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KATHRYN B. BROWN
Publisher

DANIEL WATTENBURGER
Managing Editor

JANNA HEIMGARTNER
Business Office Manager

TIM TRAINOR
Opinion Page Editor

OUR VIEW

Support third parties for more choice on Election Day

More than 80 million Americans watched Monday's presidential debate, and perhaps many of them were unimpressed with the two candidates on display.

Certainly there was a tremendous gulf in their abilities — one could finish a sentence and a thought and the other could not. But judging by most polls, neither is a majority of Americans' cup of tea.

Why, in a nation of more than 300 million people, with just as many political ideologies and problems to solve, do only two Americans currently have a legitimate chance to be the next president of the United States?

This choose-between-two mentality has been the status quo in this country for more than a century and, we would argue, is a major reason for the divisiveness in Congress and at dinner tables across America.

When there are only two teams, it is only natural for them to play against each other. Like the yin and yang, their political ground is always changing but it's always leaving half of the people on the other side.

For our country's future, we should begin to break down that intractable divide by allowing more philosophies into government positions.

A simple way to start is by opening up the presidential debates to include more political parties.

Gary Johnson, the Libertarian candidate, was polling at about 8 percent before the debate, while Green Party candidate Jill Stein was at 3 percent.

Currently the Commission for Presidential Debates has a threshold for inclusion at 15 percent. That

means a presidential candidate must be polling at 15 percent just to get on the stage. The last third party candidate to do so was Ross Perot in 1992, who as head of the Reform Party collected nearly 19 percent of the national vote in the November election.

Undoubtedly, his sharing the stage with George H.W. Bush and Bill Clinton made Perot more of a household name, and helped him be taken seriously by the electorate.

In each and every election, polls show third party candidates with high poll numbers early on in the campaign, especially as each voter's candidate of choice is knocked out of the Democratic or Republican primary. Yet on election day, when it becomes clear no third party candidate has a chance to win the election, those numbers dip and again are cast aside as "wasted votes" — perpetuating two-party rule.

We should do better. The debate commission should reduce the barrier to entry to 10 percent — a realistic goal for the Libertarian and Green parties, and an aspirational goal for new parties that could crop up and toss a few ideas into the national conversation.

There are important reasons to limit the number of people on the debate stage. Donald Trump was able to disappear into his 17 rivals in the Republican primary when important policy questions were asked. But in a one-on-one debate, his ignorance could no longer be ignored.

Yet in most cases, with 3-4 people in the discussion, the number of policy ideas would increase and the number of voting options would too.

That's more freedom, right?

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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

Best practices for regulating marijuana

The (Medford) Mail Tribune

Oregon's foray into legalizing recreational marijuana has been a learning experience for everyone involved, not least for the state's many growers of medical marijuana, who had the luxury of operating with little oversight for years under Oregon's 18-year-old medical marijuana law. Those days are over.

That reality has been brought home once again after the state Land Use Board of Appeals upheld Jackson County's rules barring medical marijuana growing on land zoned rural residential. Growing for the recreational market was already off-limits in rural residential zones.

State law says medical marijuana may be grown on land outside cities. The problem is that Jackson County land-use rules prohibit agricultural operations on rural residential land. And by any definition, growing marijuana, whether for the medical or the recreational market, is agriculture.

A growers group called Right to Grow USA challenged the county rule, arguing that it jeopardized patients' access to medical marijuana, that it conflicted with the county's Comprehensive Plan and that it was unreasonable regulation and served no governmental purpose. LUBA rejected those arguments, noting that medical marijuana may be grown in exclusive farm use or forest zones.

LUBA correctly noted that preventing conflicts between farming and residential uses is a reasonable goal. No one is suggesting, for instance, that pig farms should be allowed in residential zones.

County officials also gave medical growers who have been operating since before 2014 in rural residential zones the option of applying to be grandfathered in, but relatively few have done so.

When voters approved legalizing recreational marijuana in 2014, federal law enforcement officials made it clear that Oregon must put a stop to black-market exports of marijuana to other states, much of it grown under the cover of the medical marijuana program, or federal authorities would step in. Lawmakers' attempts to regulate what had been a largely unregulated industry inevitably led to conflict with growers.

Certainly, there are medical growers who are not diverting their harvests to the black market, and who have no interest in growing for the recreational market. But they will have to learn to live with the new regulations, which are designed to work for everyone.

If existing growers in rural residential zones want to continue, they should apply to be grandfathered in. The fee for that application does seem steep at \$1,563, but county planning department fees have gone up across the board in response to tight budgets.

The new rules also require much more thorough record keeping and reporting, in an effort to account for the marijuana being produced in the state. Medical growers are understandably reluctant to submit to increased regulation, but they have little choice in the matter.

If they want to continue to produce medical marijuana, they will have to get used to complying with reasonable regulations just as any other business does.

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. Send letters to 211 S.E. Byers Ave. Pendleton, OR 97801 or email editor@eastoregonian.com.

OTHER VIEWS



"THIS MIC MAKES ME SOUND STUPID!"

Trump? How could we?

My reaction to the Donald Trump-Hillary Clinton debate can be summarized with one word: "How?"

How in the world do we put a man in the Oval Office who thinks NATO is a shopping mall where the tenants aren't paying enough rent to the U.S. landlord?

NATO is not a shopping mall; it is a strategic alliance that won the Cold War, keeps Europe a stable trading partner for U.S. companies and prevents every European country — particularly Germany — from getting their own nukes to counterbalance Russia, by sheltering them all under America's nuclear umbrella.

How do we put in the Oval Office a man who does not know enough "beef" about key policies to finish a two-minute answer on any issue without the hamburger helper of bluster, insults and repetition?

