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OUR VIEW

Congress shouldn't let Trump silence public broadcasting

Once again, congressional conservatives are considering cutting — or eliminating — federal funding for the Corporation for Public Broadcasting, and it's a serious threat that could be devastating locally.

Nonprofit public-media platforms receive allocations from the CPB, which they combine with other fundraising and revenue generating efforts to cover operating costs. The newest threat to CPB funding arose in President Donald Trump's blueprint budget for fiscal 2018 which was unveiled in March. The budget proposes defunding the CPB, and its most famous grantee, National Public Radio, which conservatives have long viewed as sympathetic to left-wing views and an inappropriate use of government funding.

According to the Pew Center's 2016 Fact Sheet on Public Broadcasting, NPR has an average weekly audience of 26 million, and its programming is carried on more than 1,000 stations nationwide. Trump's budget would also defund the National Endowment for the Arts, the National Endowment for the Humanities and more than a dozen other agencies.

The budget, however, is subject to congressional review and may look very different by the time the process is completed. We hope it does, but as Coast Community Radio general manager Joanne Rideout told our sister paper *The Daily Astorian*, the budget threat could be "the real deal."

Despite the current GOP temperament in the nation's capital, past attempts to cut off CPB's funding have failed.

U.S. Rep. Earl Blumenauer, a Portland Democrat who founded and leads the bipartisan Public Broadcasting Caucus in the House, points out that in 2005 the GOP-led House Appropriations Committee recommended cutting 25 percent from the CPB's \$400 million outlay, leading to a weeklong public outcry. All but six of the House's 202 Democrats voted down the proposal, with 87 of 140 Republicans joining.

We hope that trend continues because the CPB has the general

public's support. A new Quinnipiac University national poll says 70 percent of American voters oppose the proposed elimination of CPB funding.

Blumenauer and Rep. Dave Reichert, R-Washington, are working to build support for a letter backing funding for CPB, Ready To Learn and public broadcasting's interconnection system, to be sent to colleagues who serve on the Labor, Health and Human Services, Education and Related Agencies Appropriations Subcommittee, which handles CPB funding. It's chaired by Rep. Tom

Cole, R-Oklahoma, and last year's letter was signed by a bipartisan group of 132 members of the House.

The letter this year, in part, states, "These federal investments are critical to public

media's mission to provide unique services in the areas of education, public safety, and civic leadership to all Americans. ... In rural areas, where public broadcasting stations can be the only source of free, high-quality local programming available to families, funding from CPB can amount to more than half of some rural stations' budgets. This is a gap that cannot be closed by increased underwriting revenue or donor support."

It is uncertain what U.S. Rep. Jaime Herrera Beutler's current position is on CPB funding, but in 2011 she supported a U.S. House law that "would have prohibited federal funding for NPR and barred stations from using CPB funds to acquire radio programming," according to an analysis by the online publication *News for People in Public Media*.

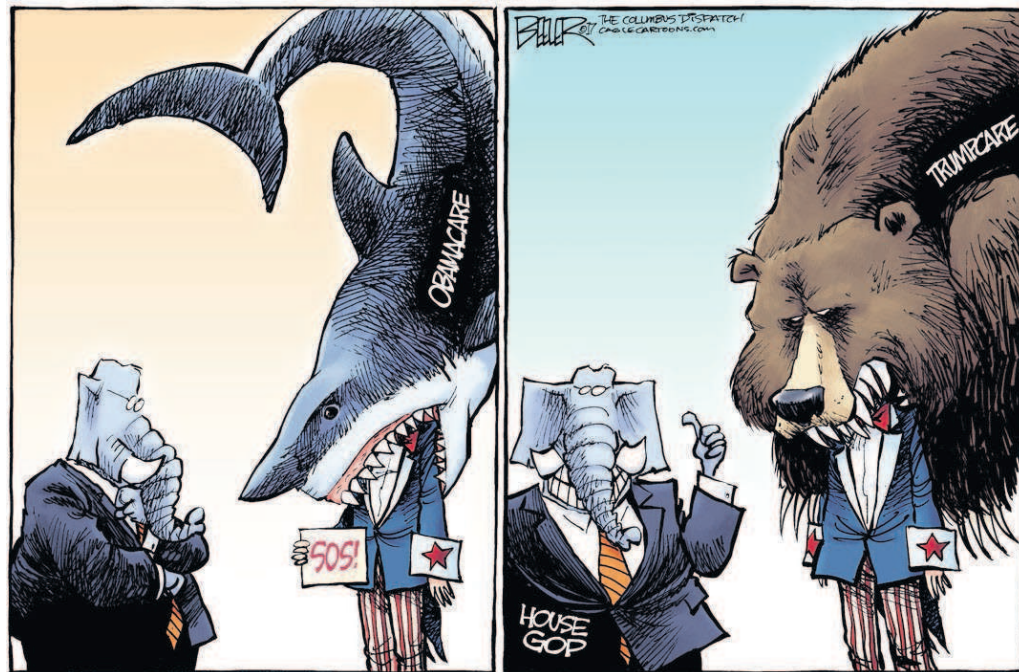
U.S. Rep. Suzanne Bonamici, a Democrat whose district includes Clatsop County, strongly supports the fund-saving effort. She calls cutting the funding "wrong and short-sighted," especially at a time when the president "is proposing to add more to an already bloated defense budget and build a massively expensive and unnecessary border wall."

