

O EAST OREGONIAN PINION

KATHRYN B. BROWN
PublisherDANIEL WATTENBURGER
Managing EditorTIM TRAINOR
Opinion Page Editor

Founded October 16, 1875

OUR VIEW

BLM should move west

A bipartisan group of senators and congressmen say the headquarters for the Bureau of Land Management should move from Washington, D.C., and relocate in the West — where the agency manages 385,000 square miles of public lands.

Interior Secretary Ryan Zinke, who oversees the BLM, agrees. So do we.

Colorado Republican Sen. Cory Gardner introduced a bill to move the BLM to one of a dozen states in the West — Alaska, Arizona, California, Colorado, Idaho, Montana, Nevada, New Mexico, Oregon, Utah, Washington or Wyoming.

“You’re dealing with an agency that basically has no business in Washington, D.C.,” Gardner told The Associated Press.

Colorado Republican Rep. Scott Tipton introduced a similar measure in the House, and three Democrats signed up as co-sponsors: Reps. Kyrsten Sinema of Arizona, Jared Polis of Colorado and Ed Perlmutter of Colorado.

The logic of this idea isn’t hard for people in the West to understand.

BLM manages huge swaths of Western states. Its decisions impact the livelihoods of people who populate rural communities but those decisions are made far from the forests, grasslands and high deserts they call home.

Not everyone is in love with the idea, particularly the special interests who court influence inside the Washington beltway.

Athan Manuel, director of the Sierra Club’s public lands program, said the Bureau of Land Management is already decentralized, and moving the headquarters would waste money.

“It’s a solution in search of a problem,” he told AP.

Critics say the BLM and other agencies need to be headquartered in the capital to be included in budget and policy discussions.

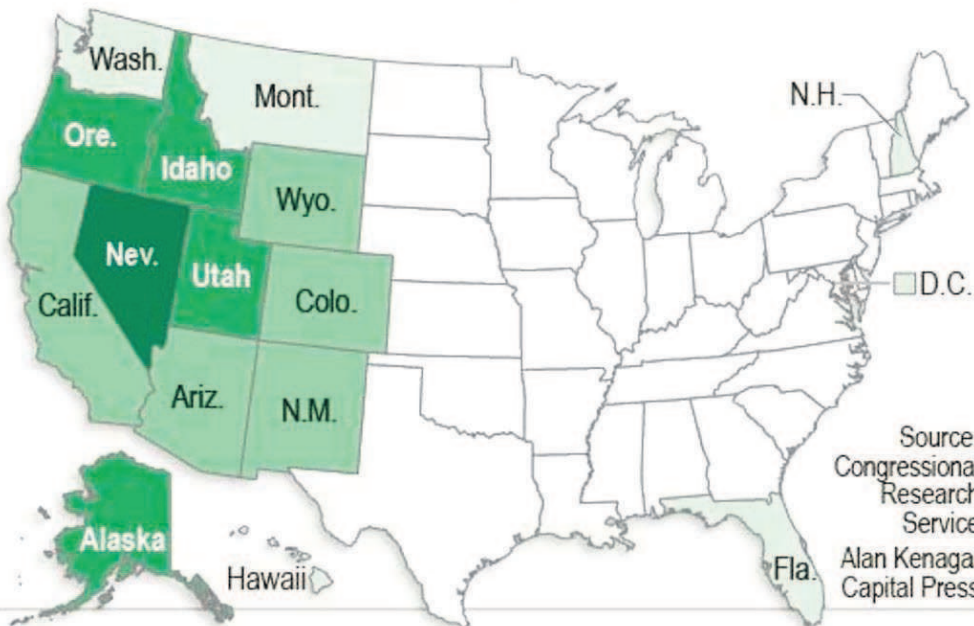
But having all those discussions in Washington is part of the problem. That’s better for K Street lobbyists and the environmental special interests, but not so good for the people those policies impact.

