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OUR VIEW

ODFW needs consistent state funding

Changes in social behavior and public financing will increasingly affect how we fund the Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife, and whether some of the Pacific Northwest's outdoor traditions are able to continue.

Our Capital Bureau reported last week that a task force charged with finding sustainable funding for ODFW is considering waiting on scheduled license fee increases.

It wants to see if the Legislature approves either an income tax surcharge or a surcharge on beverage containers to fund the department.

About a third of the agency's budget — roughly \$60 million a year — is generated by selling hunting and fishing licenses. State and federal funds account for two-thirds.

Like many other states, Oregon has experienced a gradual but inexorable decline in the number of people still interested in harvesting their own wild fish and game. And like other states, Oregon has partially offset this decline in participation by raising license fees on those who remain. This results in a cycle of less financially advantaged residents being squeezed out of hunting and fishing, along with those whose enthusiasm for rod and gun sports.

As much or perhaps more than other recreational activities, interest in hunting and fishing typically is established in childhood or not at all. ODFW and its peers around the nation have taken a variety of steps to encourage parents to get kids engaged in the outdoors, offering free or discounted license options, special events and other incentives. But if parents can't afford to go hunting or fishing themselves, it's unlikely their children will.

This leads to the kinds of internal struggles evidenced by the state's task force, which is reluctantly eying

two license fee increases — one in 2018 and another in 2020, with future increases indexed to inflation.

These increases come at the same time other hunting and fishing costs also are on the rise. In addition to the constant struggle to afford insurance and upkeep on vehicles and vessels, hunters in particular face steep increases in fees they must pay for access to many previously free forestlands.

If parents can't afford to go hunting or fishing themselves, it's unlikely their children will.

Weyerhaeuser and other corporations have been aggressively raising access fees — ostensibly as a way to pay for forest upkeep.

Why should the majority of citizens who neither fish nor hunt care about any of this? Many who enjoy nature

in ways that do not require licenses — everything from birdwatching to the satisfaction of knowing wild places exist — individually pay a few dollars in taxes a year to ODFW operations, as opposed to \$180 for a full combination adult license fee.

Oregon Public Broadcasting reported this week on the difficulties ODFW has in funding conservation measures for nongame species — everything from bats to frogs. Problems like this will get nothing but worse if hunting and fishing participation rates and license income continue to languish.

What can we do? Certainly support legislative efforts to establish a reliable safety net for ODFW funding. Other voluntary options already exist and are fully described at www.dfw.state.or.us. One of the easiest is buying \$20 habitat conservation stamps via the internet or at any location that sell fishing and hunting licenses.

If we care about Oregon wildlife — and surveys show we strongly do — we have to figure out new ways to pay for the vital work performed by Fish and Wildlife.

The real election winners



OTHER VIEWS

The post-familial election

How did we get here? How did it come to this? Not just to the Donald Trump phenomenon, but to the whole choice facing us Tuesday, in which a managerial liberalism and an authoritarian nationalism — two visions of the president as essentially a Great Protector: a feisty grandmother or fierce sky father — are contending for the votes of an ostensibly free people?

Start with the American family. Start with my own family, as an illustration — white Protestants for the most part on both sides with a few Irish newcomers mixed, rising and falling and migrating around in the way of most families that have been in this country a long time.

My maternal great-grandfather had five children, four of whom lived to have families of their own. His son, my grandfather, also had five children, two sons and three daughters, who grew up as part of a dense network of cousins.

On my father's side, the families were a little smaller. But my dad was one of three siblings, meaning that I had six aunts and uncles overall.

Then the social revolutions of the 1970s arrived. There were divorces, later marriages, single parenthood, abortions. In the end all those aunts and uncles, their various spouses and my parents — 12 baby boomers, all told — only had seven children: myself, my sister and five cousins.

So instead of widening, my family tree tapered, its branches thinned. And it may thin again, since so far the seven cousins in my generation have only three children. All of them are mine.

This is a very normal Western family history. Everywhere across the developed world, families have grown more attenuated: fewer and later marriages, fewer and later-born children, fewer brothers and sisters and cousins, more people living for longer and longer stretches on their own. It's a new model of social life, a "post-familial" revolution that's unique to late modernity.

For a while, conservatives have worried that this revolution is a boon to liberalism, to centralization and bureaucratic control — because as families thin people are more likely to look to politics for community and government for protection.

This idea is borne out in voting patterns, where marriage and kids tend to predict Republican affiliation, and the single and divorced are often reliable Democratic partisans. The Obama White House's "Life of Julia" ad campaign in 2012 — featuring a woman whose every choice was subsidized by the government from cradle to grave, with a lone child but no larger family or community in sight — seemed to many conservatives like a perfect confirmation of our fears: Here was liberalism explicitly pitching the state as a substitute for kith and kin.

But while we worried about the liberal vision, our own ideological side was adapting to the family's attenuation in darker ways — speaking not to singletons or single mothers, but to powerful post-familial anxieties among the middle-aged and old.

Human beings imagine and encounter the future most intensely through our own progeny, our flesh and blood. The Constitution speaks of "our posterity" for a reason: We are a nation of immigrants, but when people think about the undiscovered America of the future, its strongest claim on them is one their own descendants make.

If those descendants exist. But for many native-born Americans there are fewer of them — fewer children and, as birthrates drop and marrying age rises, still-fewer grandchildren or none at all. Which means that when they look



ROSS DOUTHAT
Comment

ahead into their country's future, white baby boomers especially see less to recognize immediately as their own.