Bonamici is right, and her congressional colleagues should take notice and support the effort. Public broadcasting is part of the fabric of our free society, and it needs to stay that way.

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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.

REPEAL and REPLACE



OTHER VIEWS

Party like it's 1984

There have been many bad laws in U.S. history. Some bills were poorly conceived; some were cruel and unjust; some were sold on false pretenses. Some were all of the above.

But has there ever been anything like Trumpcare, the health legislation Republicans rammed through the House last week? It's a miserably designed law, full of unintended consequences. It's a moral disaster, snatching health care from tens of millions mainly to give the very wealthy a near-trillion-dollar tax cut.

What really stands out, however, is the Orwell-level dishonesty of the whole effort. As far as I can tell, every word Republicans, from Trump on down, have said about their bill — about why they want to replace Obamacare, about what their replacement would do, and about how it would work — is a lie, including "a," "and" and "the."

And what does it say about the state of American politics that a majority of the representatives of one of our major political parties has gone along with this nightmarish process?

Before taking back the White House, Republicans attacked Obamacare for many things. For one thing, they claimed that it was rushed through without proper debate.

They also claimed that Americans were getting a raw deal. Deductibles were too high, they claimed; so were premiums. They promised to bring these costs down, to provide, as Donald Trump insisted he would, coverage that was "much less expensive and much better."

And meanwhile, they promised to keep the things people liked about Obamacare (whether or not voters knew they were getting those good things because of Obamacare). Nobody would be thrown off Medicaid; nobody would be denied affordable coverage because of pre-existing conditions.

Then came the reality of Republican legislation. Obamacare was debated and analyzed for many months; Trumpcare was thrown together so fast it's hard to believe any significant number of those voting for it even had time to read it. And it was, of course, pushed through the House without giving the Congressional Budget Office a chance to estimate its costs, its effects on coverage, or anything else.

Even without a proper analysis, however, it's clear that Trumpcare breaks every promise Republicans ever made about health. Deductibles will rise, not fall, as insurers are set free to offer lower-quality coverage. Premiums may fall for a handful of young, healthy, affluent people, but will rise and in many cases soar for those who are older (because age spreads will rise), sicker (because protection



PAUL KRUGMAN
Comment

against discrimination based on medical history will be taken away), and poorer (because subsidies will go down).

Many people with pre-existing conditions will find insurance either completely unavailable or totally out of their financial reach.

And Medicaid will be cut back, with the damage worsening over time.

The really important thing, however, is not just to realize that Republicans are breaking their promises, but to realize that they are doing so with intent. This

isn't one of those cases where people try to do what they said they would, but fall short in the execution. This is an act of deliberate betrayal: Everything about Trumpcare is specifically designed to do exactly the opposite of what Trump, Paul Ryan and other Republicans said it would.

Which raises two questions: Why are they doing this, and why do they think they can get away with it?

Part of the answer to the first question is, presumably, simple greed. Tens of millions would lose access to health coverage, but — according to independent estimates of an earlier version of Trumpcare — people with incomes over \$1 million would save an average of more than \$50,000 a year.

And there is a powerful faction within the GOP for whom cutting taxes on the rich is more or less the only thing that matters.

And on a more subjective note, don't you get the impression that Donald Trump gets some positive pleasure out of taking people who make the mistake of trusting him for a ride?

As for why they think they can get away with it: Well, isn't recent history on their side? The general shape of what the GOP would do to health care, for the white working class in particular, has long been obvious, yet many people who were sure to lose, bigly, voted Trump anyway.

Why shouldn't Republicans believe they can convince those same voters that the terrible things that will happen if Trumpcare becomes law are somehow liberals' fault?

