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OUR VIEW



Trump and Nixon

Donald Trump has always been a little Nixonian.

They share an affinity for authoritative leadership, the habit of continually attacking the press and rivals both in their party and outside of it, reliance on a small and always shrinking circle of advisers, and a lifelong lack of personal friendships.

But President Trump took a giant step toward joining his legacy with Richard Nixon's when he announced Tuesday that he had fired FBI director James Comey. Comey was investigating possible corruption and ties between Trump, his associates and Russia. And we learned Wednesday that just days before he was fired, Comey asked for additional resources to expand and further the investigation.

The White House claimed that Trump fired Comey because of how the FBI director mishandled Hillary Clinton and her email scandal, which is so blatantly absurd as to make the whole continent shudder with laughter. That Trump would have empathy for "crooked" Hillary Clinton, who he said during the campaign should be "locked up," is too much to believe.

The clear truth is that the White House fired Comey despite having no set replacement, no clear message on why they were firing him at this time, and no legal experts or surrogates to defend the action. Certainly Trump had no explanation, other than a day later saying Comey "was not doing a good job."

When he was let go, Comey was speaking at an FBI event across the country. He found out by watching television, and later a bodyguard handed him an envelope and he was whisked away. That's how Nixon loved to do it, as do a whole range of authoritarian strongmen.

Like Nixon, Trump has become increasingly isolated. His family lives elsewhere, his public appearances

have decreased. His hunger for approval has been starved as the campaign trail has given way to the Oval Office, and his poll numbers continue their decline.

Unlike Nixon, however, Trump has access to a Twitter account, which allows him to send his paranoid scribes out across the world. Yet like Tricky Dick, Trump in those messages never forgets the faults of others and

Trump, like Nixon, never forgets the faults of others and never misses the opportunity to bring them up.

never misses an opportunity to bring them up.

Still, the two men have their differences, as the Richard Nixon Presidential Library pointed out. It tweeted soon after news of Comey's firing broke: "FUN FACT: President Nixon never fired the Director of the FBI

#FBI Director #notNixonian."

Still, Oregon's U.S. Senator Jeff Merkley saw the similarities. He said Tuesday that "Trump's pattern of firing people who are investigating him is downright Nixonian, and members of Congress of both parties should treat it with the same gravity that our predecessors did during Watergate."

You can see the words Trump's opponents want brought back into daily use: Nixon. Watergate. The Saturday Night Massacre. Impeachment. Investigation. Russia. Investigation. Russia. Investigation.

Whether Trump will meet the same fate as Nixon — helicoptered away to infamy — remains to be seen. But what the American people must demand is that members of Congress and employees of the FBI and the Department of Justice remember that their duty and honor is to their country, not their boss.

Comey should testify before a bipartisan commission immediately. An independent investigator and/or special prosecutor — someone Trump cannot fire — must take on the dangerous burden of this investigation and see it to its conclusion.

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

Suicide bill aims at wrong target

The Baker City Herald

We agree with members of Oregon's Legislature who want to reduce the state's suicide rate. Indeed, does anybody not share that goal?

But we disagree that a law — and in particular the constitutionally shaky bill that the Oregon Senate approved this week — is likely to accomplish, in any meaningful way, this noble objective. Senate Bill 719 passed by a 17-11 vote and is now under consideration in the House.

The bill would require people whom a judge deems to be at risk of suicide or of harming another person to surrender all their guns or other potentially deadly weapons to police, a gun dealer or potentially a third party.

The law would apply only if a judge approved what the bill calls an "extreme risk protection order." A police officer, spouse, parent, child or sibling, or anyone living with the allegedly suicidal person could petition the court for such an order. If it's approved, the person would have 24 hours to surrender guns

and other weapons.

Subjects of such an order could appeal, but the order would remain in effect until the appeal was decided. The order otherwise would be in effect for one year.

Besides its potential conflicts with the Second Amendment, our main concern with the bill is that it focuses solely on the means by which a person might harm himself or others, but has nothing to do with the person's motivations. And we're not convinced that those motivations can be addressed through legislation. Not every societal problem can be fixed with a law.

The Legislature can, and should, ensure that the state has a robust and accessible system available for people who seek help with severe emotional problems. But we don't believe that Senate Bill 719, which treats distraught people as though they were criminals, constitutes that sort of help.

