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OUR VIEW

Uniquely Oregon

Every state has its quirks, and some quirks come to define that state in the national consciousness.

Florida, for instance, is part retirement community, part Deep South stronghold, part Disney World, part Latino immigration hub and part swamp, with an annual hurricane or two. The other 49 states aren't sure exactly what to make of it.

Texas, which is not to be messed with, has an outlaw Western spirit and wide open spaces, but is also home to six of the 20 largest cities in the U.S.

California is the magnet for show business and tech development, Michigan is the sputtering frame of a once-great economic engine and Delaware is a state, too.

Oregon's place in the national consciousness is as a liberal testing ground for progressive policies, rooted in Portland's firm seat as the state's thought center.

Sometimes this doesn't work out. Promising our public employees a Rolls Royce retirement package must have sounded nice at the time, but is hurting us badly. Every new iteration of the state's education plan, touting a better future for our students, seems to pan out as more style than substance (remember CIM and CAM testing? Or more recently 40-40-20?).

But sometimes that striving for progress pays off. We believe Oregon's innovative Motor Voter law, given its first real test drive this election, is an example of creative thinking that solves a real democratic problem.

The state already allows everyone to vote by mail, a rarity in the country, and the state legislature passed a measure in 2015 to automatically register residents through the Department of Motor Vehicles unless they specifically opt out. In essence, this means it's more difficult to opt out of getting a ballot than to register to receive one.

While lawmakers in other states have contrived ways to make voting more difficult, which always disproportionately affects poor and minority citizens, Oregon has made equal voter access a priority.

The downside is negligible. Voter fraud, which was briefly a national concern this fall until the conspiracy's most prominent promoter won the election, is not likely and certainly not easy in this system. Ballots require verifiable signatures before they are counted. The *East Oregonian* obtained a list of every registered voter in the November election and can check, line-by-line, if concerns are raised about improper votes cast.

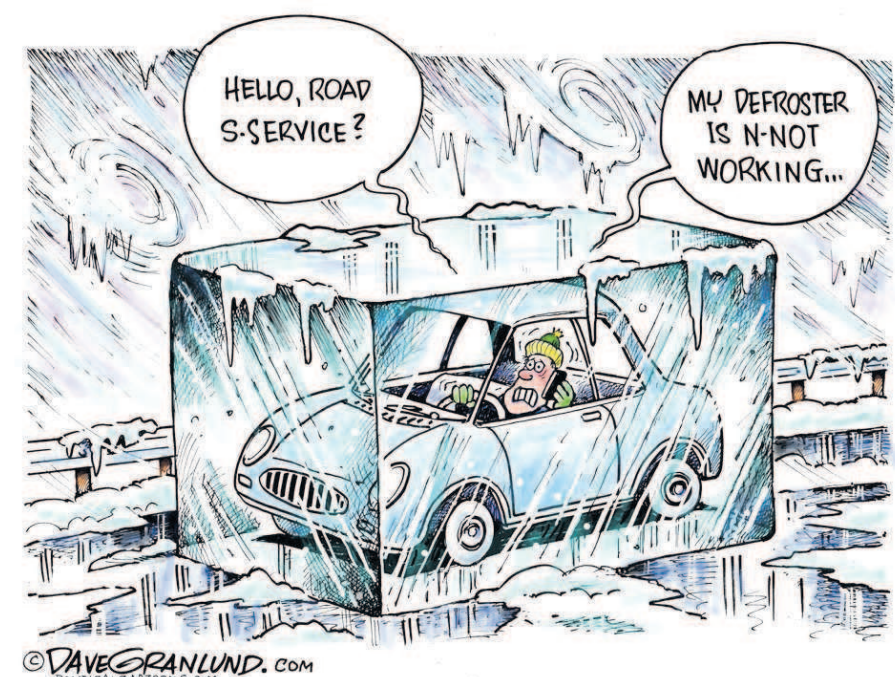
There were two cases of fraudulent registration in Oregon, according to outgoing Secretary of State Jeanne Atkins, and both are being investigated.

As for the cost, more postage and staff time does come with a price tag. In Umatilla County the November election cost \$47,168 — \$7,549 more than the 2014 general election. The state is expected to reimburse \$5,727, leaving a little less than \$2,000 for the county to cover.

