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OUR VIEW

Pie in the sky, costs on the ground

Governor's energy orders set unrealistic construction standards

Gov. Kate Brown issued two executive orders last week that she said would reduce greenhouse emissions while supporting Oregon's economy.

The environmental aspects were obvious. The economic ones? Not so much. The Governor's Office has yet to release any analysis of how her fiats would affect the economy, especially construction costs.

That should concern Oregonians. So too should the governor's decision to bypass the Legislature in revising the state building code.

As head of the executive branch, Brown certainly was within her rights to expand purchases of electric vehicles for state use and to require increased energy efficiency when the state builds or remodels its government buildings. The Legislature ultimately will decide whether to fund those decisions.

But in her 17 pages of executive orders, Brown also demanded changes to building regulations that affect all construction in Oregon, including requiring that new buildings be ready for installation of solar panels. That mandate would take effect in October 2020 for residences and October 2022 for commercial buildings.

By January 2020, high-efficiency water fixtures would be required in new buildings.

By October 2022, new commercial buildings would have to exceed International Green

Construction Code requirements. By October 2023, new residences would have to consume no more energy than they generate. By October 2025, new commercial structures would have to safely reuse water for irrigation.

Those changes, and others, during the next two to eight years sound good in theory. Brown says Oregonians will save money on utility costs and — with the

emphasis on electric vehicles — on fuel. There also are provisions that some requirements could be temporarily delayed if the costs are "significant," although that term is left undefined.

But in practicality, this seems like a classic case of putting the cart — in this case, an electric one —

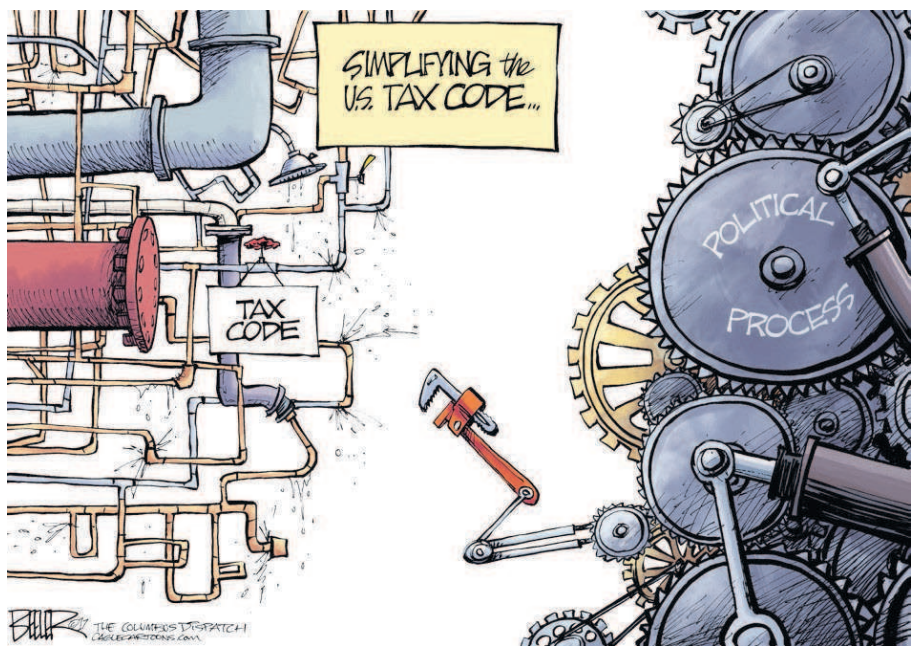
before the horse. Brown provided no evidence that her executive orders involved give-and-take discussions with the construction industry, private property owners and other Oregonians throughout the state.

If state government wants to place unfunded mandates on itself, that's one thing. But it's quite different to put those mandates on the private sector without first understanding the resulting financial and social costs.

Running a business, especially a small business, is tough enough in Oregon. So is getting a housing development to break ground in Eastern Oregon. Every government mandate increases both the cost and uncertainty of doing business.

