

# EAST OREGONIAN

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## OUR VIEW

# A graduation on the move

Hermiston's senior class is busting at the seams with no relief in sight, and for every record-setting class that graduates, an even larger group of freshmen comes in behind.

This year 332 graduating seniors received diplomas, and each was allowed to invite five family members and friends to witness the occasion in the high school gym. In 2018, even more students are expected to walk.

And if the event is held at the same venue, each can expect to distribute four tickets.

For one of the biggest days in these young lives, that's a problem. We don't like the idea of forcing them to choose between grandparents, siblings and mentors when deciding who most deserves to witness the ceremony. And we certainly don't like the idea of uncomfortably stacking these loved ones on top of each other.

Graduation should be a joyous day, and as the school board considers the best place to hold the ceremony we hope they are keeping that front of mind.

The two outdoor locations in Hermiston are tempting for obvious reasons. Both Kennison Field and the EOTEC rodeo arena have been advertised as multi-use venues and would allow a little extra elbow room.

Kennison Field, just a few steps from the high school gym, would make sense as a transitional location while the EOTEC arena might be the long-term answer with even more seats.

Because they are both outdoors, and that's a clear drawback. Rain is rarely in our forecast in early June, though wind or high heat often are. The odds of a perfect day are not certain, and the possibility of rushing indoors at the last moment is on the table.

That's no reason not to consider it — Pendleton has been handing out diplomas at Round-Up Stadium

for several years now and has fared well. But the comfort of the graduates and their guests is a concern.

The other option being considered solves some of those problems, but adds others. The Toyota Center in Kennewick has more than enough space for every graduate's third-cousin, great-aunt and former T-ball coach. The weather inside

is always perfect, and the cost will likely be comparable to the others once transportation is finalized.

But the distance and timing are problems the school district must address. Driving to the Tri-Cities is no big deal for

Hermistonians, and with some well-planned shuttles everyone who wants to go could easily make it. The fact that event may have to take place on a weeknight instead of a Saturday morning would also hinder some travel plans.

Maybe most importantly, the connection of a graduating class to a city should not be overlooked. It's one thing to hold the graduation of one of Portland's suburban high schools at a downtown venue 20 miles away. It's another to ask a community like Hermiston to leave the state to celebrate an implicitly local event. That connection is important, and we understand those wary about such a move. Plus, the community has invested heavily in the aforementioned Kennison Field and EOTEC arena, and would surely get an additional boost of pride to see them put to such a uniquely local use.

We hope the school board listens to the feedback on this potential move and weighs even the intangible community spirit and morale in the decision.

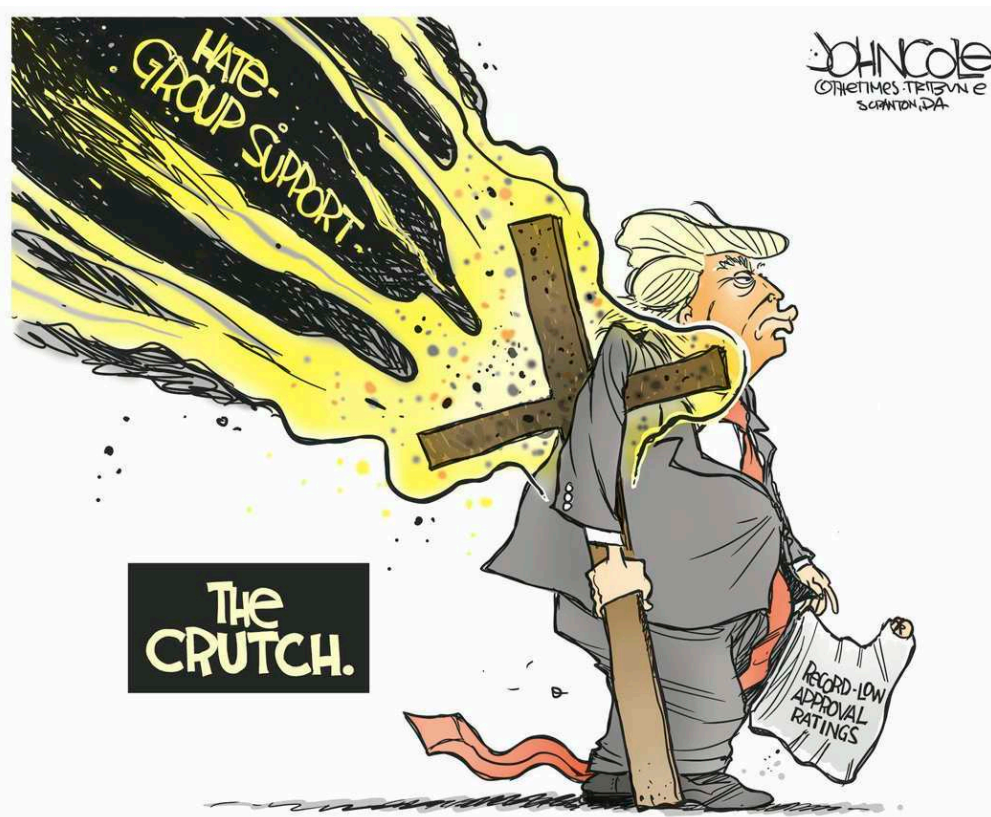
To submit your thoughts on the graduation venue, visit the district website or [www.surveymonkey.com/r/SRW5VFV](http://www.surveymonkey.com/r/SRW5VFV).