While it’s true that less than

Federal land by state

Land area by percent of state

0-10% 11-30% 31-50% 51-80% > 80%

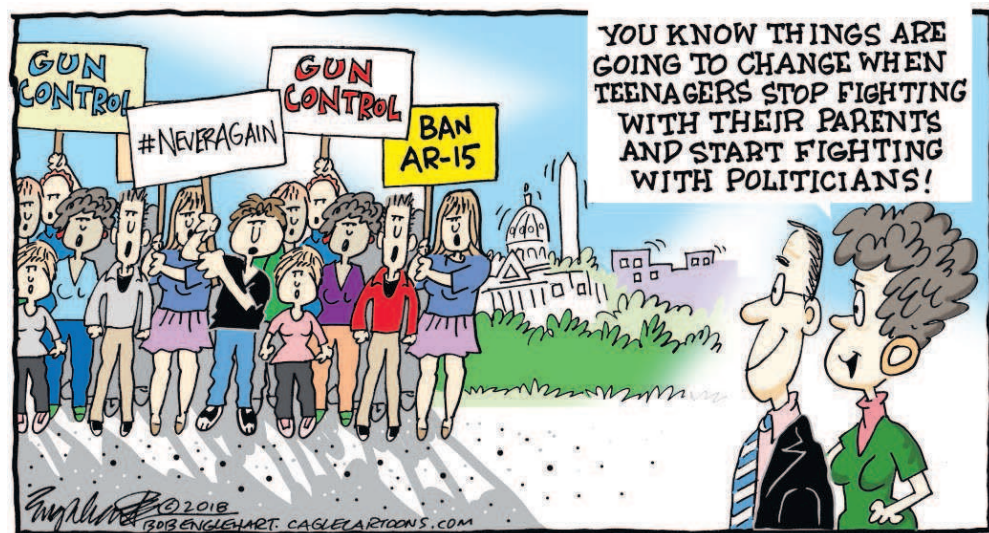


Source:
Congressional
Research
Service
Alan Kenaga/
Capital Press

5 percent of the bureau’s 9,000 employees are stationed in D.C., they have more say and less access to the national treasures they administer than their colleagues in the field.

Putting BLM headquarters in Denver,

Boise or Seattle wouldn’t change its statutory mission. But it would give the agency bigwigs a different perspective and a better-than-nodding acquaintance with the territory they manage and the people who live there.



YOUR VIEWS

Different political backgrounds support Bounds for Ninth Circuit

By FRIENDS OF RYAN BOUNDS

To U.S. Senate Committee on the Judiciary

We write to offer our unqualified and personal support of Ryan Bounds as a nominee to the Ninth Circuit Court of Appeals. We all have a long personal history with Ryan, as we grew up together in the same rural northeastern Oregon town of Hermiston.

As members of Oregon’s legal, medical, corporate, and higher education communities and leaders and volunteers for a variety of progressive causes and organizations — including the Oregon Democratic Party, the Hillary Clinton for President Campaign, SOLV (Stop Oregon Litter and Vandalism), Oregon Women Lawyers, and Basic Rights Oregon — we are uniquely situated to critically assess Ryan’s growth and temperament over more than three decades.

We have no doubts about Ryan’s capacity to serve as a judge by any criterion — be it personal, intellectual, professional, or temperamental. We urge your fair and thorough consideration of his nomination.

A cursory review of Ryan’s record reveals his eminent qualification for this position, and we need not persuade you in that regard. Ryan possesses the academic experience (Stanford and Yale), professional path (U.S. Department of Justice, White House, judicial clerkship), and community engagement (Equity, Diversity & Inclusion Committee of the Portland Bar, Court-Appointed Special Advocate for African-American foster children, environmental crimes prosecutor).

Because we have known Ryan since our days in middle school, we think it far more valuable to your deliberations to express unequivocally our knowledge of Ryan’s empathy, capacity for self-reflection, and propensity to put himself in the shoes of others. We have never known him even to suggest — by word or deed — any personal animosity for anyone based on his or her race, gender, creed, ethnicity or sexual orientation. But he is happy

to argue with anyone without regard to those characteristics. Ryan does not view contentious debate as contrary to our shared humanity; rather, he lives his life celebrating both.

We understand, with the examination of his record, the committee has reviewed a handful of articles Ryan penned as an editor on the staff of a conservative college newspaper, *The Stanford Review*, nearly a quarter-century ago. We have read the articles. Cautious not to apply the important progressive lens of today to impertinent

words of youth, we — women, a gay man, a refugee, and members of Oregon’s communities of color — nonetheless agree the articles deserve an explanation. We know Ryan regrets and is embarrassed by the tone of his writings as a conservative college student.

We would expect any reasonable person to understand how a student’s words designed to garner attention for an alternative college newspaper might not resonate with the person that student will become after 25 years of experiencing the world.

Perhaps more importantly for your inquiry and examination, we can represent without hesitation that Ryan’s path has been one of growth, intellectual curiosity and rigor, love of his family, friends, and community, and respect for the humanity of others.

If Ryan is incapable, in your eyes, of serving his country as a judge, we must share our worry as to who might be qualified and suited for the judiciary in the view of the committee and Senate.

Ryan James Hagemann is vice president and general counsel at Western Oregon University. Sally Anderson Hansell works for Anderson Hansell PC. Dr. Aloysius Fobi works in the emergency department at Legacy Emmanuel Hospital. Andrea Streedain is director of operations at Starbucks Coffee Company. Nhan Nguyen is chief financial officer at American Medical Concepts, Inc.

