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KATHRYN B. BROWN
Publisher

DANIEL WATTENBURGER
Managing Editor

TIM TRAINOR
Opinion Page Editor

MARISSA WILLIAMS
Regional Advertising Director

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OUR VIEW

Tip of the hat; kick in the pants

A tip of the hat to the Pendleton Round-Up for taking home their third straight award for best large outdoor rodeo from the PRCA.



The rodeo won the award five times, including their centennial year of 2010. This year they defeated four other finalists in the category from Cheyenne, Wyo., Dodge City, Kansas, Ogden, Utah, and Caldwell, Idaho.

And numerous folks with Round-Up connections also brought in awards — including pickup man Gary Rempel, bullfighter Dusty Tuckness, clown Justin Rumford and performer Bobby Kerr.

As the rodeo elite mingle and compete down in Las Vegas, it's good to know Pendleton is holding its own and winning

awards that increase its reach and presence on the regional and national stage.

A kick in the pants to lazy recyclers, who are putting all of us at risk by not adequately cleaning or sorting what they throw in a transfer station or a recycling bin.

You know 'em. Maybe you are one. We admit we're not perfect — sometimes not fully scrubbing out that glass jar or just wishfully hoping our refuse could be recycled, instead of giving the sanitary company exactly what it asks for.

We have to do better. The American recycling industry is changing — much of what we saved from landfills had been sent to China on razor-thin profit margins. But that's no longer penciling out, and it certainly doesn't pencil if the valuable, recyclable materials are mixed in with no-way-around-it trash.

And sometimes that means the do-gooders among us, who don't want to put something in the trash that we think could or should be recycled, have to suck it up and throw it away. If your local sanitary service says no, it means no. By throwing in unwelcome materials, you're making it more likely that the good stuff will have to be tossed on account of the bad.

And a tip of the hat to the Blue Mountain Community College basketball team, who helped push and jumpstart a stalled vehicle, earning gratitude for doing so.

BMCC basketball coach Osa Esene noticed Bryan Cummings about 6:30 a.m. Sunday morning leaning against his stalled truck on Highway 37. Esene was headed to the college where his team would board a bus and drive to Clackamas Community College for a game later in the day.

Esene stuck his head out of his car window and asked if the man needed help pushing the truck around the corner to a better spot. Cummings, who posted on Pendleton Classifieds later that morning, wrote "I let him know that two of us were not going to push it up that incline. So he said he would be right back with his team."

Osa drove to the school and directed his players to head down to help Cummings. Nine of them jumped from a string of cars and offered assistance. One of the players had jumper cables and soon Cummings was on his way.

In his message Cummings wrote that "My hat is off to you guys. Thanks so much for the assist. Kids to be proud of."

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

A monumental mistake

The (Eugene) Register-Guard

Interior Secretary Ryan Zinke recommended Tuesday that President Trump reduce the size of the Cascade-Siskiyou National Monument in Southern Oregon and three others, but didn't say by how much. The recommendation came the day after the president traveled to Utah to announce the shrinkage of two national monuments — one by half, the other by 85 percent.

The actions threaten to make an important type of public land protection provisional, to the detriment of some of the nation's most important scenic, cultural and biological resources.

Presidents create national monuments under authority granted to them by the Antiquities Act of 1906. The Cascade-Siskiyou monument was created by President Clinton in 2000, and expanded by President Obama in his last days in office. President Wilson scaled back the national monument that later became Olympic National Park, but the legal question of whether the Antiquities Act is a two-way street has not been answered by the courts.

It's about to be: Lawsuits have already been filed by Native American tribes and conservation groups against Trump's decision to reduce the Bears

