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OUR VIEW

ICE goes too far in carrying out Trump's immigration policies

There is growing discomfort about recurring news of immigration arrests in sensitive places and circumstances in the Pacific Northwest.

We expect agencies including U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement and the FBI to actively seek out and interdict threats to internal security. Competent national law enforcement meets with widespread approval, providing some peace of mind in a world where America's interests are under attack by radical ideologues.

The ICE mission statement includes, "To identify, arrest, and remove aliens who present a danger to national security or are a risk to public safety, as well as those who enter the United States illegally or otherwise undermine the integrity of our immigration laws and our border control efforts. Enforcement and Removal Operations upholds America's immigration laws at, within and beyond our borders through efficient enforcement and removal operations."

In and of itself, this doesn't raise many red flags.

There are, however, limits to our confidence and support. At one end of the scale, deadly attacks like those in New York City this week and in Las Vegas on Oct. 1 demonstrate ineffectiveness at stopping determined "lone wolf" assailants. And on the other side of the scale, mass arrests and detentions of inoffensive working immigrants raise questions about how much our democracy is willing to tolerate.

In an Tuesday story, *Willamette Week* reported three "controversial arrests in the Portland area raised fears that U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement agents are breaking federal laws and their own rules."

The most recent of these incidents involved arrest of an undocumented immigrant at a bus stop just outside after he left Legacy Emanuel Health Center in north Portland. ICE agents are supposed to be barred by agency policies from making arrests in "sensitive locations" including hospitals, schools and churches. A variety of motivations guide this policy — including a public health and humanitarian interest in allowing sick people to obtain medical care. From ICE's perspective, slapping handcuffs on someone in or near a sensitive location results in bad political optics and negative publicity.

The three known questionable arrests in Oregon lead to concerns about how many have gone unreported.

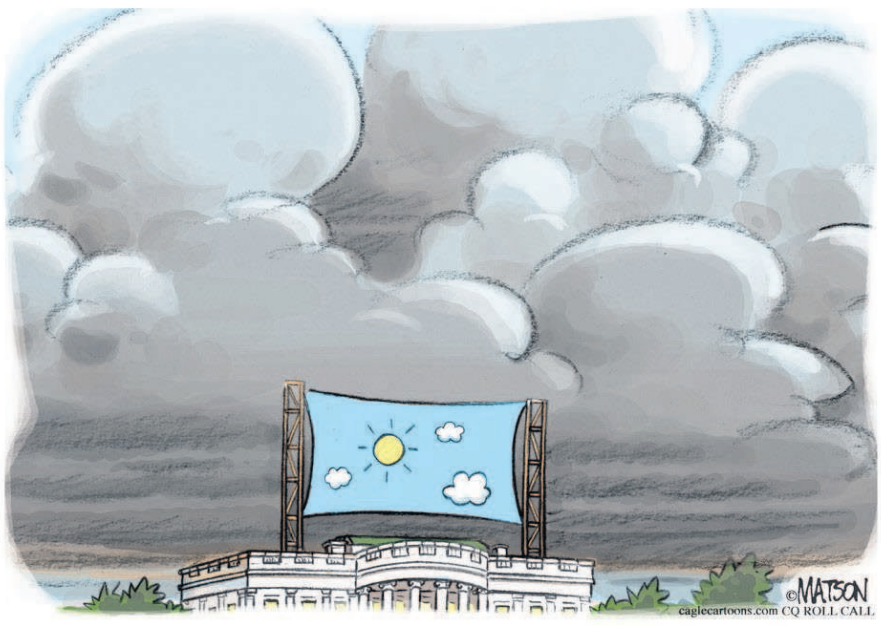
"(For) any of these actions that we've recorded or have reported on, there are likely dozens or more happening here in Oregon and around the nation every month that we just never hear about," the American Civil Liberties Union of Oregon told *Willamette Week*. "If ICE can't admit that their agents may be violating policy, I have no hope that we might see a decrease in these kinds of illegal arrests."

Immigration agents in plainclothes are reported to be approaching individuals in or near courthouses, taking them into custody without identifying themselves as ICE. This is chilling.

Detainees aren't blameless. Clearly, all have violated immigration laws. Some have arrest records or have come back across the border after an earlier deportation. The worst cases belong to gangs or have committed serious crimes.

But in the U.S., we expect all people to receive legal due process and to face proportional penalties. Absolutely, imprison and deport serious criminals. But is the wholesale destruction of families an appropriate consequence for someone who came across the border without filling out the right paperwork? More and more Americans are asking this question as ICE goes too far in carrying out President Donald Trump's promise of mass deportations.

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.



YOUR VIEWS

Why I gave up on the Democrat Party

To every Democrat in the area: I'm the former chair of the Morrow County Democratic Party. I wasn't terribly active. I'm disabled, and Morrow County isn't a liberal stronghold, but I believed it deserved to be represented in the state party, and I did my best to serve. I've been a loyal, a "yellow dog," Democrat for 30 years. After hearing excepts from Donna Brazile's book I changed my party affiliation.

I'd heard the accusations before. The Bernie Sanders supporters tried to reach out to many of us last year. However, I buried my head in the sand, and refused to hear the truth because I was terrified of a Trump presidency. Fear always leads to the wrong decisions. I was originally a Bernie Sanders supporter, but I backed the party's candidate, and dismissed the accusations from the Bernie faithful.

To many politics may be a small part of their lives. It's not in mine. I'm terribly disappointed in myself for not giving the truth a fair hearing.

I was wrong, I'm ashamed, and for the first time in three decades I'm not a Democrat. I'm not naive. Parties, like people, are flawed. I don't think anyone should follow my example. I think people should follow their conscience. I wish I had.

