

# EAST OREGONIAN

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## OUR VIEW

# Oregon's future depends on new arrivals

The English poet John Donne famously wrote, "No man is an island," in 1624. His belief that all humans are intertwined applies equally well four centuries later in Oregon.

Although Donne wasn't mentioned by name, his message — in 21st century language, "we're all in this together" — was an underlying theme of the state economic and revenue forecasts presented to the Legislature on Wednesday.

The message from Oregon's state economists was dark humor: Oregon's economy will continue growing, although at a slower pace, unless something happens like war with North Korea.

It was surprising: As Oregon's population ages, by 2029 more people will be dying than being born in the state. That makes Oregon's economy increasingly dependent on people moving here from other states.

It was obvious: The issue of housing affordability has spread from urban Oregon into rural areas, and Oregon's situation is worse than in many states.

It was reassuring: Jobs are increasing in rural Oregon as companies in urban areas confront a lack of workers and an inadequate supply of land for expansion.

And it was ironic: The federal tax reforms making their way through Congress will reduce Oregonians' federal income taxes. That, in turn, will increase their state income

taxes because they have less federal tax to deduct. The state government could gain so much more revenue that it causes the income tax "kicker" to take effect, providing taxpayers with a rebate in two years.

These changes create challenges for employers and communities alike.

For employers, how can they mentally retool their operations to take advantage of Oregon's aging population, including the retirees moving in from California and other states? The experience and work ethic of older Oregonians make them a valuable commodity — if employers adjust their business

operations, such as offering part-time and seasonal work for semi-retirees.

For communities, the challenge will be to integrate these new arrivals into a culture that might seem alien to them. For example, many will be used to paying sales taxes and pumping their own gas. Unaccustomed to "Oregon nice," some will flaunt their car horns at the slightest irritation. Rain may be perceived as an excuse not to enjoy the outdoors.

Their economic presence is needed to keep the economy growing; otherwise, the economy will retreat and neighborhoods will die.

These new arrivals will adapt and change. And they will change Oregon.

**As Oregon's population ages, by 2029 more people will be dying than being born in the state.**

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

### Hate crimes are an attack on identity

*The Washington Post*

An FBI report on hate crimes tells a sobering story. For the second year in a row, police departments across the country reported a rise in the number of crimes motivated by bias.

In 2016, the FBI counted 6,121 reported incidents nationwide — an increase of 4.6 percent from 2015, during which 5,850 cases were reported. That number, in turn, marked a 6.8 percent increase in reported hate crimes over 2014. Roughly 58 percent of such attacks last year were motivated by racial bias, of which about half targeted African Americans. Of the 21 percent of crimes fueled by animosity toward the victim's religion, more than half the attacks were aimed at Jews, a quarter at Muslims.

The sharp rise in crimes against Muslims and people of Arab descent is particularly troubling. Racially motivated attacks on Arabs jumped 38 percent from 2015, the first year in which the FBI requested data on such crimes. And attacks on Muslims, which spiked 67 percent in 2015, rose an additional 19 percent last year to more than 300 reported incidents. That makes 2016 the year with the highest number of hate crimes against Muslims since 2001, following the 9/11 attacks.

Meanwhile, crimes against Latinos and against white people rose 15 percent and 17 percent, respectively, from 2015. Crimes against transgender people went up 44 percent.

The FBI's report doesn't draw

conclusions as to what might be behind this disturbing rise in hate. But it's noteworthy that many of the groups against whom crimes rose by double digits were the focus of inflammatory rhetoric by Donald Trump over the course of his presidential campaign. Likewise, the FBI data shows a sharp rise in bias-motivated incidents in the months around the 2016 election — confirming reports by the Anti-Defamation League and others of a surge of attacks on Muslims and Jews in the wake of Mr. Trump's election.

"Hate crimes are different from other crimes," FBI Director James B. Comey said in a 2014 speech. "They strike at the heart of one's identity." For this reason, it's important that the United States be able to tackle this growing problem with the best data it can gather. The FBI's statistics on hate crimes, while the best we have, are also incomplete — partly because it's up to state and local police departments to decide whether to provide the federal government with their data. What's more, a study by the Bureau of Justice Statistics suggests that many hate-crime victims never report the offense.

Police departments should work to provide the federal government with more complete data. But taking this rise in hate seriously also requires that law enforcement officials cultivate trust with the communities they serve. Victims need to know they will be treated with respect if they come forward — especially in the current political environment, where many may be particularly fearful.

## 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.



## OTHER VIEWS

### The sterile society

When Bill Clinton survived impeachment, there was a sense among his advocates that they weren't just defending one philanderer; they were defending sex itself. To be against a president's dalliances was to be a Comstock, a Babbitt, a pleasure-hating heartland prude. To be for Clinton, as Tara Isabella Burton noted recently in a retrospective piece for Vox, was to be for a dream of sexual sophistication, a Europe-envying vision of perfect zipless adult bliss.

Little of that attitude has survived to our own era of grim sexual revelations. Nobody is defending Harvey Weinstein for being "debonair" or John Conyers for having "heat," as Tina Brown once did with Clinton. Some politician-groppers may outlast the outrage, but the idea that sexual sophistication requires defending pigs from prudes has largely fallen out of fashion.

But a slightly different fear, that we're on a path to criminalizing normal relations between the sexes, has surfaced here and there. In *The New Yorker*, Masha Gessen warned about a "sex panic" that might "criminalize bad sex and trivialize rape."