OTHER VIEWS

You’re wrong! I’m right!

We live in two Americas.

In one America, a mentally unstable president selected partly by Russia lies daily and stirs up bigotry that tears our social fabric.

In another America, a can-do president tries to make America great again as lying journalists stir up hatred that tears our social fabric.

The one thing we all agree on: Our social fabric is torn. In each America, people who inhabit the other are often perceived as not just obtuse but also dangerous. Half of Democrats and Republicans alike say in polls that they are literally afraid of the other political party.

This is not to equate the two worldviews. I largely subscribe to the first, and I’m a villain in the second. But I do believe that all of us, on both sides, frequently spend more time demonizing the other side than trying to understand it, and we all suffer a cognitive bias that makes us inclined to seek out news sources that confirm our worldview.

A classic study offered free research to ordinary Democrats and Republicans.

People on both sides were eager to get intelligent arguments reinforcing their views and somewhat interested in arguments for the other side that were so silly they could be mocked and caricatured (it’s very satisfying to dismiss rivals as libtards or bigots). Neither Democrats nor Republicans were interested in intelligent arguments challenging their own views.

Decades ago, a media expert at MIT named Nicholas Negroponte foresaw the emergence of a news product that he called “The Daily Me,” with information tailored to a user’s needs. Negroponte was thinking of local weather, sports, particular interests and so on, but what actually arrived with the internet was a highly political version of “The Daily Me.”

There’s not an exact parallel in the way the right and the left seek out like-minded news sources. The right has spawned conspiracy nuts like Alex Jones who believe that the Sandy Hook school shooting was faked, and one study found that the more people watched Fox News, the worse they did on a current events test.

So I’m not advocating that you waste time on Breitbart propaganda any more than I’m saying that it was worth listening to leftists in the 1970s who praised Chairman Mao. But wherever we stand on the spectrum, there are sane, intelligent voices who disagree with us — and too often we plug our ears to them.

On the left, there has been some outrage at conservative voices on the *Times* op-ed pages. But as a progressive myself, steeped in the liberal worldview, I must say that I often learn a lot — however painfully — from these conservatives with whom I utterly disagree, partly because they gleefully seize upon inconvenient facts that my side tends to ignore because they don’t fit our narrative.

Moreover, there’s some experimental



NICHOLAS KRISTOF
Comment

evidence that our biased approach to getting news actually makes us dumb. For example, one experiment asked 1,000 people to look at a simple data set and draw conclusions about a skin cream’s effectiveness. Not surprisingly, Democrats and Republicans were about equally good at calculating the math and determining how well it worked.

But when the experiment offered the very same data set and said it referred to the effectiveness of a gun control measure, Democrats and Republicans alike went to pieces.

In one version, the numbers showed that a gun control measure worked — and Republicans kept flubbing the math. In another version, the gun control measure was ineffective, and this time the Democrats couldn’t manage the calculations. The evidence on these biases is complex, studies sometimes haven’t replicated well, and I don’t want to exhibit confirmation bias in my warnings of confirmation bias. Researchers also caution that it’s too glib to say we are all locked in our echo chambers, for most Americans still are regularly challenged by dissonant information.

But what does seem clear is that rigid ideological beliefs impair our cognitive functions. For many years, Philip Tetlock of the University of Pennsylvania has been running experiments measuring the ability of thousands of people to make sound predictions.

The best forecasters, Tetlock finds, are not experts or even intelligence officials with classified information, not liberals and not conservatives, but rather those instinctively empirical, nonideological and willing to change their minds quite nimbly. The poorest marks go to those who are strongly loyal to a worldview.

I wondered whether to write this column, for there are so many urgent — and progressive! — causes on the table that I want to thunder about: Dreamers, guns in American life, White House dismissiveness toward domestic violence, and so on.

But the “Daily Me” problem also undermines the capacity of liberals to win these arguments. When we stay within our own tribe, talking mostly to each other, it’s difficult to woo other tribes to achieve our aims.

The ideological blinders may worsen because of our tendency to seek out like-minded people. A 2014 Pew survey found that half of consistent conservatives and 35 percent of consistent liberals say, “It’s important to me to live in a place where most people share my political views.”

It should be possible both to believe deeply in the rightness of one’s own cause and to hear out the other side. Civility is not a sign of weakness, but of civilization.

*Nicholas Kristof grew up on a sheep and cherry farm in Yamhill. Kristof has been a *The New York Times* columnist since 2001 and won the Pulitzer Prize twice.*

Unsigned editorials are the opinion of the East Oregonian editorial board. Other columns, letters and cartoons on this page express the opinions of the authors and not necessarily that of the East Oregonian.

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. 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.