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OUR VIEW

Report on women should serve as a call to action

In a state that makes efforts that go a long way to helping others in need, it has a long way to go in helping raise the status and equality for women who live within its borders.

That's the urgent wakeup call that the "Count Her In" report delivers in what is the first comprehensive look at the status of Oregon women and girls in nearly two decades. The 120-page report comes from the new Women's Foundation of Oregon and was released to state officials this past Wednesday in Salem, ironically a day before American Business Women's Day.

The findings in the study are both stark and grim. The last comprehensive report on the status of Oregon women and girls came out in 1998 and relied on census data from 1990. Much was different then, and much has changed.

The material for the "Count Her In" report, which one legislator described as "really top-notch work," was gathered from surveys, interviews and federal and state reports. It reflects the harsh daily circumstances facing Oregon women in nearly every walk of life:

- Women in Oregon have the nation's highest rates of reported depression and heavy alcohol use.
- Federal surveys found that nearly half the women and girls in Oregon have suffered domestic or sexual violence.
- Census numbers show women across the state earn less than men, and the wage gap is even wider

for women of color. In Umatilla County, women make \$0.77 for every dollar a male counterpart makes, while in Morrow County that figure is \$0.72.

• Oregon is one of the least affordable states in the nation for working mothers to care for children. In Umatilla and Morrow counties, there are fewer than 14 child care slots per 100 children, the lowest rate in the state.

• Elected and appointed leaders also skew heavily toward men, with 30 percent of those positions statewide filled by women and only 20 percent in Umatilla County.

Clearly, the report illustrates serious problems Oregon women face every day.

Emily Evans, director of the Women's Foundation in Oregon, put out a call to action that policymakers and all Oregonians should heed, saying "... there is something hopeful about finally knowing the full measure of the problem. Then we can move past the speculation of whether it is a problem and move toward creating solutions together."

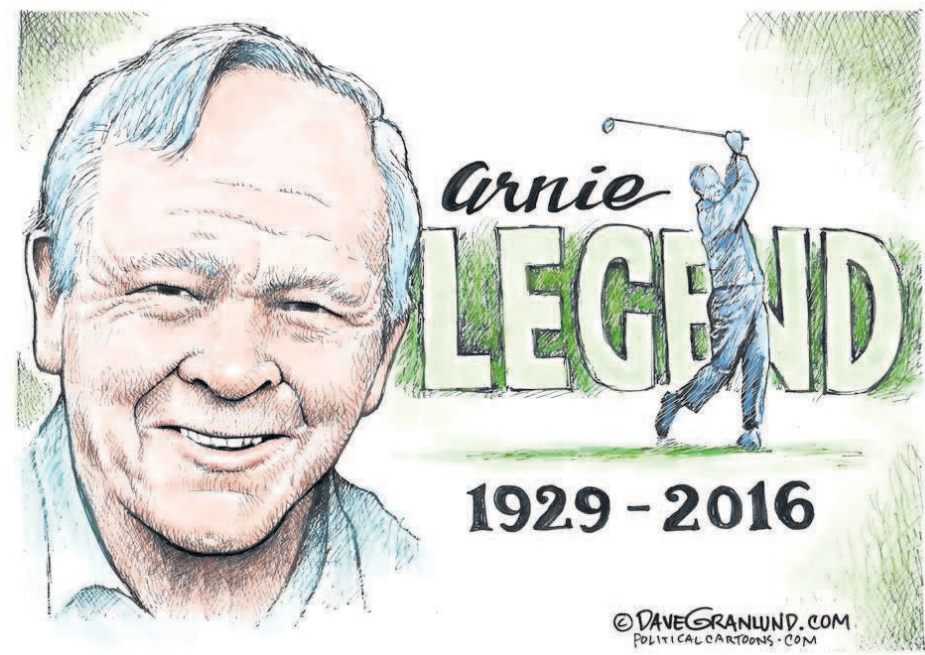
State Rep. Knute Buehler, R-Bend, is already on board.

"Good policy will be produced from such great foundational efforts," he said.

Other lawmakers and leaders throughout the private sector need to get on board as well. If Oregon wants to live up to its reputation for progressive values, the "Count Her In" report presents the challenge to uphold those ideals.

Women in Oregon have the nation's highest rates of reported depression and heavy alcohol use.

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

American epidemic, American consent

Another set of black men killed by the police — one in Tulsa, Oklahoma, another in Charlotte, North Carolina.

Another set of protests, and even some rioting.

Another television cycle in which the pornography of black death, pain and anguish are exploited for visual sensation and ratings gold.

And yes, another moment of mistakenly focusing on individual cases and individual motives and individual protests instead of recognizing that what we are witnessing in a wave of actions rippling across the country is an exhaling — a primal scream, I would venture — of cumulative cultural injury and a frantic attempt to stanch the bleeding from multiplying wounds.

We can no longer afford to buy into the delusion that this moment of turmoil is about discrete cases or their specific disposition under the law. The system of justice itself is under interrogation. The cultural mechanisms that produced that system are under interrogation. America as a whole is under interrogation.

We are in a new age in which the shroud has slipped and trauma has risen.

This is a video age, in which facts that were previously filtered through police accounts and media sources, that were previously whispered over shoulders at barbershops and across kitchen tables, have been buttressed by the immediacy and veracity of visual proof.

It is an age in which the language of resistance has been set and accepted, in which the mode of expression and resistance has been demonstrated and proved effective. It is an age of enlightenment and anger, of fear and frustration, of activism and alertness. Black America is beyond the breaking point, a point of no return.

And in this era, the discussion around these issues must be broad and deep because the actions required to address the problems must be broad and deep.

