

# EAST OREGONIAN

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## OUR VIEW

# Control your gun

Perhaps no stories are more difficult to write and read than those about young children harmed through no fault of their own.

Sometimes this is due to health issues, other times accidents or crimes. No matter the cause, it's excruciating each and every time.

This week we reported one such incident, in which a Hermiston toddler was shot and injured by a sibling, just 7 years old, who got control of a loaded gun and fired it.

It's a devastating story. The longterm prognosis for the 2-year-old boy is unknown, the bullet from the Beretta handgun having struck him in his head. No charges have been filed in the case thus far.

But it reminds us of the value of actual gun control. Not some government conspiracy to take weapons away from American citizens, but the call for personal responsibility over your own firearms. In other words: Gun control as controlling your guns and not letting them get into the hands of children, those you don't know, or those who wish to do others harm.

Control of your own guns, both in your hand and in your home, is critical to the fight against needless gun deaths and injuries.

Centers for Disease Control estimated 77 children died from accidental gun discharges in 2015, the latest data on record, but the Associated Press counted 141 cases that year reported in the media.

How do we reduce these unnecessary, tragic deaths? One simple way is via gun locks — simple devices that should be used in

every household, especially homes with young children. The locks keep a gun from being fired as long as they are affixed. A key is kept in a separate place. It's unknown if a gun lock in this specific situation was used or would have stopped this tragedy — but in general they are a critical safety tool.

Gun safes are critical, too. Storing ammunition in a safe place out of the reach of children, and in a separate place from where weapons are kept, should go without saying. And it's ridiculous that we even have

to mention this, but guns should never be left loaded, in the open for anyone to grab. If doing so leads to serious injury or death, it should be prosecuted as a crime. We must also add responsible cleaning and maintenance of firearms, as well as gun safety at the shooting range and in the field.

At the base level, gun control is predicated on self control — teaching the value and responsibility of owning and using firearms.

"It goes without saying that this is an incredibly horrible incident for the involved family, and the officers who responded, the medical professionals who treated the child, and the community as a whole," the Hermiston Police Department stated in its initial press release. "If you own firearms, we urge you to store them in a safe manner to prevent unauthorized access."

That means you. Do it now. Gun locks are available for free at Hermiston PD and the Umatilla County Sheriff's Office in Pendleton.

**It's your responsibility and your lawful duty to keep your firearms safe and secure.**

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

# Can counties assert local control over federal land?

The Eugene Register-Guard

People who supported the aims but not the tactics of last year's armed takeover of the Malheur National Wildlife Refuge think they've found a way to gain a greater degree of local control over federal lands. Last week the Crook County commissioners adopted a Natural Resources Policy that asserts a doctrine of "coordination" based on federal law. The doctrine would give the counties what amounts to veto power over federal land management decisions. Supporters of this approach are bound to be disappointed.

Close to half the land in Crook County is managed by the U.S. Forest Service or the Bureau of Land Management — and if some of those agencies' decisions were put to a local vote they'd be soundly defeated. Crook County's economy has historically depended on logging and ranching, both of which have been curtailed in recent decades by federal environmental and land management laws.

But there's a reason the agencies' decisions aren't subject to local votes: The Forest Service and BLM manage public lands on behalf of all Americans, not just those who live nearby. Crook County can't dictate how many cattle can graze on BLM rangeland, or how much timber should be logged in the Ochoco National Forest, because citizens in the nation's 3,141 other counties and parishes also have a right to insist that their ownership interests are protected.

Federal laws governing public lands generally grant local communities a role in decision-making, and federal agencies are required to coordinate their policies with state and local authorities. Crook

County has taken this requirement and pushed it beyond the limit. Coordination, the Natural Resources Policy claims, essentially means that federal lands must be managed in ways that reflect local priorities.

Baker County in Eastern Oregon and Owyhee County in Idaho have approved similar policies, and the idea seems likely to spread. Its chief legal theorist is Wyoming attorney Karen Budd-Falen, who visited the Crook County seat of Prineville last March. "The federal statutes are so broad that it's actually not that hard to write a local land use plan that is completely in line with federal statutes," *The (Portland) Oregonian* quoted her as saying. Budd-Falen was a member of President Trump's transition team, and her name is mentioned as a potential nominee to lead the BLM.

Even as head of the BLM, Budd-Falen would be stymied in any attempt to surrender much of her agency's authority to local governments. In a landmark 1987 decision, *Granite Rock vs. California Coastal Commission*, the Supreme Court upheld federal supremacy in the management of federal lands. Neither the White House nor Congress is likely to pursue an erosion of this supremacy — whether they favor preservation or exploitation of natural resources on public lands, the executive and legislative branches don't want their priorities vetoed at the local level.

Coordination can and does occur in many forms of federal land-use planning. Examples include the collaborative plans developed for both the Malheur refuge and the Ochoco forest. These plans attempt to balance competing interests — a difficult but often fruitful effort that Crook and other counties should continue to pursue.

**Coordination essentially means that federal lands must be managed in ways that reflect local priorities.**



## OTHER VIEWS

# I believe Juanita

On Friday evening MSNBC host Chris Hayes sent out a tweet that electrified online conservatives: "As gross and cynical and hypocritical as the right's 'what about Bill Clinton' stuff is, it's also true that Democrats and the center left are overdue for a real reckoning with the allegations against him." Hayes' tweet inspired stories on Glenn Beck's *The Blaze*, Breitbart and *The Daily Caller*, all apparently eager to use the Clinton scandals to derail discussions about Roy Moore, the Republican nominee for the U.S. Senate in Alabama who is accused of sexually assaulting minors.