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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.



OTHER VIEWS



MATSON CO. ROLL CALL. caglecartoons.com

Roy Moore should face defamation suit from God

For decades, one of the most sanctimonious moralizers in U.S. politics has been Roy Moore, the longtime Bible-thumper in Alabama who crusaded against gays, transgender people, Islam and "sexual perversion."

Moore suggested just this year that the 9/11 terror attacks were God's punishment because "we legitimize sodomy." He has said homosexuality is "the same thing" as sex with a cow and should be criminalized, and argued that Rep. Keith Ellison should not be allowed to serve in Congress because he is a Muslim.

All the while, Moore seems to have been the king of hypocrisy. *The Washington Post* published a devastating account of how he initiated a sexual encounter with a 14-year-old schoolgirl.

The victim said that Moore, then a 32-year-old assistant district attorney, drove the girl to his house, removed her clothes and touched her sexually. Under Alabama law, that apparently constitutes sexual abuse in the second degree. If you want an example of a politician who lost support and was arrested for less egregious behavior, consider Anthony Weiner, the former Democratic member of Congress, who is now in prison for sexting a 15-year-old girl.

The Post found three other women who said that Moore pursued them when he was in his 30s and they were teenagers. The women did not contact *The Post* and were initially reluctant to speak.

Moore denies the accusations as "completely false" — and promptly tried to use them for fundraising. My reaction was that Moore should have spent less time thundering about the Ten Commandments and more time reading them.

This is of course a larger pattern in American life. As one reader put it on my Facebook page: "Those who moralize most, sin most."

That's not always true, and sanctimonious hypocrites inhabit the left as well as the right: Harvey Weinstein participated in a "women's march." But we're at a watershed moment in the aftermath of the Weinstein case, trying to end impunity for sexual assault, and allegations against our leaders are even more serious than those against our entertainers. And, frankly, it's just staggering to see "family values" conservatives making excuses for child molestation.

The Alabama state auditor, a Republican named Jim Ziegler, defended Moore as "clean as a hound's tooth" and offered a bizarre defense of child abuse: He asserted that the Virgin Mary was a teenager when Joseph married her (in fact, the Bible does not indicate her age), adding: "They became parents of Jesus."

Sigh. When Christians cite the Bible to defend child molestation, Jesus should sue for defamation.

Meanwhile, an Alabama Republican legislator, Ed Henry, went even further: He said that the women accusing Moore should be prosecuted for waiting to make their allegations.



NICHOLAS KRISTOF
Comment

Looking back, some of the grossest immorality of the late 20th century had nothing to do with gay bath houses, as preachers sometimes suggested, but rather with the blowhard televangelists who suggested that AIDS was God's punishment of gay men. This smirking moralizing slowed the response to AIDS and arguably resulted in millions dying unnecessarily all over the world.

In my columns, I've repeatedly defended evangelical Christians and protested that they are one of the few groups that it's socially acceptable for liberals to mock, stereotype and discriminate against. Some liberals still haven't forgiven me for my "Hug an Evangelical" column 13 years ago. But I find it infuriating to see some evangelicals now downplaying child molestation or our president's boasts of sexual assault.

We all make compromises — I supported Bill Clinton in 1992 over George H.W. Bush, whom I thought was personally more moral — but that doesn't require downplaying the inexcusable. I used to complain that conservatives believe that morality is about only personal behavior, while liberals believe it is only about policy positions, while actually it's about both. Sadly, some of the "family values" conservatives now don't seem to care about either private or public morality.

If evangelical Christians want to engage in activism, they needn't support hypocrites and bigots; they can support lifesaving organizations like World Vision or African Mission Healthcare Foundation, or fight human trafficking by supporting International Justice Mission, or reduce abortions by backing the National Campaign to Prevent Teen and Unplanned Pregnancy.

As it happened, just before the revelations about Moore became public, I visited leaders of an inspiring tri-faith project in Omaha, Nebraska, where a church, a synagogue and a mosque are partnering on a shared site to build empathy and understanding. I asked the pastor involved, the Rev. Eric Elnes, for his reaction to Moore.