In the *Los Angeles Times*, Cathy Young worried about healthy flirtation disappearing from workplaces entirely. The Matt Lauer revelations inspired Geraldo Rivera to tweet that we might be on our way to "criminalizing courtship."

Like Gessen, I worry about what's happening in campus rape courts. But my general response to these fears is similar to one offered by Christine Emba of *The Washington Post*, who argued that stricter boundaries on how you chase a co-worker are a salutary corrective to the pervasive idea that maximal sexual experience is essential to the good life.

"If you are a decent person," she wrote, "a clearer, more bounded sexual ethic should not frighten you. If not, have you considered that you might be part of the problem?" (In the case of Geraldo, whose self-described sexual history is disgusting, the answer is a decisive yes.)

Still, I paused over one line from Emba's brief: "We won't die of having less sex ... Somehow, people will still find ways to meet, mate and propagate the species."

People will, it's true. But as a society we are actually in some serious trouble on the mating-and-propagation front.

When the sexual revolution started, its conservative critics warned it would replace marriage with a divorce-go-round, leave children without fathers, and expose women to more predation than before. Versions of these things happened, but over time various correctives, feminist and conservative, helped mitigate their worst effects. Divorce rates fell, sexual violence diminished, teen sex and pregnancy were reduced. In the last few years, even the out-of-wedlock birthrate has finally

stopped climbing.

The cascade of revelations about powerful men is a continuation of this mitigation and correction process. But so far the process has not substituted successful marriages for failing ones, healthy relationships for exploitative ones, new courtship scripts for the ones torn up 50 years ago. Instead as Weinsteinian or Polanski excesses have been corrected, we've increased singlehood, sterility and loneliness.

We've achieved the goal of fewer divorces by having many fewer marriages. We've reduced promiscuity by substituting smartphones and pornography. We've leveled off out-of-wedlock births by entering into a major baby bust.

Part of the problem is economic: Everything from student debt to wage stagnation to child-rearing costs has eroded the substructure of the family, and policymakers have been pathetically slow to respond. Last week's struggle to get the allegedly pro-family Republican Party to include help for parents in its tax reform is a frustrating

illustration of the larger problem.

But there is also strong resistance to seeing a failure to unite the sexes and continue the species as a problem. If women are having fewer children, it must be because they want fewer children. (In fact most women want more children than they have.) If there are fewer marriages, they must at least be happier ones. (In fact they aren't.) If the young are delaying parenthood, it must be that they are pursuing new opportunities and pleasures. (In fact the young seem increasingly medicated and miserable.) If men prefer video games and pornography to relationships, *de gustibus non est disputandum* (there is no disputing about tastes).

A useful counterpoint to these assumptions was provided this week by my colleague Norimitsu Onishi, who wrote about the extraordinary loneliness of old age in Japan, a country that has lived with collapsed fertility and strained relations between the sexes for a generation. Japan's aging, dying, atomized present is one version of our future — and a not-so-distant one, already visible in late-middle-age despair and elder exploitation.

I don't know what new-old mix of mating rituals and expectations and supports could arrest Japanification. I don't think either feminism or social conservatism at present have the answer. And I'm sure there is nothing worth saving in the predatory sexual culture currently being put to the torch by victims and journalists.

But any moral progress will be limited, any sexual and romantic future darkened, until we can figure out what might be rebuilt in the ashes.

Ross Douthat joined *The New York Times* as an Op-Ed columnist in April 2009. Previously, he was a senior editor at *The Atlantic*.

## YOUR VIEWS

### The 'money-sucking pigs' of Pendleton

When I first heard this term, and having not attended the recent city council workshop, I naturally figured that the mayor was referring to the Rivoli Theater restoration and the relocation of the Eighth Street Bridge projects. I was actually surprised to learn he was referring to swimming pools, though I wasn't sure if he was referring to the Aquatic Center Pool or the pool at BMCC, a pool whose condition I'm sure the mayor, as past BMCC president, was already intimately familiar with.

When people are asked, "What brought you to Pendleton, and why are you still here," generally the answers have to do with a job, the rich historical past, the small town atmosphere and, most of all, it's a great place to raise children. So I guess the question is: Why is it that projects like restoring and effectively managing the Vert Auditorium or covering the swimming pool are, as City Hall says, "not talked about," or called "money-sucking pigs"?

From the sounds of the comments made at the workshop and the previous attempt to unload the Recreation Center, support from City Hall for recreation may be waning. "It

sounds expensive" and "we can't even fix our potholes" were two phrases uttered in the pool cover discussion. It's funny how both phrases were conspicuously absent when funding was requested and approved for speed bumps on Main Street, moving a bridge simply for decoration, and renovating a private theater. I guess there are no swimmers at City Hall, and that limiting swimming will add to the city's arsenal of weapons to limit our shrinking water supply.

Did you hear the latest claim from the Downtown Business Association (PDA)? "Street trees protect sidewalks from damage," so they've planted more to replace the ones they previously cut down. I hear they've pinpointed the actual cause of all the cracking and heaving to the additional seismic activity that's been plaguing the city from all the "moving and shaking" taking place in the downtown area.

In a related move, and in an effort to reduce empty downtown retail space, the PDA is planning to partner up with an additional non-profit and relocate to the space vacated by the closing of Mayson's Old Fashioned General Store.

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Pendleton