How do we put in the Oval Office a man who suggests that the recent spate of cyberattacks — which any senior U.S. intelligence official will tell you came without question from Russia — might not have come from Russia but could have been done by "somebody sitting on their bed that weighs 400 pounds?"

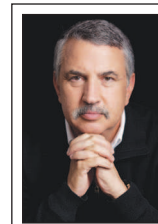
How do we put in the Oval Office a man who boasts that he tries to pay zero federal taxes but then complains that our airports and roads are falling apart and there is not enough money for our veterans?

How do we put in the Oval Office a man who tries to prove he was against the Iraq War — even though he publicly stated his support for it when it began — by saying he said so privately to his pal Sean Hannity at Fox News? Trump is so caught up with his own infallibility that he didn't think to respond in the debate: "Yes, I supported the Iraq War as a private citizen, but Hillary voted for it as a senator when she had all the intelligence and whose job it was to make the right judgment."

How do we put in the Oval Office someone who says we should not have gone into Iraq, but since we did, "we should have taken the oil — ISIS would not have been able to form ... because the oil was their primary source of income."

ISIS formed before it managed to pump any oil, and it sustained itself with millions of dollars that it stole from Iraq's central bank in Mosul. Meanwhile, Iraq has the world's fifth-largest oil reserves — 140 billion barrels. Can you imagine how many years we'd have to stay there to pump it all and how much doing so would tarnish our moral standing around the world and energize every jihadi?

How do we put in the Oval Office someone whose campaign manager has to go on every morning show after the debate and lie to try to make up for the nonsense her boss spouted? Kellyanne Conway told CNN on Tuesday morning that when it comes to climate change,



THOMAS FRIEDMAN
Comment

"We don't know what Hillary Clinton believes, because nobody ever asks her."

Say what? As secretary of state, Clinton backed every global climate negotiation and clean energy initiative. That's like saying no one knows Hillary's position on women's rights.

Conway then went on CNBC's "Squawk Box" and argued that Clinton, who was secretary of state from 2009 to 2013, had never created a job and was responsible for the lack of adequate "roads and bridges" in our country. When challenged on that by MGM Resorts' CEO, James Murren — who argued that his business was up, that the economy

was improving and that Clinton's job as secretary of state was to create stability — Conway responded that Clinton had nothing to do with any improvements in the economy because "she's never been president so she's created no financial stability."

I see: Everything wrong is Clinton's fault and anything good is to the president's credit alone. Silly.

The "Squawk Box" segment was devoted to the fact that while Trump claims that he will get the economy growing, very few CEOs of major

U.S. companies are supporting him. Also, interesting how positively the stock market reacted to Trump's debate defeat. Maybe because CEOs and investors know that Trump and Conway are con artists and that recent statistics show income gaps are actually narrowing, wages are rising and poverty is easing.

The Trump-Conway shtick is to trash the country so they can make us great again. Fact: We have problems and not everyone is enjoying the fruits of our economy, but if you want to be an optimist about America, stand on your head — the country looks so much better from the bottom up. What you see are towns and regions not waiting for Washington, D.C., but coming together themselves to fix infrastructure, education and governance. I see it everywhere I go.

I am not enamored of Clinton's stale, liberal, centralized view of politics, but she is sane and responsible; she'll do her homework, can grow in the job, and might even work well with Republicans, as she did as a senator.

Trump promises change, but change that comes from someone who thinks people who pay taxes are suckers and who thinks he can show up before an audience of 100 million without preparation or real plans and talk about serious issues with no more sophistication than your crazy uncle — and expect to get away with it — is change the country can't afford.

Electing such a man would be insanity.

Thomas L. Friedman won the 2002 Pulitzer Prize for commentary, his third Pulitzer for *The New York Times*.

YOUR VIEWS

Protect Owyhee Canyonlands from industrial development

I've spent 46 years chukar hunting, camping and fly fishing in Oregon's Owyhee Canyonlands. I always look forward to the wild beauty of the land and the wonderful abundance of wildlife it harbors.

But a new report from Oregon's Department of Geology and Mineral Industries found that there is high potential for mining lithium, bentonite, uranium, gold and other minerals throughout the Owyhee Canyonlands ("Report shows Malheur County rich with mining potential," *East Oregonian*, Sept. 15.)

This should have anyone who loves to hunt, camp and fish in the Owyhee concerned. The reason this area is so incredible for outdoor recreation is the large, intact landscape that still exists out there today. This vast sagebrush sea is what sustains both small and big critters alike as they migrate through this area, including a multitude of game birds like chukar and Huns, as well as mule deer, elk, and bighorn sheep. Mining and industrial development like oil and gas is a boom and bust industry, without long-term, sustainable growth.

To say nothing of impacting the "scarce" aquifer of the arid region. If industrial

development like mining takes place in the Owyhee, so will the roads, lights, noise, pollution and other developments that go along with it. Is the American public going to be held liable for pick up the cost of another potential Environmental Superfund debacle? Once this place is fragmented, chopped up, and polluted it's ruined — future generations will never ever get it back. It's a very fragile wild landscape that needs protection.

Oregon's Owyhee is too special to mine for kitty litter or minerals for the next iPhone.

For example, take a look at Succor Creek winding along the eastside of Highway 95 between Jordan Valley and Marsing, Idaho. This used to be a pristine red bank trout water before the deciduous earth mine was developed several years ago below the Succor Reservoir. Now it's a gray soup of a creek and basically unfishable.

There are no laws on the books today that stop this kind of misguided, destructive development from happening in the Owyhee. Only permanent protection guarantees that you and I, and the next generation of children can return to this special place year after year to hunt, fish and camp. The time to protect the Owyhee is now.

Drew Wahlin
Idaho Chukar Foundation president
Meridian, Idaho