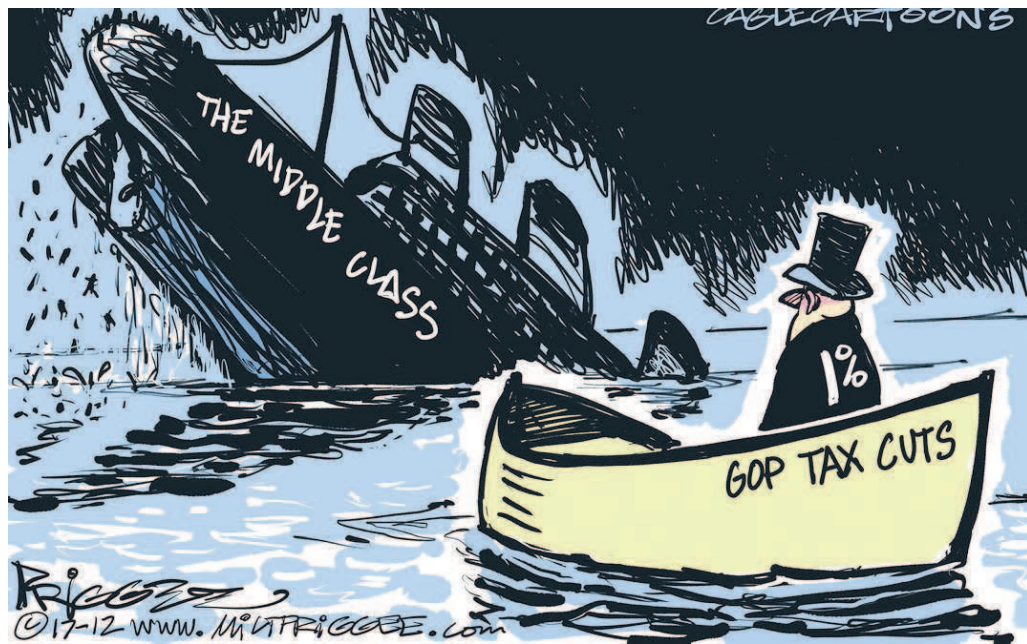
Ears and the Grand Staircase Escalante monuments in Utah. Oregon Gov. Kate Brown has said she may sue if the president withdraws protection from the Cascade-Siskiyou monument. The tribes may have a particularly strong case: Bears Ears was created to protect sites sacred to Native Americans from looting and desecration — the explicit original purpose of the Antiquities Act.

If the Trump administration prevails, monument designations would mean little — lands protected by one president could be opened to development by the next. Permanent protection would have to come from Congress, either by clarifying the Antiquities Act to block presidential rollbacks or by giving monuments some type of protective status.

But Congress gave presidents the authority to create monuments for a reason: They are less likely to be swayed by parochial concerns, and can place the national interest above all else.

As part of his review of 27 existing monuments, Zinke has recommended that three new ones be created — in Kentucky, Mississippi and Zinke's home state of Montana. How long would those designations last? By asserting that previous presidents' decisions about monuments can be reversed, Trump is undermining his own authority.

OTHER VIEWS



Living with the Republican tax plan

First, let me vent. The Republican tax reform, now extremely likely to become law pending certain events next week in Alabama, represents a remarkable missed opportunity for a party struggling through an identity crisis and a country reckoning with a social crisis.

After watching Trumpian populism overwhelm the dikes of ideology during the last primary campaign, Republican lawmakers could have learned something from the experience, and made the discontented working class voters who put Donald Trump in the White House the major beneficiaries of their tax reform.

Instead, with Trump's enthusiastic blessing, they devised a bill that was more solicitous of their donors than their voters, and that only modestly addressed the central socioeconomic challenge of our time — the nexus of wage stagnation, family breakdown and falling birthrates, which will eventually undo conservatism if conservatives cannot take it as seriously as they do the animal spirits of the investor class.

What's particularly frustrating is that it didn't have to be this way. The bill's basic architecture is compatible with better policy, and there is no great mystery about how it could have been improved: All it needed was to shrink the business tax cuts somewhat and push the extra money directly into the paychecks of the working class. But when a version of that improvement was attempted, when Sens. Marco Rubio and Mike Lee tried to use a small portion of the bill's corporate tax cut to pay for family tax cuts, the Republican leadership decided to make the corporate cut nonnegotiable; the Democrats decided it was better not to improve a bill that they oppose; and the senators themselves declined to be the Bad Guys of their caucus in a good cause and simply swallowed their defeat.

