

EAST OREGONIAN

Founded October 16, 1875

KATHRYN B. BROWN
Publisher

DANIEL WATTENBURGER
Managing Editor

TIM TRAINOR
Opinion Page Editor

MARISSA WILLIAMS
Regional Advertising Director

MARCY ROSENBERG
Circulation Manager

JANNA HEIMGARTNER
Business Office Manager

MIKE JENSEN
Production Manager

OUR VIEW

Election interference not a partisan issue

Reports of Russian interference in an American election should be concerning to everyone in this country, regardless of their political affiliation. A foreign government meddling in our sovereignty and independence is not a partisan issue.

And multiple nonpartisan U.S. intelligence agencies, as well as intelligence agencies of some

foreign allies, have reported that Russia attempted to influence our democratic process during the 2016 presidential election.

It doesn't matter who won the election. Outside interference is an affront to our way of life. It undermines the belief that Americans have in our institutions and our government.

Almost as scary as the fact that our country has been under intense, sustained cyberattack is the fact our population has become so polarized that some are willing to see their neighbors as enemies, rather than a foreign power actively trying to manipulate our country for their benefit.

This is something that should bring us together. In the face of a real enemy, we should remember we're all on the same team, hoping to make our country as safe and prosperous as possible.

We should all want to know exactly what happened during the run up to the 2016 election. We should all demand the truth so we

are better protected from interference in future elections.

Questioning and condemning a foreign country's involvement should not be conflated as an attack on our president. Unless an investigation determines a member of Donald Trump's campaign colluded in the interference or that the president obstructed justice

Questioning and condemning a foreign country's involvement should not be conflated as an attack on our president.

regarding the investigation into the matter, he should be presumed innocent. No evidence has yet been presented that either occurred.

There is ample evidence, however, that Russia attempted to influence our election and undermine our democracy. That should be

concerning to everyone, including the president, both political parties and every elected official.

During his testimony before Congress, former FBI director James Comey was clear he believes this will happen again and again. Russia and other enemies will look for any means they can to disrupt our nation's free election process, and cyberattacks are the most efficient way to do damage covertly.

Election interference is not a party-line issue. It is a threat to all Americans. We should demand answers from our intelligence agencies, and explore Congress to get to the bottom of what happened and figure out how we can stop it from happening again.

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

Stop public financing of sports stadiums

The Journal Record (Oklahoma)

There are plenty of federal government programs that manage the money from taxpayers well. Americans want safe water, good highways, and a strong, well-prepared military to keep us safe.

But there are programs that leave taxpayers scratching their heads. Two members of Oklahoma's congressional delegation are trying to correct one such bit of fiscal irresponsibility: the federal subsidization of sports stadiums.

According to research by the Brookings Institution, 36 of the 45 stadiums built or renovated since 2000 were financed with public money, typically municipal bonds.

Since municipal bonds are tax-exempt, the IRS missed out on an estimated \$3.7 billion in revenue. Fifth District Rep. Steve Russell and Sen. James Lankford wrote bills this year to end that practice.

Prior to 1953, sports stadiums were privately built. But that year, the Boston Braves moved to Milwaukee in large part to take advantage of a new stadium built with public money and with that the horse was out of the barn. Oklahomans gained nothing when the New York Yankees got a new \$2.3 billion stadium in 2009 but paid their share of the \$431 million federal subsidy nonetheless.

The economic development argument is that a sports stadium is good for

business, that the public spends more in nearby restaurants, that more hotel rooms are booked and that the panache of having a major league team carries with it such a powerful intangible benefit that the whole community benefits. Economists disagree.