Gregory A. Hall
Boardman

OTHER VIEWS

National Parks for the 1 percent

TIMOTHY EGAN
Comment

America's Best Idea is now just another commodity. A president who knows the price of everything and the value of nothing, as Oscar Wilde had it, wants to make it prohibitively expensive for many to enter the most popular national parks.

You may have missed this, between the indictments, the terrorist attack, the Civil War revisionism. But the Trump administration has proposed nearly tripling the entrance fees to select national parks, to $70.

The man who loves nothing so much as his gold-plated bathroom fixtures wants to gouge people who want to experience something that all of Donald Trump's minions could never create. It's a teardrop in the federal budget, but is emblematic of the ocean of wrong coming from this president.

First, we already own these parks — Glacier, Olympic, Mount Rainier, Zion, Yellowstone, the names themselves music to lovers of magic in the natural world. They are a birthright of citizenship.

Second, the Trump administration wants to jack up the price of admission to our most spectacular public lands while moving to cut the Park Service budget by almost $300 million. The new fees would add $70 million. Go figure. His attacks on the parks would be the biggest cut to the agency since World War II.

Third, he not only wants to make it more costly to get into beloved public places, he also plans to take away land already protected in ways similar to national parks. He told Sen. Orrin Hatch, R-Utah, he's going to shrink two extraordinary national monuments — "for you, Orrin." It's a corrupt-sounding gift to a senator, and a giveaway of a public trust. No drain of this swamp.

But this is the Trump ethos. There's always a velvet rope — coming soon, at the rim of the Grand Canyon — a place for VIPs, deal-makers and insiders, and too bad for everyone else.

It may sound like no big deal — raising admission fees in the 17 parks targeted for price gouging — when Trump's government is running a $660 billion deficit. You'd pay $107 to get into Disney World. But national parks are not theme parks, market-driven to match the latest entertainment blockbusters.

All national parks should be free, like the great museums of Washington. We should care for these special places with a budget commensurate to their value, treating them like the huge income generators they are, producing $34 billion to local businesses. Instead, we starve them nearly to death.

In the bizarro world of this administration, taxpayers are being asked to subsidize a dying industry, coal mining, while their government is slashing the budget for a growing one that is responsible for four times as many jobs.

We saw again this week how confused so many people are about basic elements of our history. When a general, Trump Chief of Staff John Kelly, doesn't even have a grade-school understanding of the Civil War, you know we need more park-uniformed historians.

Kelly should visit the national battlefield at Antietam, site of the bloodiest single day in our history. Or walk up the slope of the national military park at Fredericksburg, Virginia. There, the Union Army's Irish Brigade was slaughtered by the slaveholding forces of Gen. Robert E. Lee.

The park service keeps that vital history alive. Trump's budget would drastically cut money for historic preservation, and eliminate more than 1,200 full-time employees.

> All national parks should be free, like the great museums of Washington.

It's too bad that the statue of Teddy Roosevelt in front of the American Museum of Natural History was recently defaced, which a handful of extremists took responsibility for. Roosevelt was a founding progressive voice who saw parks and public land as a basic right.

National parks are "as uniquely American as the Declaration of Independence and just as radical," wrote Dayton Duncan, a parks historian and a co-writer of many a Ken Burns documentary.

Ryan Zinke, the thin-skinned and very strange secretary of the interior, says the price hikes for select parks are necessary to ensure their preservation. Yes, the parks have a huge backlog of things that need to be fixed. Broken toilets, pockmarked roads, untended trails. And yet, there were 331 million visits to these much-loved and abused places last year — a record.

The solution is not to make it more difficult for those who are financially struggling to see their parks. Yes, again, their parks.

We could, for instance, not build Trump's nonsensical border wall, which looks like it will cost upward of $20 billion, more than eight times the entire proposed budget for the Park Service. (Wait — wasn't Mexico supposed to pay for that?)

Or we could keep the estate tax, which effects only about 1 out of every 500 people who die every year, and raises $20 billion as well. The bigger question, after all, is about inheritance: What would we rather pass on to our children?

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Timothy Egan worked for 18 years as a writer for The New York Times, first as the Pacific Northwest correspondent, then as a national enterprise reporter.

OTHER VIEWS

Doctors taking responsibility for opioid addiction problems

Roseburg News-Review

They say the first step to overcoming addiction is admitting that you have a problem.

It's true for addicts, and maybe it's true for others who've contributed to the problem. That's why it's nice to see a local group of 35 doctors acknowledge that the excess prescriptions doctors write have helped fuel the rise in addictions in America, and in Douglas County.

Opioid pain medication can be a godsend following surgery. It's natural for doctors to want to help people who are suffering from pain. We get that.

But the over-prescription of medications like oxycodone can lead to addictions, either in the people prescribed the pills, or the people who find the leftover pills. Four out of five heroin users were first addicted to prescription opioids, and 70 percent of them found their first pills in the medicine cabinet at home. Some of them were teenagers.

Oregon residents have the second highest rate of opioid abuse in the nation.

Opioid addiction is dangerous, and potentially deadly. Each year, about 60,000 people die of drug overdoses. Most of these deaths are a result of addiction to painkillers.

Locally, a group of surgeons and other medical professionals are taking action to prevent such deaths happening in Douglas County. They hope to decrease the number of painkiller pills in circulation. One of their ideas is to initiate a drug take-back program. They'd like to see Mercy Medical Center and local clinics and pharmacies collect unused pain pills.

They also want to encourage doctors to take responsibility by reducing the number of pills they prescribe.

These are important steps, and we applaud them. Drug addiction causes a lot of misery in our community. We're glad to see doctors stepping up to do something about it.

LETTERS POLICY

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