Moreover, relatives and friends need no law to compel them to help people they're worried about. That's why people take the car keys from loved ones who have been drinking.

OTHER VIEWS

Spending bill, not Obamacare, reveals deep GOP division

If you want to see what divides Republicans in Congress, don't look at the struggle to repeal and replace Obamacare. Look at spending.

The House's narrow passage of a partial repeal of Obamacare dominated media for days. Happening at the same time, but receiving relatively little coverage, was the Senate's approval of a \$1.1 trillion spending bill that revealed — far more than Obamacare — the deep differences among Republicans in both houses of Congress.

The story is in the numbers. On Obamacare, 217 Republicans voted for partial repeal, while just 20 — a little under 10 percent of the House GOP conference — voted against it.

On the spending bill, just 131 Republicans voted yes, while 103 GOP lawmakers — about 43 percent of the House GOP conference — voted no. In the Senate, 32 Republicans voted yes, while 18 GOP senators — about one-third of the Republican side — voted no.

Lawmakers gave several reasons for rejecting the leadership's spending deal with Democrats. "This bill funds sanctuary cities, funds Planned Parenthood, it funds Obamacare and I think that was unfortunate and it's a real missed opportunity," Sen. Ted Cruz — a no vote — told San Antonio radio host Trey Ware. "There is a reason Chuck Schumer and Nancy Pelosi are celebrating, because the spending measure funds everything they want and funds virtually none of the priorities we were elected to fund."

"I think the Democrats cleaned our clock," said Sen. Lindsey Graham, another no vote. "I'm for comprehensive immigration reform, but sanctuary cities go untouched. Obamacare continues to be funded in a way that we all say is illegal."

"Drain the swamp, right?" asked Rep. Dave Brat, another no vote, in BuzzFeed. "Where is that in the budget? Nowhere. We fully funded the swamp."

Another House Republican no vote pointed to a provision in the spending bill that would



BYRON YORK
Comment

double the number of so-called H-2B visas to allow temporary low-wage foreign workers into the U.S. — a move a number of experts said would lower wages for American workers.

"H-2Bs will be an issue and will cause a loss of conservative support for the bill," the member said shortly before the vote. "Very un-Trumpian to ban border wall construction and fund sanctuary cities while also expanding foreign labor!"

Foreign labor was a key factor in the no vote of Sen. Tom Cotton. In a floor speech Thursday, the Arkansas Republican explained that he recognized the good parts of the bill, in particular more defense spending. But he

focused on the H-2B provision, not just because it is bad policy — he explained at length what that is so — but because it "shows just how bad this process is."

"It's not necessary," Cotton said of the visa expansion's inclusion in the bill. "It has nothing to do with funding the government, nothing. It hasn't been vetted. It hasn't gone through the normal legislative process, which would be the

Judiciary Committee, where the chairman and the senior Democrat both have written that they oppose this measure. I don't even know how it got in (the bill)."

And yet there it was. And President Trump signed it into law.