And for that matter, how confident are you that mainstream media will resist the temptation of both-sides-ism, the urge to produce "balanced" reporting that blurs the awful reality of what Trumpcare will do if enacted?

In any case, let's be clear: What just happened on health care shouldn't be treated as just another case of cynical political deal making. This was a Freedom is Slavery, Ignorance is Strength moment. And it may be the shape of things to come.

Paul Krugman joined *The New York Times* in 1999 as a columnist on the Op-Ed Page and continues as professor of Economics and International Affairs at Princeton University.

YOUR VIEWS

New schools help business grow

The Greater Hermiston Chamber of Commerce Board of Directors supports the efforts of the Hermiston School District bond on your May 2017 ballot.

In most communities, even when education is a priority, the older facilities where learning takes place often do not get visited by the general public to see how inadequate the rooms are. Some class rooms are so small you can barely walk between the desks, some of the rooms have very inefficient air conditioning and heating systems; age plays a major factor in all those conditions. While a quality education does not require flashy facilities, it cannot be accomplished in a building that suffers from age, safety and deficiencies. That means the cost of maintaining these buildings is also high. New facilities are designed to use energy wisely and create a safe place for our children to learn.

Business and industry are attracted to locations where there are quality schools. Schools also will create a well-qualified workforce and a higher standard of living. Businesses benefit because more events bring more people to town to shop, eat and utilize services here in Hermiston. When businesses, corporations or employee recruits are seeking information about

Hermiston, schools and what they offer are typically at the top of the list for inquiries, which leads to visits and tours of the facilities.

Local residents reap the benefits of increased property values. Building the new schools reflects how we feel about our community. New facilities will provide more venues for adult and youth events and add to our economy.

Communities experience economic growth, lower crime rates, increased participation, volunteerism, and charitable giving. Our local schools should be a source of pride, a symbol of our community's determination to ensure a better future for everyone who lives here. We have a lot to be proud of and in order to continue to grow and provide for the needs of our students, we must think about building and expanding to adequately provide the classroom space needed.

Debbie Pedro,
Chamber president, Hermiston

Support fire department's judgment

As a fire survivor with most of my belongings intact, I support the May 2017 bond to replace the city's Fire Station 1 and improve the facility, equipment and training grounds.

Although the costs seem exorbitant, I rely on PFD's good

judgment to keep the public's welfare in mind, and that includes hiring experts to do a proper job of designing and building a new fire station. The PFD needs upgrades, so let's support them. After all, it's the citizens of Pendleton who will benefit from a well-trained team of firefighters using up-to-date equipment and working from a safe facility.

Please vote YES for the bond.

Kate Ely
Pendleton

Walden not working for rural Oregon

Greg Walden has completely forgotten about the people in his district and their principles, following only his political party and special interests with deep pockets.

Thursday morning Walden voted to push the AHCA ("Obamacare repeal") through the House and on to the Senate. By pushing this bill he showed his belief that we should be able to deny access to medical insurance to Americans with persistent medical issues. This vote also included a huge tax cut to the wealthiest of Americans, resulting in sharply reduced assistance to poor Americans.

Trump promised "insurance for everybody," but in the rush to accomplish something, anything!, the party of Walden and Trump

forced a bill that at present can only be said to have broad and unpredictable consequences. Sure, Obamacare has real problems that need to be fixed, and a single payer system providing coverage for everybody would be an amazing improvement regardless of which party produced it. The AHCA will not improve — and may even harm — the day-to-day lives of most people in Walden's rural district of mostly modest earners. Hopefully this bill will quickly fail in the Senate, but the vote shows us something about the people Walden is trying to protect — and it isn't you or me.

On March 28, Walden and his party voted to authorize internet service providers to sell your browsing history. I would have expected howling over this direct assault on our constitutional right to privacy. Walden received over \$369,000 in campaign donations in 2016 from the telecom industry, the highest amount for any house candidate in 2016. Over the course

of his political career, the telecoms have given him almost \$1.39M, the second highest among current House members. Quid pro quo?

Most of Walden's constituents agree: We want an honest day of work, to support and protect our families, to give our kids everything they need to grow, to save for retirement, and have something left over to enjoy spending time off all over this great state and region. Walden should support efforts to help average Oregonians live better day-to-day and he should oppose measures that cause deep concern and run contrary to his constituent's ideals.

Businesses exist to make money. Businesses make investments and expect returns on those investments. So why do they give Greg Walden so much money? Look at how he votes. Our district needs a representative who wants to help us, not a politician bought by special interests.

William E. Perkinson
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.