Yet despite the right's evident bad faith, I agree with Hayes. In this #MeToo moment, when we're reassessing decades of male misbehavior and turning open secrets into exposés, we should look clearly at the credible evidence that Juanita Broaddrick told the truth when she accused Clinton of raping her. But revisiting the Clinton scandals in light of today's politics is complicated as well as painful. Democrats are guilty of apologizing for Clinton when they shouldn't have. At the same time, looking back at the smear campaign against the Clintons shows we can't treat the feminist injunction to "believe women" as absolute.

Writing at *Crooked.com*, Brian Beutler warns that in future elections, right-wing propaganda will exploit the progressive commitment to always taking sexual abuse charges seriously. It's easy to imagine an outlet like Breitbart leveraging the "believe women" rallying cry to force mainstream media coverage of dubious accusations.

The Clinton years, in which epistemological warfare emerged as a key part of the Republican political arsenal, show us why we should be wary of allegations that bubble up from the right-wing press. At the time, reactionary billionaire Richard Mellon Scaife was bankrolling the Arkansas Project, which David Brock, the former right-wing journalist who played a major role in it, described as a "multimillion-dollar dirty tricks operation against the Clintons." Various figures in conservative media accused Bill Clinton of murder, drug-running and using state troopers as pimps. Brock alleges that right-wing figures funneled money to some of Clinton's accusers.

In this environment, it would have been absurd to take accusations of assault and harassment made against Clinton at face value. On Monday, Caitlin Flanagan, perhaps taking up Hayes' challenge, urged liberals to remember some of what Clinton is said to have done. "Kathleen Willey said that she met him in the Oval Office for personal and professional advice and that he groped her, rubbed his erect penis on her, and pushed her hand to his crotch," Flanagan wrote, recalling the charges Willey first made in 1998. It sounds both familiar and plausible. But Willey also accused the Clintons of having her

husband and then her cat killed. Must we believe that, too?

Similarly, there are reasons to be at least unsure about Paula Jones' claim that Clinton exposed himself to her and demanded oral sex. Jones was championed by people engaged in what Ann Coulter once proudly called "a small, intricately knit right-wing conspiracy" to bring down the president. She described "distinguishing characteristics" of Clinton's penis that turned out to

be inaccurate. Her sister insisted to Sidney Blumenthal, then a *New Yorker* writer, that she was lying. Should feminists have backed her anyway? I'm still not sure, but the evidence was less definitive than that against Harvey Weinstein, Trump or Moore.

Of the Clinton accusers, the one who haunts me is Broaddrick. The story she tells about Clinton recalls those we've heard about Weinstein. She claimed they had plans to meet in a hotel coffee shop, but at the last minute he asked

to come up to her hotel room instead, where he raped her. Five witnesses said she confided in them about the assault right after it happened. It's true that she denied the rape in an affidavit to Paula Jones' lawyers, before changing her story when talking to federal investigators. But her explanation, that she didn't want to go public but couldn't lie to the FBI, makes sense. Put simply, I believe her.

What to do with that belief? Contemplating this history is excruciating in part because of the way it has been weaponized against Hillary Clinton. Broaddrick sees her as complicit, interpreting something Hillary once said to her at a political event — "I want you to know that we appreciate everything you do for Bill" — as a veiled threat instead of a rote greeting. This seems wildly unlikely; Broaddrick was decades away from going public, and most reporting about the Clinton marriage shows Bill going to great lengths to hide his betrayals. Nevertheless, one of the sick ironies of the 2016 campaign was that it was Hillary who had to pay the political price for Bill's misdeeds, as they were trotted out to deflect attention from Trump's well-documented transgressions.

And now they're being trotted out again. It's fair to conclude that because of Broaddrick's allegations, Bill Clinton no longer has a place in decent society. But we should remember that it's not simply partisan tribalism that led liberals to doubt her. Discerning what might be true in a blizzard of lies isn't easy, and the people who spread those lies don't get to claim the moral high ground. We should err on the side of believing women, but sometimes, that belief will be used against us.

Michelle Goldberg, a *New York Times* op-ed columnist, covers politics, gender, religion and ideology.

## YOUR VIEWS

### Violation of pesticide law a symbol of bigger problems

Imagine if our local political leadership worked toward passing laws treating drug dealers similar to noxious weeds. Drug dealers are invasive, traveling county to county, crossing state lines.

They distribute harmful poison in a faulty, careless and negligent manner. Their injurious poisons are changing and killing our young adults by biologically impairing rational thinking. Their contaminating poisons develop a brain disease that makes you too selfish to see the havoc you created or care about the people whose lives you have shattered.

The heartache drug dealers cultivate for families is indescribable as someone they love turns into someone they don't know. Methamphetamine and heroin addiction grows criminal drug addicts.

Daniel Webster wrote: "Let us not forget that the cultivation of the earth is the most important labor of man. When tillage begins, other arts will follow." The farmers, therefore, are the founders of civilization.

In the fall 2017 Oregon Department of Agriculture Pesticide Bulletin, notices of violations were announced. Part of the responsibilities of the Oregon Department of Agriculture's pesticides program is to investigate pesticide complaints, determine compliance with the Oregon Pesticide Control Act and initiate any administrative actions deemed necessary.

Umatilla County Commissioner Larry Givens was issued a violation for performing pesticide applications activities in a faulty, careless or negligent manner.

It reminds us that little duties neglected bring great downfalls.

Sally Sundin  
Walla Walla

## 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.