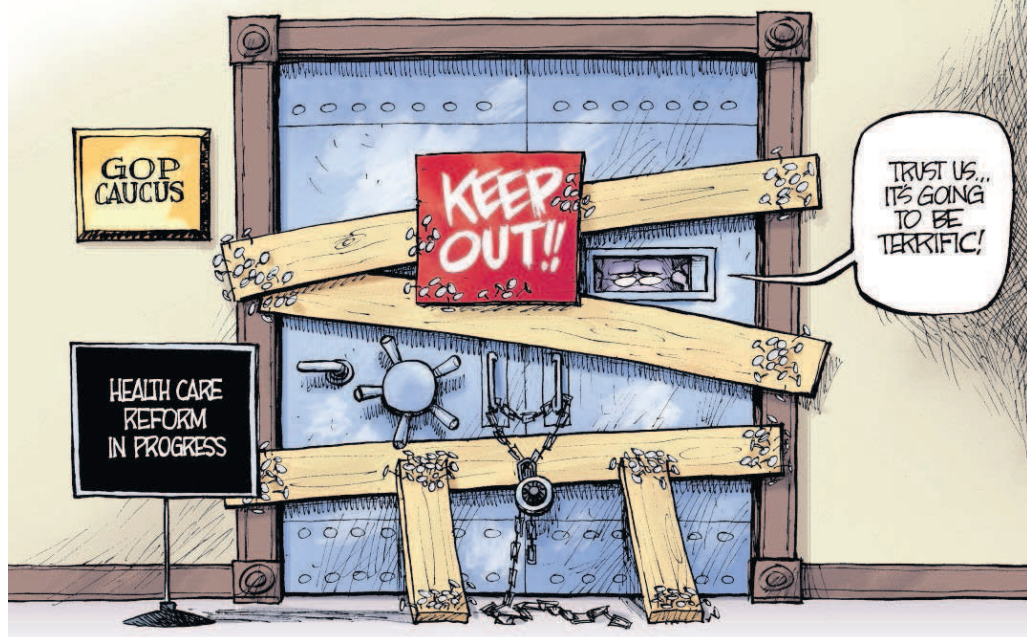
"Few fields of empirical economic research offer virtual unanimity of findings," economists John Siegfried and Andrew Zimbalist wrote in *The Journal of Economic Perspectives*. "Yet independent work on the economic impact of stadiums and arenas has uniformly found that there is no statistically significant positive correlation between sports facility construction and economic development."

Oklahoma cities chose the fiscally conservative course; arenas here were built without debt, including the Chesapeake Arena. That good sense can't be forced upon other municipalities, but when a local government in another state decides paying for a new stadium is a good idea it doesn't mean Oklahomans should help foot the bill.

Russell's HR 811 and Lankford's Eliminating Federal Tax Subsidies for Stadiums Act would eliminate the effective subsidy by making it illegal to build stadiums with tax-exempt bonds but they would also make it possible to subsidize stadiums with taxes on tickets and in-stadium purchases.

That would shift the burden to the community that benefits, and that's exactly where it should be.

THE COLUMBIAN DISPATCH
BYRON YORK



OTHER VIEWS

Five more notes on Trump's current predicament

Not long ago I wrote that the danger President Trump faces from the various investigations into the Trump-Russia matter had changed dramatically in recent weeks. Now, in just the last few days, the situation has changed even more. In five ways:

1. The Mueller office: Investigative arm of the House

The *Washington Post* reported recently that special counsel Robert Mueller is investigating the president for possible obstruction of justice. The possibility of Trump facing legal jeopardy raises the question that has been part of every big Washington scandal involving the White House: Can a sitting president be indicted? The generally agreed-upon answer is no; impeachment is the constitutional remedy when presidential misconduct rises above a certain level. That is what would happen with Trump, if it came to that.

So what is Mueller doing, as far as the president himself is concerned? The special counsel is known to be investigating a number of figures around Trump for possible charges not related to the 2016 election. Those figures could certainly be indicted if the evidence warrants.

But as far as the investigation into alleged Trump obstruction is concerned, Mueller's work will end up not in an indictment, but in the House of Representatives. The House is constitutionally charged with originating articles of impeachment. But it does not have the investigative powers of the Justice Department and, if impeachment is on the table, will rely on the evidence Mueller gathers. Which makes Mueller's office, for the purposes of Donald Trump specifically, not a prosecutor's office but the investigative arm of the House.

2. Mueller's team of killers vs. Trump's amateurs?

Recently a Republican lawyer who supports the president and has experience in government emailed an article he had read about the team of prosecutors Mueller is assembling. "This ain't good," he headlined the email, which went on to discuss the legal stars Mueller has hired.

