through its actions in these cases that they don’t, that that is a lamentation of hopeful



CHARLES BLOW
Comment

ideals rather than a recitation of a national reality.

My fingers ache as I type this. I want to pound this keyboard. I want to delete until all the characters disappear, to make the pain of it simply vanish behind a retreating cursor, but it’s just not that easy. These words are all I have left. This agony pouring out of me onto the screen is all I have.

And I take no solace in the lip service generated by politicians and their parties to rectify this situation.

I have been to two national party conventions in as many weeks and with everything I hear, my cynicism grows.

Last week in Cleveland, the Republican Party delivered an unabashed affront to the movement for black lives as it took every opportunity to diminish black loss, as if there was an inherent conflict between valuing police lives and valuing the lives of the black and brown people who are policed. Donald Trump himself delivered a heavily coded speech in which he repeatedly asserted that he would be the “law and order” candidate, but never spoke of the equally important issue of imposing some order on the law.

The Democratic convention has been different and better in many ways — particularly about elevating the issue and using proper language — but even here I remain leery of empty platitudes over actual policies.

The Mothers of the Movement — black women who have lost children to gun violence — took the stage on Tuesday night and delivered a powerful and moving address to those in the hall and across America. But even this makes me a bit uneasy.

While I applaud and commend the mothers for taking every opportunity to campaign for justice for their children and to champion policies that would prevent other mothers from ever being thrust into their position, I’m also incredibly aware of the usury nature of politicians and how they try to politicize other people’s pain for their own self-aggrandizement.

Justice doesn’t live on the left or right side of the ideological spectrum. Justice lives on the side of righteousness.

I am exhausted. I am repulsed. I am over all the circular dialogue. But I don’t know precisely where that leaves me other than in a hurt and festering place. America is edging ever closer to telling people like me that the eye of justice isn’t blind but jaundiced, and I say back to America, that is incredibly dangerous.

Charles M. Blow is *The New York Times*’s visual Op-Ed columnist. His column appears in *The Times* on Saturday.

YOUR VIEWS

Farm thieves should consider a day’s work

The last time I wrote a letter to the editor was about three years ago after someone stole hay from my 17-year-old son’s hay stack. Here I am again condemning the behavior of yet another thief.

Attempting to complete another wheat harvest, littered with equipment breakdowns, low commodity prices and long hours, my husband and son arrived at their field to find that during the night someone siphoned all of the diesel from their combine and truck and helped themselves to all of the fire extinguishers, tools and CB radios. It wasn’t bad enough that they stole the items, they had to break things in the process. Instead of putting to use the tools that they obviously had and undoing the radios, they cut wires and yanked things loose making more work for us in the long run. Thank you!

To the thieves who feel the need to steal your living from hardworking people, if you needed the supplies to sell in order to feed your family or pay your rent, I can sympathize with that. Instead of lurking around during the evening hours, maybe you should come back to those farmers during the day and ask for a job. Most farmers have fences that need to be repaired or weeds needing to be hoed. You

might find some satisfaction in making an honorable living.

If you are taking the items to subsidize a drug habit, maybe putting in a long day’s work, where at the end of the day you are like most farmers, too exhausted to even eat, you wouldn’t feel the need to smoke, snort or inject your life away.

Cindy Wood Adams

Luxury or efficiency in our new fire station?

Why does Pendleton need an \$8 million firehouse? Short answer: “It doesn’t.” When economical times are at their worst our town’s leadership fails us every time.

The report done says, if built at old St. Anthony, we will lose 23 seconds of response time. That very report also indicates the old St. Anthony is a bad choice because of that very reason.

For a town this size we don’t need an \$8 million fire station, again on the backs of taxpayers. A modest fire station built at the old cinema is the only way a new fire station could be justified in Pendleton’s economic condition. There are plenty of places for fire training and plenty of places to build that won’t take 23 seconds of response time away.

This says it all: “Fire Chief Mike

Ciraulo pointed out that while the Pendleton Cinema site was slightly cheaper to develop and would generate faster response times, the St. Anthony site had more room for training and parking.” So training and parking are more important than price and response time? This is ludicrous! Remember, the fire station can train at any location. It does not have to be on site.

Their plan to build a two-story fire station on six acres is ridiculous for what Pendleton needs. Read the McKenzie report — it was designed to persuade and not enlighten. If you don’t want to read the whole ridiculous thing then just skip down to where they grade each of the sites. They give the old St. Anthony site the highest grade for building. You will find that the report is deceiving. The most important thing a fire station needs (response time) graded the lowest for that site.

Of course, all the silly things got a high score, making the old St. Anthony site seem like the obvious choice. You will soon see that this site was picked for luxury and not for the city’s best interest. As a matter of fact, it is highly plausibly a dangerous place to build. Twenty-three seconds of burn time has serious implications and is a reckless decision.

Vote no next May on this absurd fire station plan, and let our leaders

learn a little self-discipline with our money and pick a more modest and comprehensively designed fire station at a location that better fits Pendleton’s needs! This time it’s our choice!

Chris Hallos Pendleton

Montez a headliner, not an afterthought

On Tuesday I attended a Hermiston Chamber of Commerce lunch at McKenzie park. I would like to first commend the Umatilla County Fair court for doing such a good job announcing the events of the Umatilla County Fair.

I would, however, like to make one minor, but I believe important, critique. The headliner music events of most of the days of the fair were announced by name. On Friday, however, we were told only that a “traditional cultural event” would take place.

That “traditional cultural event”

was none other than Montez de Durango. “Traditional cultural event” is a lame way to refer to the boys behind the 2007 smash hit “Lagrimas del Corazon.” In fact, Montez probably brings in more money every year than all of the other groups mentioned put together.

If CCR minus John Fogerty, “Creedence Clearwater Revisited,” deserves to be mentioned by name, how much more does a group of international fame like Montez?

This omission seems to be part of an underlying attitude of self-discrimination by Latino and Anglo culture in this area. The fair court might have well said that “on Friday, the Mexicans will be doing their thing, don’t worry about it, show up for Saturday to see CCR without John Fogerty.” If the Umatilla County Fair is going to pay to bring a well-known group like Montez, the least the fair royalty could do is mention them by name.

Blaise MacPherson Irrigon

LETTERS POLICY

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