

O EAST OREGONIAN PINION

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Tip of the hat, kick in the pants



A kick in the pants to President Trump's terrible decision to level tariffs on steel and aluminum imports.

The plan has caused anger the world over, from allied governments to the World Trade Organization, as well as most voices up and down the Republican Party. President Trump's own economic adviser quit over the ill-formed policy.

The tariffs are bad news for consumers, and will increase costs on many goods and decrease economic opportunities. They are good news for a few corporations and some employees in an outmoded industry.

We give our last word on the matter to a great supporter of free trade:

"So called protectionism is almost always self-destructive, doing more harm than good even to those it's supposed to be helping. Advocates of protectionism often ignore its huge hidden costs that far outweigh any temporary benefits."

— Ronald Reagan

A tip of the hat to the many people who threw their hat in the ring for 2018 elections.

We've been hammering on the need for competitive political races for many years — especially in local elections — and it's great to see so many people step up to the plate.

In Hermiston, four city council seats will be contested and in Pendleton currently three seats will be decided via a competitive race. There are also opponents for both Umatilla County commissioners up for election, and plenty of candidates hoping to unseat U.S. Rep. Greg Walden. That's not to mention the 17 Oregonians running for governor, and many more running for the state legislature.

These contested elections help us hone our arguments, spark ideas and give voters a real choice in who represents them. It's how democracy is supposed to work, and how it must work in order to remain healthy.

Obviously, we are in a moment of political upheaval, where more people



Staff photo by E.J. Harris

Keysha Ashley, right, fixes a fry bread taco during a fundraiser to help with the medical bills of Zoe Bevis on Tuesday at Nixyaawii Community School in Mission.

than usual feel called to participate in politics. That's a great development, and Eastern Oregon government is sure to benefit from the new blood and new ideas brought forth.

A tip of the hat to community support that blossomed out of two local tragedies.

In newspapers this week, we noted the outpouring of grief and support in the CTUIR community for Alameda

Addison, and in the Pilot Rock community for young Liam Flanagan. Both people were taken too soon in terrible accidents that left the people around them shaken and stunned.

But in the depths of despair, true friends and family came to offer their support and aid. That certainly took place this week, as charity events raised money to care for those lost and those left behind. We tip our hat to all who helped in a time of need.

OTHER VIEWS

Mr. Trump: Here's a hero, now it's your turn!

When a gunman rampaged through a high school in Parkland, Florida, three weeks ago, a 15-year-old soccer player named Anthony Borges showed undaunted courage.

Anthony, who is of Venezuelan descent, apparently was the last of a group of students rushing into a classroom to seek refuge. He shut the door behind him and frantically tried to lock it, but in an instant the gunman appeared on the other side. Instead of running for cover, Anthony blocked the door to keep the shooter out. He held his ground even as the attacker opened fire.

"I asked him why he would do that," his lawyer, Alex Arreaza, told me. "He said, 'What's so hard to understand about what I did?' He had no issue with risking his life."

Shot five times in the legs and torso, Anthony phoned his father to say that he had been wounded. He was rushed to a hospital and survived: Photos show him with wires and tubes snaking from him. He still can't walk — it's unclear if that is just temporary — but fellow students say he saved their lives. No one else in that classroom was shot.

The world turned upside down: Armed law enforcement officers dawdled outside during the shooting, but a 15-year-old kid without any weapon at all used himself as a human shield to protect his classmates. More broadly, the Florida high school students have argued maturely for sensible gun laws, while Florida state legislators have acted like frightened toddlers, first passing a two-year moratorium on sales of AR-15 rifles and then undoing it 15 minutes later.

And now it seems that the grown-up world is again going to fail Anthony and other young Americans. Congress and President Donald Trump have stalled on a push to pass meaningful gun legislation that has overwhelming public support. The grown-ups are once more loitering in a crisis, leaving kids to be shot.

Trump said that if he had been on the scene, he would have rushed into the building to confront the shooter. "I'd run in there even if I didn't have a weapon," he said.

Really? Even though when he is armed with the power of the White House he still doesn't have the guts to confront the NRA in a sustained way?

Given that gun owners largely trust Trump, he could hammer out a bipartisan deal for universal background checks — the single step that would make the most difference, one supported overwhelmingly even by gun owners — but the White House is AWOL on the issue.

Congress may pass "Fix NICS" legislation to improve the FBI database used to screen gun buyers, and maybe the federal government will ban "bump stocks."