So the result leaves a reforming conservatism as the neglected stepchild of the GOP, granted table scraps while the donors get the feast. It leaves Republicans with ownership of a bill that is neither populist nor popular, and Trump with ownership of an economic agenda that a reasonable voter should consider a betrayal of his promises. And it wastes an opportunity to turbocharge the recovery, because the bill's corporate beneficiaries are already sitting on ample cash reserves and it's the middle-class taxpayers who would have been more likely to spend extra money if they got it.

However, to repeat something I've said a few times in the Trump era, when the venting is done it's important to acknowledge that it could be worse. The bill is badly designed but it does some good things, including some things that could be done only in the teeth of Democratic opposition. Its flaws are significant but also manageable, and they aren't going to tip America into the dystopian nightmare invoked by a certain kind of liberal Twitter hysteric this past week.

And as is often the case with flawed proposals, the failings offer useful signposts to the opposition: The partial defeat of reform conservatism leaves good ideas lying around to be picked up, and Republican overreach creates opportunities for the Democrats to pursue them.

One good thing is that the bill's stimulus, flawed as it is, still might give the economy a further short-term boost and undo more of the Great Recession's damage. Another good thing is the child tax credit increase that Rubio and Lee did win, which is much too modest but still a step toward the family policy the United States needs. A third good thing is the bill's willingness to raise taxes on the not-quite-rich upper-middle class, a constituency whose influence is often bad for the country and whose liberal drift and blue-



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Comment

state concentration has left Democrats leery of any confrontation.

Meanwhile, the thing that the bill's centrist critics are most incensed about, the fiscal irresponsibility of cutting taxes without offsets, just doesn't look like that big a deal in the context of continued low interest rates and bond market unconcern.

Like many people I accepted the arguments of fiscal hawks in the early Obama years, but few-to-none of their predictions have come to pass. I don't think Republicans have really learned from this experience and become less alarmist about deficits; they're mostly just being opportunists and hypocrites. But the experience is still real, and the lesson that the deficit is not, in fact, our major near-term problem seems convincing.

Then there are the fixable problems. The bill's repeal of the individual mandate will create additional challenges for the struggling Obamacare exchanges. But the mandate has never worked as its creators intended, it remains more unpopular than Obamacare as a whole, and it penalizes a narrow class of middle-class individual market buyers instead of spreading the burden of the system's costs more widely. In the long run any universal health insurance system will be on a firmer political

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footing if it finds a way to work without requiring people to buy a product they don't want.

The corporate tax cut, meanwhile, is too deep, but a lower corporate rate than the present one remains a good idea, and it's not implausible to imagine these deep cuts being rolled back to a happy medium. Likewise, the bill's budgetary *legerdemain*, which has the individual tax cuts expiring early and threatening a middle-class tax hike, sets up a plausible path to a negotiated settlement, in which Democrats who want to protect the middle class can seek a variation on the Obama-era deal that kept most of the Bush tax cuts in exchange for higher rates on the rich.

Or, should they be victorious in 2018 and 2020, Democrats can pursue broader ambitions, relying on this tax reform's overreach for funding rather than simply engaging in deficit-busting of their own. "Repeal some of the Trump tax cuts to pay for Liberal Ambition X or Y!" will be a natural rallying cry for their party in 2020, and the fact that the Trump tax cuts are so tilted toward corporations and businessmen and wealthy heirs means that the cry will have much more political appeal than it might have otherwise.

The question is what those liberal ambitions should be. The bipartisan (if insufficient) support for Rubio and Lee's child tax credit amendment points to one possibility: Democrats could take up the work-and-family agenda that reform conservatism has fitfully advanced, making something like Sens. Sherrod Brown and Michael Bennet's child tax credit proposal or Rep. Ro Khanna and Brown's bigger earned-income tax credit idea the centerpiece of their 2020 agenda.

The problem for the Democrats is that a lot of their activists' hopes are invested with far inferior ideas, like the lure of free college and the political fantasy of single-payer.

But there is room here for liberalism to take advantage of the Trump Republicans' retreat from populism, and to advance a left-wing version of the politics of work and family that the blinkered GOP should champion but refuses to embrace. In which case this bill's best elements could survive when the wheel of power turns, and its flaws and missed opportunities could still be good for the country in the end.

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

LETTERS POLICY

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