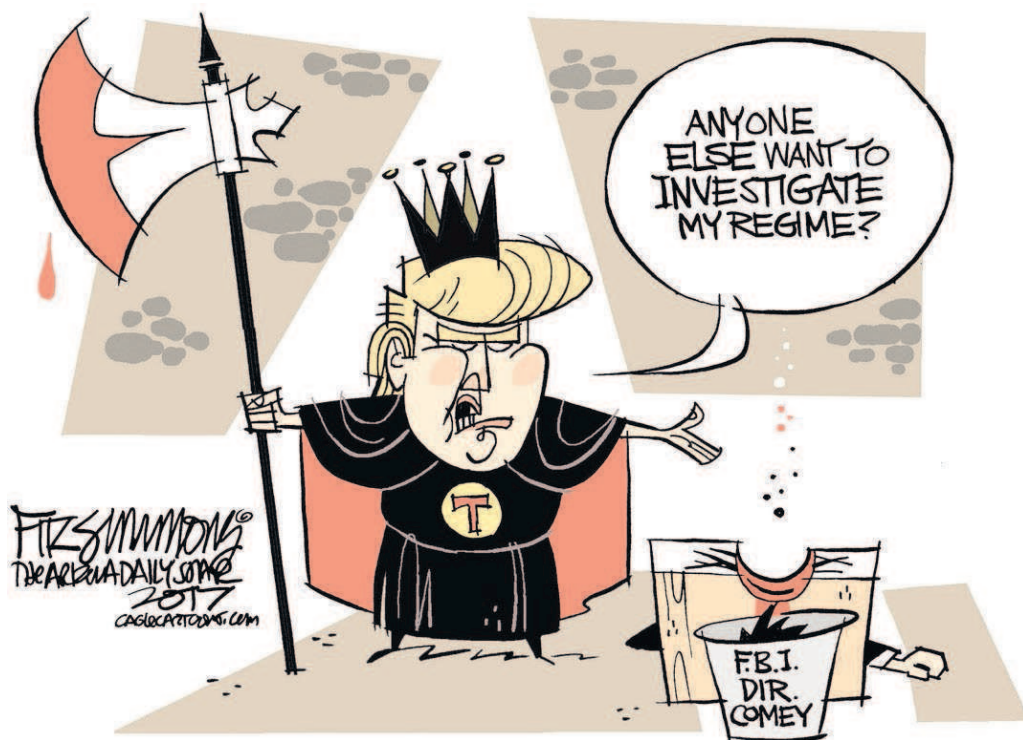
In the end, the spending bill votes revealed significant divisions among Republicans about the amount of spending — more precisely, the amount of deficit spending — they can tolerate.

Those differences extend far beyond their conflicts over Obamacare repeal. A grand total of 20 GOP House members split with their leadership on health care, while 103 did so on spending. In the Senate, where the Republican majority is so narrow they have just two votes to spare, the GOP lost 18 votes. Those are signs of problems ahead.

Byron York is chief political correspondent for The Washington Examiner.

"We fully funded the swamp."

— Dave Brat, Republican, U.S. Representative



YOUR VIEWS

Procrastinators can still help build a new fire station

For those of you, who like my family and me have not yet voted, I urge you to vote yes on the Pendleton general obligation fire station bond.

Here's why: The fire station on 10th and Court is over 50 years old (there were 4,000 fewer Pendletonians when it was new), isn't big enough for modern emergency response equipment, lacks training space for emergency responders, is short on room for emergency responders and volunteers, and is located near two of the busier intersections in town, which causes reduced response times.

Most importantly, because it doesn't meet public health and safety codes, it puts the very people we rely on in an emergency at risk every time they come to work.

The new fire station will be located at the old St. Anthony Hospital parking lot. This location was chosen for a variety of factors that includes land availability, site development costs, and faster response times across all of Pendleton (six seconds faster than the current site — and every second counts if you or your family or friends need help). Other discussed sites either are not for sale, would cost more to develop, or don't improve response times — in other words, would not be smart investments.

And, at a total cost of just under \$10 million, the new fire station will cost the average homeowner less than \$8 per month — less than two bags of potato chips per month. For that you get faster response times, better trained emergency responders with better equipment, healthier and safer emergency responders — and as a bonus, the new station will save taxpayers \$50,000 per year in building maintenance costs.

My family and I think this is a fantastic deal and we hope you do, too. So if you

haven't yet voted please vote yes today (or at least before May 16) on the Pendleton fire station bond.

Scott Fairley
City councilor, Pendleton

New station needed, but not the one the bond will build

Yes, Pendleton, we really do need a new fire station. Our fire and police personnel are the finest and deserve our respect and admiration for the job they do for our community.

The present bond we are asking to approve is for a community that is growing vibrantly. This doesn't appear to be happening. Take a look around at all the homes for sale, the empty buildings and some of the businesses pulling up stakes and leaving.

Another observation and concern that I have: Look at the state-of-the-art schools that we just finished building. It appears that school attendance is down and the district is making necessary cuts to its budget, which includes laying off personnel. Those same people are the taxpaying citizens that paid for these schools. This is terribly wrong.

Furthermore, not too long ago an expensive street sweeper, which wasn't too old, suffered a mechanical breakdown. The decision was to purchase another at nearly ten times the amount that it would have cost to repair it. Poor decision? Look at the condition of our streets.

A good share of the taxpaying citizens of this community are on limited and fixed incomes. Based on the above-stated observations and concerns on how money is being spent, the current proposal will be difficult to support.

Freddy D. Johnson
Pendleton

LETTERS POLICY

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