But the payoff is worth it. Oregon had 97,000 new voters cast ballots this year, about 44 percent of those registered through the new law. That's a lot of people newly enfranchised in a cornerstone of our democracy. That engagement, while maybe a drop in the bucket in the wider scheme of, say, the presidential election outcome, has a great effect on statewide and certainly local politics.

A state can't choose its reputation on a whim. Or-E-gawn will always be full of tree-hugging hippies if you ask a random resident of Florida, Texas, California, Michigan or Delaware. But by proving automatic voter registration can work, we'll give those other states a reason to again follow our lead.

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.



THE WORST EMPLOYER IN ALL OF THE ENTIRE HISTORY OF LITERATURE, Ebenezer Scrooge, BARELY PAID ENOUGH TO KEEP HIS EMPLOYEE AND DEPENDENTS HOUSED, CLOTHED AND FED...

IN OTHER WORDS, MUCH BETTER THAN TODAY



OTHER VIEWS

A fresh start or crazy reckless?

Maybe it will all turn out OK. If it does, put me down as promising to applaud.

But my fellow Americans, whatever mix of motives led us to create an Electoral College majority for Donald Trump to become president — and overlook his lack of preparation, his record of indecent personal behavior, his madcap midnight tweeting, his casual lying about issues like “millions” of people casting illegal votes in this election, the purveying of fake news by his national security adviser, his readiness to appoint climate change deniers without even getting a single briefing from the world's greatest climate scientists in the government he'll soon lead, and his cavalier dismissal of the CIA's conclusions about Russian hacking of our election — have no doubt about one thing: We as a country have just done something incredibly reckless.

There is actually something “prehistoric” about the Cabinet that Trump is putting together. It is totally dominated by people who have spent their adult lives drilling for, or advocating for, fossil fuels — oil, gas and coal.

You would never know that what has actually made America great is our ability to attract the world's smartest and most energetic immigrants and our ability “to develop technology and to nurture our human capital” — not just drill for coal and oil, remarked Edward Goldberg, who teaches at NYU's Center for Global Affairs and is the author of “The Joint Ventured Nation: Why America Needs a New Foreign Policy.”

Don't misunderstand me: It is excusable to raise questions about climate change. But it is inexcusable not to sit down with our own government experts at NASA and the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration for a briefing before you appoint flagrant climate deniers with no scientific background to every senior environmental position.

It is excusable to question if Russia really hacked our election. But it is inexcusable to dismiss the possibility without first getting a briefing from the CIA, some of whose agents risked their lives for that intelligence.

That is reckless behavior — totally unbecoming a president, a professional or just a serious adult.

It's not that all of Trump's goals are wrongheaded or crazy. If he can unlock barriers to innovation, infrastructure investment and entrepreneurship, that will be a very good thing. And I am not against working more closely with Russia on global issues or getting more tough-minded on trade with China.

But growth that is heedless of environmental impacts, collaboration with Russia that is heedless of Vladimir Putin's malevolence, and greater aggressiveness toward China that is heedless of the carefully



THOMAS FRIEDMAN
Comment

crafted security balance among the U.S., China and Taiwan — which has produced prosperity and stability in Asia for over four decades — is reckless.

For an administration that lost the popular vote by such a large margin to suddenly take the country to such extreme positions on energy, environment and foreign policy — unbalanced inside by any moderate voices — is asking for trouble, and it will produce a backlash.

Already, some Republican lawmakers who love our country more than they fear Trump's tweets — like Sens. Lindsey Graham and John McCain — are insisting that Russia's apparent cyberhacking to help Trump win election be investigated by Congress. If Congress

affirms what the intelligence community believes — that Russia intervened in our democratic process — that is an act of war. And it calls for the severest economic sanctions.

At the same time, Trump's readiness to dismiss the entire intelligence community because its conclusions contradict his instincts and interests could really haunt him down the road.

Let's imagine that in six months the CIA concludes that North Korea is about to perfect a nuclear missile that can reach our West Coast and President Trump orders a pre-emptive strike, one that unleashes a lot of instability in Asia. And then the next day Trump and his national security adviser, Mike Flynn, the purveyor of fake news about Hillary Clinton, defend themselves by saying, “We acted on the ‘high confidence’ assessment of the CIA.” Who's going to believe them after they just trashed the CIA?

