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OUR VIEW

Neither Trump
nor Clinton offer
Plan B on TPP

Hillary Clinton and Donald Trump are running for president. Their expressed positions on issues, and the positions of their respective party platforms, are easily distinguishable.

Except for trade, where there's not much difference between Republican or Democrat standard bearers. If farmers and ranchers were to decide on this issue alone, they would have a hard time picking the candidate who best represents their interests.

Trade is the lifeblood of agriculture in the Northwest and California. Everything from apples to nuts is dependent on trade. Eighty percent of the wheat grown in the Northwest is bound for Asian markets. Without access to those markets, producers are finished.

Both sides are for trade — fair trade. And by that they mean trade that doesn't cheat middle class Americans out of good-paying jobs. Democrats are also concerned with foreign labor standards and environmental regulation. Republicans want our partners to respect American intellectual property and stop manipulating their currencies.

By those standards, they all say, many previous deals have been very bad. And the recently submitted Trans-Pacific Partnership — a 12-nation, 6,000-page behemoth awaiting a vote in Congress — could be the worst.

Clinton once called TPP the "gold standard" of trade deals, but last fall after the deal was written Clinton said it didn't meet her standard. Sen. Tim Kaine, her running mate, was for it as recently as a week before being nominated for the vice president slot, when he promptly

came out against the pact.

Trump has always been against TPP, calling it "terrible for America." Though China isn't a party to TPP, Trump says it gives China opportunities to get in "through the back door." As governor of Indiana and a congressman before that, Mike Pence, Trump's running mate, has long supported multi-nation trade deals — including TPP. He too underwent a post-convention conversion.

There have been many trade deals over the years. Some of them good, some of them bad. Even in the best, someone in the United States loses as other of their countrymen win.

And it is thus with the TPP. In granting access to its market to our farmers, Vietnam will expect more favorable terms for its manufactured goods here. What country would make a deal in which it received nothing in exchange for its concessions?

Without TPP, what's Plan B? Both Clinton and Trump say they'll reopen the negotiations on TPP and other pacts and get a better deal for America. Maybe, but those kinds of negotiations take time. In the meantime, some of our toughest competitors could get a toehold in some of our best markets in Asia.

Supporters of TPP, including President Obama, are still pushing for a vote on the deal — perhaps after the election and before the inauguration, when everyone will be protected from the voters.

That's a little sleazy. But, better to have a deal in hand for the next president to tweak than allow our competitors months — and potentially years — to exploit our lack of favored standing with established customers.

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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

Governor Brown's union ties cloud judgment on economic issues

The (La Grande) Observer

Discouraging. That is the most apt word to describe Gov. Kate Brown's announcement Thursday she supports a ballot measure designed to tax firms in Oregon that generate more than \$25 million a year.

The initiative is now known collectively as IP 28 but when it reaches the ballot for voter consideration in November it will be dubbed Measure 97.

The rationale behind Measure 97 is a simple one and also one that casts a wide populist net. The measure will change the current minimum tax on C-corporations in Oregon. The plan would levy a 2.5 percent tax on corporations that generate sales in excess of \$25 million a year.

Advocates of the proposal assert — among a host of things — a kind of self-styled populist rhetoric whereby only huge, out-of-state owned firms will be forced to pay. After all, the theory goes, these megalithic firms are out-of-state intruders anyway, and they don't pay enough to begin with. So let's tax them and make them pay their fair share.

Sounds like a pretty good populist argument. The only problem with this theory is that it fails to take into consideration several important factors that have nothing to do with rhetoric but are actually based on reality.