This alienation is heightened when the descendants they do have seem to be faring worse than they did — as in those white working-class communities where opioid addiction, worklessness and family breakdown have advanced apace. The combination of small families and social disarray feeds a grim vision of the future, in which after you've passed, your few kids and fewer grandkids will be beset, isolated and alone.

This sense of dread, in turn, bleeds easily into ethno-racial anxiety when the benefits of that imagined future seem to belong increasingly to people who seem culturally alien, to inheritors who aren't your natural heirs. For this reason mass immigration, the technocratic solution to the economic problems created by post-familialism — fewer workers supporting more retirees — is a double-edged sword: It replaces the missing workers but exacerbates intergenerational alienation, because it heightens anxieties about inheritance and loss.

In this landscape, the white-identity politics of Trumpism or European nationalism may be a more intuitively attractive form of right-wing politics than a libertarian conservatism. Right-authoritarianism offers some of the same welfare-state protections that liberalism offers to its Julias, it offers tribal solidarity to people whose family bonds have frayed — and then it links the two, public programs and tribal consciousness, in the promise of a welfare state that's only designed for you and yours.

For conservatives who abhor Trumpism this presents a hard dilemma. No politician can address a Trump voter (or a LePen or UKIP supporter) alienated from their country's future and say — as strangely true as it may be — that "you should have had more children when you had the chance." So conservatives have to figure out how to go partway with their anxious older voters, to push against the post-familial trend in public policy while also adapting to the anxieties that it creates — and all without being swallowed up by bigotry.

For liberals, to whom an expansive state is a more uncomplicated good, the challenge may seem easier. They can hope that with time the racial and ethnic differences between the generations will diminish, and that eventually state programs can more smoothly substitute for thinning families without ethno-cultural anxieties getting in the way.

But I'm not so sure that it will work like this. A post-familial society may unleash tribal competition within the coalition of the diverse, as people reach anew for ethnic solidarity and then fight furiously over liberalism's spoils.

Or else a technocratic and secular liberalism may simply not be satisfying to a fragmented, atomized society; there may be a desire for a left-wing authoritarianism to bind what's been fragmented back together, in comradeship and common purpose.

In either case, the demagogues of the future will have ample opportunity to exploit the deep loneliness that a post-familial society threatens to create.

This loneliness may manifest in economic anxiety on the surface, in racial and cultural anxiety just underneath. But at bottom it's more primal still: A fear of a world in which no one is bound by kinship to take care of you, and where you can go down into death leaving little or nothing of yourself behind.

Ross Douthat joined *The New York Times* as an Op-Ed columnist in 2009 and previously a senior editor at *The Atlantic*.

YOUR VIEWS

Consider the Constitution this election and vote

The Preamble of the U.S. Constitution is as follows:

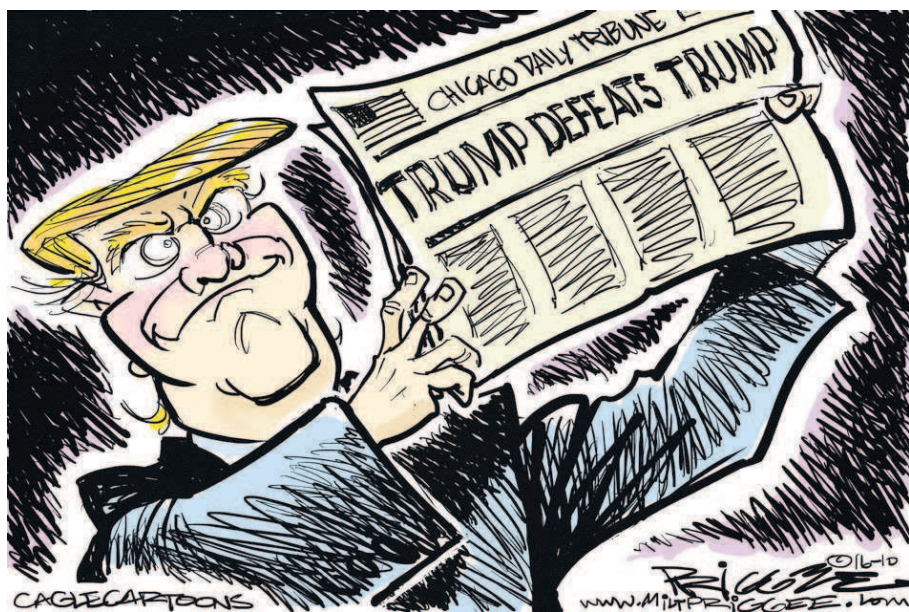
"We the People of the United States, in Order to form a more perfect Union, establish Justice, insure domestic Tranquility, provide for the common defence, promote the general Welfare, and secure the Blessings of Liberty to ourselves and our Posterity, do ordain and establish this Constitution for the United States of America."

If you still have your ballot, please consider our U.S. Constitution and fill in those ovals, sign your ballot envelope with your ballot enclosed and take it to the county courthouse.

If you heard on the news that today's post-mark counts, you must have been listening to a Washington station. For Oregon, the ballot must be received by 8 p.m. Tuesday. That is easy in Pendleton. I'm not sure of locations elsewhere in Umatilla County. Hopefully the newspaper will list them prominently.

In Pendleton you can drop your ballot into the box in the parking lot at the rear of the courthouse (closer to Southeast Fifth), accessible from either Southeast Court or Southeast Dorian before 8 p.m. Or, you can deliver it directly to the Elections Division office. That office is on the building's Southeast Fourth and Southeast Dorian corner, with a basement entrance. It is open until 8 p.m. Tuesday.

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LETTERS POLICY

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