Finally, Trump has demonstrated a breathtaking naiveté toward Putin. Putin wanted Trump to win because he thinks that he'll be a chaos president, who will weaken America's influence in the world by weakening its commitment to liberal values and will weaken America's ability to lead a Western coalition to confront Putin's aggression in Europe. Putin is out to erode democracy wherever he can. Trump needs to send Putin a blunt message today: “I am not your chump.”

As Stanford University democracy expert Larry Diamond noted in an essay on Atlantic.com last week: “The most urgent foreign-policy question now is how America will respond to the mounting threat that Putin's Russia poses to freedom and its most important anchor, the Western alliance. Nothing will more profoundly shape the kind of world we live in than how the Trump administration responds to that challenge.”

Thomas L. Friedman won the 2002 Pulitzer Prize for commentary, his third Pulitzer for *The New York Times*. He became the paper's foreign-affairs Op-Ed columnist in 1995.

Growth that is heedless of environmental impacts is reckless.

OTHER VIEWS

Trump resistance pins last hope on electoral college

The Electoral College meets this Monday in what will be the final step in Donald Trump's improbable rise to the presidency. But it will also be the last chance for #NeverTrump dead-enders to keep Trump out of the White House. And now, the anti-Trump effort has been given new fuel by allegations of Russian attempts to interfere with the presidential election.

Trump won 306 electoral votes. There are 306 electors, actual people, who are expected to vote for him next Monday in Electoral College meetings in state capitals across the country. Trump's total is 36 more than the 270 required to become president. With that in mind, a group of Trump resisters is hoping to convince 37 Trump electors to vote for someone else on Monday, taking Trump just below the magic 270 mark. If that were to happen, Trump would not become president.

The hope is to create one of two scenarios. If rogue electors vote for candidates other than Hillary Clinton, who won 232 electoral votes



BYRON YORK
Comment

on Election Day, then no candidate would have 270 and the election would be thrown to the House of Representatives. If the 37, plus one more, voted for Clinton, she would reach 270 and become president.

“This election is not in the books,” said Chris Suprun, a Texas Republican elector who says he will not vote for Trump, at a news conference Sunday. “While we have been perhaps remiss in thinking it is, Dec. 19 is when ballots will be cast.”

Suprun would not reveal who he will vote for, but said it will not be Clinton. “While I have not chosen my candidate, I am going to vote for another Republican, someone who I think can unite our country and will do so effectively without the issues that Mr. Trump faces that disqualify him from the presidency,” Suprun said.

Although Trump won Texas by more than 800,000 votes, there is no law requiring Suprun to vote for him. Texas is one of 21 states that do not require electors to vote for the winner of the popular vote in that state. In

29 states, however, there are laws requiring electors to vote for the popular vote winner.

California and Colorado are two of those 29 states. Now, in the wake of Trump's win, there are lawsuits in both states challenging restrictions on electors. Neither suit was filed by Trump electors seeking to vote for someone else; there are no Trump electors in California and Colorado, which Clinton won. Instead, both suits were filed by Democratic electors seeking to knock down the laws in other states that bind electors to Trump.

In the California suit, Democratic elector Vinzenz Koller argues that he “must be allowed to exercise his judgment and free will to vote for whomever he believes to be the most qualified and fit for the office of president and vice president within the circumstances and with the knowledge known on Dec. 19, 2016, whether those candidates are Democrats, Republicans, or from a third party.”

There are reports that a total of 10 electors support the lawsuits. The problem for the anti-Trump forces is that nine of those electors are Democrats who weren't going to vote

for Trump anyway. Only one, Suprun, is a Republican.

The Trump resisters have formed a group called the Hamilton Electors, named in honor of Alexander Hamilton, who wrote Federalist 68, which deals with the Electoral College. The group says it represents electors “who are pledging to put America first and vote for a qualified Republican alternative who can unify our country.” (The group doesn't name names, but some involved in the cause have mentioned Ohio Gov. John Kasich as a possible compromise candidate.)

There are other efforts as well. There is a petition created by change.org urging Republican electors to vote for Clinton. “We are calling on ‘Conscientious Electors’ to protect the Constitution from Donald Trump, and to support the national popular vote winner,” organizers say. They claim 4.7 million people have signed the petition.

Byron York is the White House correspondent for *National Review* and the author of *The Vast Left Wing Conspiracy*, published in April by Crown Forum.