First, supporters of the measure contend that the money accumulated

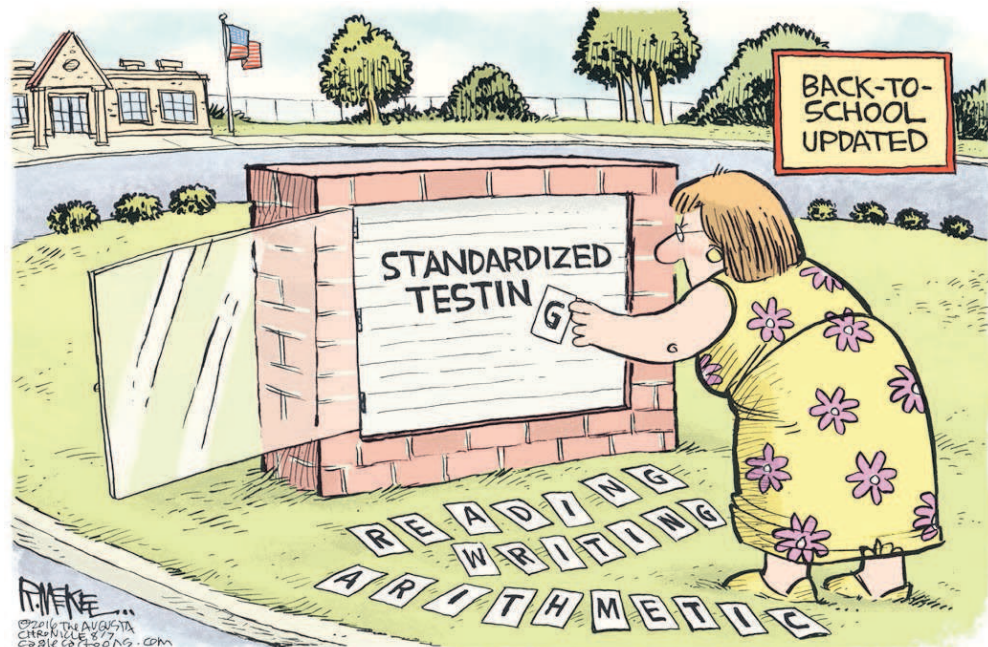
by it will be directed toward education, health care and senior services. Again, that sounds pretty good. Yet, again, that isn't necessarily true because the Legislature could rework the law to spend the money somewhere else.

Unless the governor has somehow forgotten that we live in a democracy, what the Legislature does or does not do is something she has no control over.

The very way the tax initiative is being sold should also be troubling to legislators and those who actually believe in the three-tiered American system — legislative, judicial and executive branches — as a viable method. That's because this tax hike — configured to hit big business — isn't going through a legislative vetting process. It isn't going to face debate in the House or the Senate.

Most troubling, though, is that the proposed tax boost most likely will not be a hit big firms will simply shrug off. Nope, they will either leave the state, lay off workers or — and this is more likely — pass the extra costs onto consumers. That is, you and me. Plus, in an economically struggling area such as Eastern Oregon, such a measure will simply be one more reason for a large corporation to go somewhere else.

Brown made a bad judgment on this one. It is a discouraging move and unfortunately shows that the governor may regard her ties to public unions as more important than the future economic health of the state.



OTHER VIEWS

The great affluence fallacy

In 18th-century America, colonial society and Native American society sat side by side. The former was buddingly commercial; the latter was communal and tribal. As time went by, the settlers from Europe noticed something: No Indians were defecting to join colonial society, but many whites were defecting to live in the Native American one.

This struck them as strange. Colonial society was richer and more advanced. And yet people were voting with their feet the other way.

The colonials occasionally tried to welcome Native American children into their midst, but they couldn't persuade them to stay. Benjamin Franklin observed the phenomenon in 1753, writing, "When an Indian child has been brought up among us, taught our language and habituated to our customs, yet if he goes to see his relations and make one Indian ramble with them, there is no persuading him ever to return."

During the wars with the Indians, many European settlers were taken prisoner and held within Indian tribes. After a while, they had plenty of chances to escape and return, and yet they did not. In fact, when they were "rescued," they fled and hid from their rescuers.

Sometimes the Indians tried to forcibly return the colonials in a prisoner swap, and still the colonials refused to go. In one case, the Shawanese Indians were compelled to tie up some European women in order to ship them back. After they were returned, the women escaped the colonial towns and ran back to the Indians.

Even as late as 1782, the pattern was still going strong. Hector de Crèvecoeur wrote, "Thousands of Europeans are Indians, and we have no examples of even one of those aborigines having from choice become European."

I first read about this history several months ago in Sebastian Junger's excellent book "Tribe." It has haunted me since. It raises the possibility that our culture is built on some fundamental error about what makes people happy and fulfilled.