"Blazing with self-righteous indignation toward others is often what people use to hide their own sins in the shadows," Elnes said. "This is probably why Jesus' biggest problem — by far — was with the self-righteous. When it came to those whom society cast away as 'sinners,' Jesus was repeatedly gentle, gracious, encouraging and forgiving, but he continually castigated the self-righteous."

Elnes added: "I've never understood why certain Christians are so eager to turn the United States into a Christian country when their time would be so much better spent turning their churches into Christian churches."

Roy Moore today is a challenge for those who see themselves as good and decent people of faith: If you find yourself excusing child molestation, then you are driven not by morality or faith, but simply by the emptiest kind of tribalism.

Nicholas D. Kristof, a columnist for The Times since 2001, is a two-time Pulitzer Prize winner who grew up on a sheep farm in Yamhill, Oregon.

YOUR VIEWS

Westland needs a farmer like Jack Bellinger

Much can be said for Jack Bellinger's experience and impact as a director on the Westland Board. However, I would also like to highlight his excellent contributions as a member of the local community.

A skilled and hardworking farmer, Jack has expanded his second generation farm from small scale to a thriving 900-acre operation. Watermelons are among Bellinger Farms' most familiar offerings, and the Bellinger shop just outside of Hermiston is another familiar marker in the community. In recent years, Jack and his wife expanded the shop further to include the Gathering Place restaurant.

Jack runs a successful farm and business with the community in mind. This is exactly the type of individual Westland needs on its board of directors. He is a great communicator and willing listener who welcomes patron feedback and comments. This is illustrated through his offer to meet with groups of district patrons to discuss concerns and answer questions. Jack understands the local region and the importance of water to it.

Jack approaches his position on the Westland board of directors the same way

he approaches his business and farming endeavors: with a strong work ethic, well-informed insights, and a continued willingness to improve and succeed. I encourage patrons of Westland Irrigation District to cast their vote next Tuesday to re-elect Jack Bellinger.

Jake Madison
Echo

Movers, shakers and my friends

Recently, I was approached by a local citizen who was plenty upset after reading a recent letter I had written that was published in the *East Oregonian*. Apparently he feels that I'm too sarcastic in my criticism of some actions taken by our City Hall. I explained that I was just expressing not only my views, but also those of friends and acquaintances. That was when he set me straight, letting me know that I was hanging around with the wrong people and making comments that were dividing the city. His parting remarks were, grow up, get with it, and support the local "movers and shakers" of the community because they know what's best for everyone.

My self-confidence was shaken to learn that since childhood, I had been associating with the wrong people. It turns out that

the education I received in the Pendleton public school system regarding democratic principles was nothing but hogwash, and that real world experience, mostly military duty overseas, meant nothing. Evidently, what I needed was his strong dose of reality to set me on the right path.

Actually, after the last election I was somewhat optimistic that politics as usual was in for a change. Goals were established to correct the neglect of city buildings and infrastructure. Goals that made sense. Activities such as Pendleton Bike Week, the summer concert series, Oktoberfest and Cattle Barons Weekend were maturing on the tourism front, and the UAV program began to produce results at the airport. However, with all this new prosperity, I fear City Hall is losing its focus and drifting away from their established goals, shifting its support to expensive private or special

interest projects that benefit few.

We've taken on a lot of debt with the infrastructure updates and airport construction projects. Projects at the airport, financed partially with a large state grant that the governor presented with great fanfare, which will most likely turn in to a loan that must be repaid for the failure to create the required number of jobs. Infrastructure loans that we, you and I, must repay directly through increased utility rates and fees. Consequently, it's time for City Hall to refocus on those agreed-upon goals and start by saying "no" to those nonprofits and committees asking for funding of projects that have little public support.

As for those "movers and shakers?" I think I'd rather keep with the friends and acquaintances I've made growing up here.

Rick Rohde
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.