This moment in our nation's history is not about how individual fears are articulated — in an emergency call, in an officer's response, in weapons drawn and fired, in black people's desire to flee for their lives, in black parents' anxiety about the safety of their children. This moment is about the enormous, almost invisible structure that informs those fears — the way media and cultural presentations disproportionately display black people, and black men in particular, as dangerous and menacing and criminal.

It's about the way historical policies created our modern American ghettos and their concentrated poverty; the ways in which such concentrated poverty and its blight and hopelessness can be a prime breeding ground for criminal behavior; the way these areas make poverty sticky and opportunity scarce; the way resources, from education to health care to nutrition, are limited in these areas.

We keep talking about choices, but we



CHARLES BLOW
Comment

don't talk nearly enough about the fact that choices are always made within a cultural and historical context.

People didn't simply choose to live in neighborhoods with poor housing and poor schools and crumbling infrastructure and few grocery stores and fewer adequate health care facilities. There were many factors that created those neighborhoods: white flight, and the black flight of wealthier black people, community disinvestment, business lending

practices and government policies assigning infrastructure and public transportation to certain parts of cities and not others.

And the people living in those communities — sometimes trapped in those communities — make choices, sometimes poor ones, within that context.

We may say that a poor choice is simply wrong and the offending party must deal with the consequences. But poor choices made in a poor environment don't have the same consequences as those made in wealthy environments. For poor people, the same poor choices are punished more often and more severely, compounding their deficit.

Then America takes it further, imputing the poor choices of a few onto a whole race, and in so doing sets the stage for disaster. This creates the suspicion and fear that can lead to the deaths we're seeing, in which the person killed may have made no poor choices, in which the only poor choice was the pulling of a trigger.

This is what people mean when they talk about the impact of systemic racism in these cases and in these areas. It is not that the police harbor more racism than the rest of America, but rather that racism across society, including within our police departments and system of justice, has been erected in ways that disproportionately affect poor, minority communities. That is acutely clear in these killings.

What took centuries to grow may take a long time to fully chop down. You can't fight racism by plucking leaves from the top of the poisonous tree, but by taking an ax to the root.

Republican vice-presidential candidate Mike Pence said last week, "We ought to set aside this talk, this talk about institutional racism and institutional bias," calling it "rhetoric of division." That is exactly the opposite of what we should do.

The police are simply instruments of the state, and the state is the people who comprise it. The police are articulating a campaign of control and containment of populations and that campaign has the implicit approval of every citizen within their jurisdictions. This is not a rogue officer problem; this is a rogue society problem.

Charles M. Blow is The New York Times's visual Op-Ed columnist. Blow graduated magna cum laude from Grambling State University in Louisiana, where he received a B.A. in mass communications.

YOUR VIEWS

Horse acupuncture a bunch of hooley

It was with disappointment that I read the article "Needle in the neigh" (July 23-24, 2016). The subject of the article seemed like a great guy, has a great back story, and seems devoted to caring for animals.

However, my warm, fuzzy feeling for him disappeared when I read that, during veterinary school, he "was also fascinated to learn about equine and bovine acupuncture. ..." It served to remind me that not everyone with M.D., D.V.M. or Ph.D. after his name is a scientist, or even understands the scientific method and the role evidence plays in modern medicine.

Acupuncture, on both humans and animals, has been widely studied for decades, and the most that can be said of it is that it works as well as a placebo (that is, no treatment at all). In humans, about 30 percent of

subjects receiving acupuncture report that they feel "better" — the same percentage as subjects who received sham acupuncture, where no needles are actually inserted, but thought they got the real thing. These subjects feel better because they expect to feel better.

Animal acupuncture is even more dubious. Human "meridians" were overlaid onto animal diagrams, with no testing for validity.

For example, the standard horse acupuncture diagram shows gallbladder meridians; horses don't have gallbladders. The placebo effect works by proxy, too: Animal owners who have just paid to have needles stuck in their animals expect them to improve, and so that's what many of them see, even though the animals act the same as before.

I also take issue with Dr. Mannucci's claim that "there are some cases that don't respond to Western medicine," but do, supposedly, respond

to acupuncture. This is not an issue of "Western" medicine versus "Eastern." It is modern, evidence-based, science-based medicine versus pre-scientific pseudoscience.

For myself, my family, and my animals I'll choose modern medicine, which is rigorously tested, evaluated, and updated as needed, over pseudoscience any day. I'd invite Dr. Mannucci, as well as anyone else interested in science-based medicine, to read the blog at www.sciencebasedmedicine.org.

Bill Peckenpough
Inmate, EOCI
Pendleton

For neighborhood's sanity, let PAWS close

This letter is written in response to the letter from Ms. Iburg published on Sept. 21. In that letter, Ms. Iburg makes a request for funding from the county to prevent PAWS's closure.

As a Umatilla County taxpayer for more than 25 years, and homeowner within 100 feet of PAWS barking dogs, I object. PAWS has dogs in outside kennels between 9 a.m. to approximately 4 p.m., loudly barking seven days a week.

PAWS should never have been sited directly across the street from a residential area. The quality of life for residents of SE Goodwin Ave. has dramatically declined, from Main Street to SE Third St., because of PAWS dogs barking outside.

Now Ms. Iburg wants our

county funds to prevent the closure of PAWS even though PAWS provides care already duplicated in other shelters. If PAWS cannot remain open due to inadequate funding it should be allowed to close.

The closure of PAWS (at least for dogs) would return a previously quiet neighborhood to residents in close proximity who wish to keep up their homes and yards without the pervasive barking of multiple dogs 7 days a week for up to six hours a day.

Beth Brouillard
Pendleton

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 Managing Editor Daniel Wattenburger, 211 S.E. Byers Ave. Pendleton, OR 97801 or email editor@eastoregonian.com.