The native cultures were more communal. As Junger writes, "They would have practiced extremely close and involved child care. And they would have done almost everything in the company of others. They would have almost never been alone."

If Colonial culture was relatively atomized, imagine American culture of today. As we've gotten richer, we've used wealth to buy space: bigger homes, bigger yards, separate bedrooms, private cars, autonomous lifestyles. Each individual choice makes sense, but the overall atomizing trajectory sometimes seems to backfire. According to the World Health Organization, people in wealthy countries

DAVID BROOKS
Comment

suffer depression by as much as eight times the rate as people in poor countries.

There might be a Great Affluence Fallacy going on — we want privacy in individual instances, but often this makes life generally worse.

Every generation faces the challenge of how to reconcile freedom and community — "On the Road" versus "It's a Wonderful Life." But I'm not sure any generation has faced it as acutely as millennials.

In the great American tradition, millennials would like to have their cake and eat it, too. A few years ago, Macklemore and Ryan Lewis came out with a song called "Can't Hold Us," which contained the couplet: "We came here to live life like nobody was watching/I got

my city right behind me, if I fall, they got me." In the first line they want complete autonomy; in the second, complete community.

But, of course, you can't really have both in pure form. If millennials are heading anywhere, it seems to be in the direction of community. Politically, millennials have been drawn to the class solidarity of the Bernie Sanders campaign. Hillary Clinton — secretive and a wall-builder — is the quintessence of boomer

autonomy. She has trouble with younger voters.

Professionally, millennials are famous for bringing their whole self to work: turning the office into a source of friendships, meaning and social occasions.

I'm meeting more millennials who embrace the mentality expressed in the book "The Abundant Community," by John McKnight and Peter Block. The authors are notably hostile to consumerism.

They are anti-institutional and anti-systems. "Our institutions can offer only service — not care — for care is the freely given commitment from the heart of one to another," they write.

Millennials are oriented around neighborhood hospitality, rather than national identity or the borderless digital world. "A neighborhood is the place where you live and sleep." How many of your physical neighbors know your name?

Maybe we're on the cusp of some great cracking. Instead of just paying lip service to community while living for autonomy, I get the sense a lot of people are actually about to make the break and immerse themselves in demanding local community movements. It wouldn't surprise me if the big change in the coming decades were this: an end to the apotheosis of freedom; more people making the modern equivalent of the Native American leap.

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

YOUR VIEWS

EOTEC project should be praised, not criticized

In its Saturday editorial, the *East Oregonian* editors lament this will be the last Umatilla County Fair held at the old fairgrounds in the middle of Hermiston. Although acknowledging the fair is too big for its downtown location, the editors then excoriate EOTEC for "mismanagement, missed deadlines and cost overruns."

As usual, the *EO* editors sadly miss the mark. Rather than damning EOTEC, they should praise it, Umatilla County and the city of Hermiston for their vision, guts and hard work to provide a new home for the fair and rodeo and a new events center. While there have been delays and money shortages, that is to be expected with a project of this scope and complexity. They are going where no one has gone before. It's difficult and there are no road maps.

To build the facility, EOTEC has assembled \$16 million for the build — largely state and federal money and private donations. In fact they raised almost \$2 million in private money in the four months immediately after a long *East Oregonian* editorial dissing EOTEC and ridiculed its fundraising effort as begging

for charity. Apparently no one heeded the editorial.

The editors conveniently overlook the county study that found it would have taken \$8 million of basic infrastructure improvements to keep the fair at its present location — money the county did not have and that, if expended, would have still left us with decrepit, unsafe and code-violating buildings, no parking and no room.

And if you question the need for improvements to the existing fair infrastructure, you should go to the fairgrounds early in the morning this week. Each day a sewage pumper truck arrives to pump the sewage lines under the fairgrounds. They don't drain.

While we will all miss the old fairgrounds and the memories, its time has passed, and we are fortunate for the vision and work of the EOTEC board, Umatilla County and the city of Hermiston to move the fair and build EOTEC.

Shame on the *East Oregonian* editors for not once acknowledging or praising these visionaries or their efforts. Not once in six years.

George Anderson
Hermiston

LETTERS POLICY

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