Contrast that, he said in a later conversation, to the Trump team, led by Trump personal lawyer Marc Kasowitz and including partner Michael Bowe and Washington legal veteran Jay Sekulow. "I look at this team and think this is a joke!" the lawyer said.

The reaction is not unusual. As far as experience in criminal prosecutions is concerned — the kind of experience that specifically relates to the issues in the Trump-Russia case — the Mueller team has a huge advantage over the Trump team. In that sense, the coming legal fight could be asymmetrical warfare.

3. Clinton-style attacks on the prosecutor?

Some Trump supporters, most notably Newt Gingrich, have begun to attack Mueller. Still, at this early date it's clear that, when it comes to attacking prosecutors, TrumpWorld has much to learn from the last president who found himself in deep legal and political trouble, Bill Clinton.

Clinton and his supporters made an art out of attacking federal prosecutors. The president's surrogates accused independent



BYRON YORK
Comment

counsel Kenneth Starr and the prosecutors who worked for him of misconduct, of leaking, of bias, of all sorts of unprofessional behavior. Clinton's lead defense attorney, David Kendall — the kind of deeply experienced Washington fighter Trump could use now — took Starr to court over leaks, while the president's other surrogates slammed the prosecutors every day on television.

In other words, when things got serious, Clinton and his team went to the mattresses against federal law enforcement. And it worked. It is in no way clear that Trump could pull off the same thing, but a war on the prosecutor may be his only option.

4. An ever-expanding investigation

Just what Trump-related subjects is Mueller investigating? A better question right now might be what Mueller is not investigating. There has been talk of looking at allegations of money laundering in the Trump circle.

And looking at the president's conversations with a wide variety of people — not just members of his administration, but friends and whoever Trump might have talked to in his nighttime call sessions. And looking at Michael Flynn's business arrangements with Turkey, Russia and other places. And Paul Manafort's business and finances. And perhaps even the Holy Grail of NeverTrumpism: the president's tax returns. And, oh, the allegation that used to be at the core of the case, that Trump or his associates colluded with Russians to try to influence the 2016 election. The point is, Mueller can determine the scope of the investigation, and if Washington history is any guide, investigations tend to expand, not contract.

5. The Comey 'what if'

A key lesson emerged from the recent testimony of Attorney General Jeff Sessions before the Senate Intelligence Committee: Without the president's decision to fire FBI Director James Comey, the Trump-Russia investigation would be on a downward trajectory. The collusion charge would be fading for lack of evidence.

Investigators would be going down side roads involving Flynn and Manafort in which the public would have little interest. And congressional investigators might even devote most of their attention to the Russian interference itself, which is the serious issue at the bottom of this whole thing. The political radioactivity of the issue would be ticking down, not up.

But not after Comey. At the Sessions hearing, Democrats had nothing new on collusion. They barely seemed interested. Instead, they focused to a great extent on trying to get Sessions to reveal what the president did or did not say in private discussions — about Comey.

On the Democratic side of the hearing — and much of the Republican side, as well — the issue was Comey, Comey, Comey. In the end, it could be that the president's impatience to get rid of Comey in order to shorten an investigation that he believed to be going nowhere resulted in a new investigation that could last the rest of Trump's time in office.

Byron York is chief political correspondent for *The Washington Examiner*.

YOUR VIEWS

Fire tax bond higher than advertised by city

We now know for sure who's idea it was to use 14 cents per thousand dollars of assessed value in the pro-May fire bond literature: Paul Chalmers.

He is Umatilla County's director of assessment and tax department, and he should know better. The two bond issues the city of Pendleton used in their propaganda to pass the fire station bond were paid off in May 2016.

(So the real tax hike was 62 cents, not 14).

In politics you can get away with just about anything. I think this was not telling the truth.

And I also asked how many private sector jobs have been produced by the drone program at the airport. The city manager and the airport manager did not know.

I guess we are not supposed to ask these kind of questions. I think that is what open meeting are for.

ReX J Morehouse
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.