Graduation should be a joyous day, and we hope that fact is kept front of mind.

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.

## LETTERS POLICY

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## OTHER VIEWS

# Trump-backed immigration bill has many critics, but voters like it

Some Democrats and their advocates in the press have been quick to denounce the RAISE Act, the new immigration reform bill proposed by Republican Sens. Tom Cotton and David Perdue and endorsed by President Trump.

"The Trump, Cotton, Perdue bill is rooted in the same anti-immigrant, xenophobic, and isolationist rhetoric that was a cornerstone of the Trump campaign," said senior House Democrats John Conyers and Zoe Lofgren.

"A xenophobic half-measure," added Rep. Ed Markey.

"A play to the xenophobic sentiments that lifted Trump to the presidency," wrote the *Washington Post's* Jennifer Rubin.

Now, though, a new poll shows broad public support for some of the bill's key provisions — support that goes far beyond those Americans who voted for Donald Trump.

The poll, from Morning Consult-Politico, asked 1,992 registered voters about the bill's provisions to 1) allow more high-skilled, and fewer low-skilled, immigrants into the country; 2) install a points-based system by which prospective immigrants would be evaluated on the basis of English proficiency, level of education, and other factors; 3) cap the number of refugees allowed in the U.S. each year; and 4) reduce the total number of immigrants given legal permanent residence in the country to 500,000 from the current one million.

The pollsters found strong majority support for the first three, and a plurality of support for the fourth.

When asked if they support "placing greater emphasis on an applicant's job skills over their ties to family members in the U.S.," 56 percent of respondents said yes, while 31 percent said no and 13 percent did not know.

When asked if they support "establishing a 'points system' that would award points based on criteria such as education, English-language ability, and prospective salary," 61 percent said yes, while 27 percent said no and 12 percent did not know. (Respondents particularly approved an emphasis on speaking English; when asked if they believe an ability to speak English "should be a factor in determining who is allowed to legally immigrate to the United States," 62 percent said yes, while 29 percent said no and 10 percent did not know.)

When asked if they support "limiting the number of refugees offered permanent residency," 59 percent said yes, while 31

percent said no and 11 percent did not know.

Finally, when asked if they support "reducing the number of legal immigrants by one-half over the next decade," 48 percent said yes, while 39 percent said no and 14 percent did not know.

"Large majorities of Americans have long wanted to re-orient our immigration system toward high-skilled workers, while reducing or holding steady the total number of immigrants," Cotton said in a text exchange recently. "The RAISE Act respects this popular consensus, unlike past efforts at immigration reform that failed in part because they massively expanded unskilled immigration."

Cotton appeared to choose his words carefully when he wrote "reducing or holding steady the total number of immigrants." The part of the bill that would cut the number of legal permanent residents from

one million to 500,000 per year is the one major component that doesn't have majority support in the poll, although it has more support than any other option. In the weeks and months ahead, the bill's sponsors could either try to build support for that provision or compromise on the total reduction.

The Cotton-Perdue bill has of course been slammed by Democrats, but it has also been criticized by the Republicans who wrote the Senate Gang of Eight bill in 2013, the last (unsuccessful) effort to pass comprehensive immigration reform.

"I don't want to limit legal immigration," Gang of Eight member Marco Rubio said recently, predicting the new bill will not pass the Senate. Fellow Gang member Lindsey Graham, from South Carolina, said the bill would be "devastating to our state's economy." John McCain, another Gang member, opposes shifting to a high-skilled immigrant force. "I think you have to consider that we do want high-tech people, but we also need low-skilled people who will do what Americans won't do," McCain said. And the final GOP Gang member, Jeff Flake, who describes elements of the Republican Party as xenophobic and anti-immigrant, said the new bill represents "the wrong direction."

Such opinions track those of many Democrats, which will make any path forward in the Senate an uphill climb. But if the new poll is correct — and it is in line with similar surveys going back years — the bill's authors have the voters on their side.

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



BYRON YORK  
Comment

Support goes far beyond those who voted for Donald Trump.

## OTHER VIEWS

# Suggestion box needed for 2018 county fair

By TOM MARKS

Initially this op-ed was intended to be titled "What do we need to do to get our county fair back?" Upon delivering entries to the event center, this writer was astonished and appalled. After spending four days at the fair this opinion may have been changed ... a bit.

Regardless of the spin that officials selling the EOTEC project tried to throw at the public when the site and buildings were conceived, reality has been a shock. We were told that the amount of square feet lost (at the old site) and the amount that would be available at EOTEC would balance out or be better at EOTEC.

On arriving at the event center, one finds that while the floral and land produce departments previously enjoyed a full building, they were now consigned to a long narrow hall, poorly lit at best.

Formerly occupying half a large building, children's open class exhibits were crammed in a small corner of the EOTEC lobby. Preserved foods were similarly

treated, cramped into a poorly lit hallway instead of the roomy display area previously enjoyed.

Open class photography and fine arts have separate rooms, yet the square feet available felt greatly reduced. Fabric arts and general open class entries share a room, but again the space available was cramped. Quilts, in particular, overflowed the allotted room and some entries ended up on racks along the same hallway as the preserved foods. This, even though caretakers at the rooms and halls freely admitted that entries were down from previous years.

FFA and 4-H, previously enjoying the entirety of Thompson Hall and all its facilities, were pushed to the back of the event center in, at best, cramped quarters.

At least with regard to all these departments, the promise of EOTEC of "bigger, better, more up-to-date" has proven hollow. About the best that could be said in comparison to the previous downtown site is that the new one is adequately air conditioned.

That is not to say that the many, many people involved in putting

on the event didn't do the best with what they had to work with. They did. The effort needed to put on this year's fair has to be applauded.

The department chairs, the people sitting long hours tending exhibits, the countless volunteers doing multiple jobs without complaint and for the most part without overt recognition must be recognized and thanked.

Outside the event center, things were more in line with what we had been promised at the EOTEC site. Commercial displays were well plotted, accessible, if spread to the point that good walking shoes were a must. The lack of shade to relax in was a challenge for many, but the Hermiston Rotary Club has committed to planting trees before next year's fair.

The rodeo grounds were a pleasant surprise, with much of the facilities from the downtown site

being moved wholesale to EOTEC. To sit in the reserved seating or box seats, it felt very much like the old venue.

The Rotary Club has been tapped with selling admission tickets for many years. They might wish to invest in insulation for the ticket booths before the tree project.

Ticket booths, uninsulated and out in the sun, were unaffectionately thought of as "Sweatbox 1 and 2" by those who worked within them.

Lastly, in a column some years ago, this writer wondered about parking at the EOTEC site. To lament the nightmare of the parking situation would be to beat a dead horse. It was and probably will continue to be a challenge. To require fairgoers to pay to tramp through dust and grit to even access the shuttles is unacceptable.

Many of the issues with the fair this year can be put off to "first year blues." Some cannot.

As anticipated, access and egress were horrid. The exit road at places felt as if it should have had a "4-wheel drive recommended" sign. To their credit, the fair board "tweaked" the access and egress beginning at Day 3 and it helped some.

In talking to the county commissioners and fair board, one was met with slightly defensive attitudes and their watchwords for the event: "Add it to the list for improvements next year!"

Yes, many of the needs and issues with the fair this year can be put off to "first year blues." Some cannot. The fair has not hired a manager at this writing. The membership of the EOTEC board is not independent of the city and county, causing inevitable conflicts of interest.

As I confessed at the beginning of this commentary, originally the title was to be: "What can we do to get our old fair back?" In future years that title might soften; time will tell.

Tom Marks is a resident of Hermiston.