NICHOLAS KRISTOF
Comment

But those are baby steps that probably won't have a measurable impact on American mortality (right now, one American dies every 15 minutes from a gun, including murders, accidents and suicides).

Incredibly, Congress seems as likely to ease gun laws as to tighten them. One measure backed by Donald Trump Jr. would legalize silencers, which have been rigorously controlled since the 1930s. Advocates had the gall to call

it the Hearing Protection Act.

"It's about safety," Trump Jr. explains in a video. "It's about hearing protection. It's a health issue, frankly, for me. Getting little kids in the game." In fact, the unmuffled crack of a gunshot is a warning of danger and draws the police; silencers would be a gift to criminals.

Even worse, the NRA is pushing concealed-carry reciprocity, allowing people to carry concealed guns with them from places that permit them, like Alaska or Wyoming, to any other part of the country, regardless of local prohibitions.

This measure has already passed the House of Representatives, but attorneys general are fighting it. They warn that it would let a stalker, domestic abuser or suspected terrorist from a low-regulation state tote concealed weapons at will around the country.

All this is infuriating. But even if the federal government won't pass meaningful new gun laws, states are doing so. Polls show that voters overwhelmingly favor universal background checks, a 21-year-old age restriction on buying firearms and a ban on high-capacity magazines.

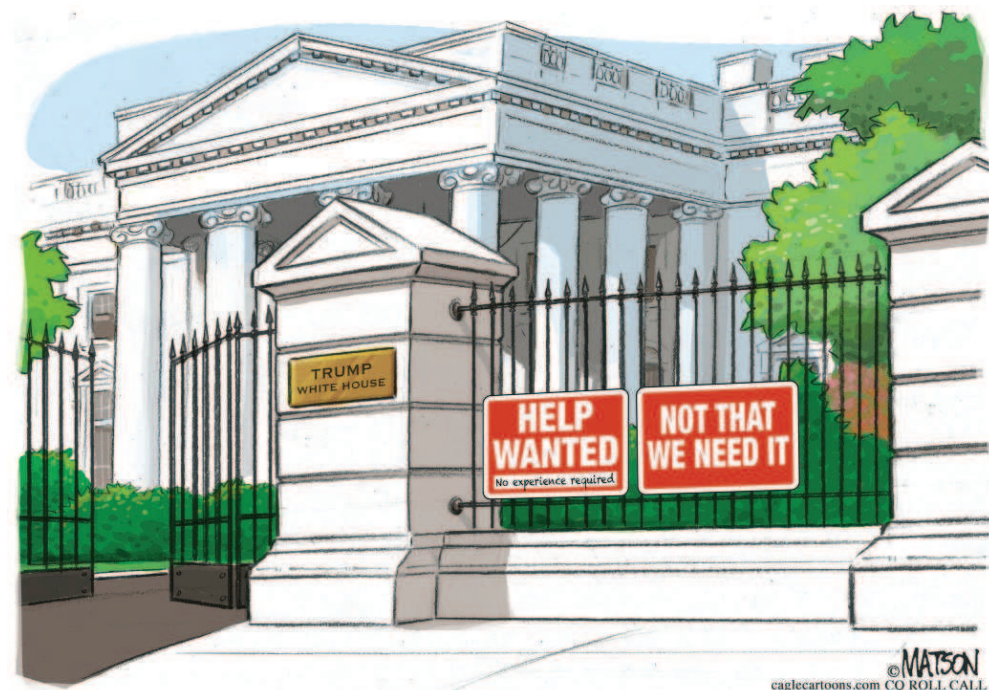
Since the 1970s, the U.S. has engaged unintentionally in an international experiment, relaxing gun laws as the rest of the world has tightened access. Gun advocates argued that more guns would make us safer, but instead the U.S. now has 25 times the gun murder rate of other advanced countries.

Indeed, since 1970, more Americans have died of gun violence, including murders, suicides and accidents (1.4 million), than in all the wars in American history (1.3 million).

Whenever there is a mass shooting, there are inspiring individual stories like Anthony's. But the larger picture is disgraceful: the president and congressional leaders dillydallying on the sidelines, sending "thoughts and prayers" and nothing else.

This will change only when politicians are more afraid of voters than of the NRA.

Nicholas Kristof grew up on a sheep and cherry farm in Yamhill. Kristof, a columnist for The New York Times since 2001, writes op-ed columns that appear twice a week. He won the Pulitzer Prize two times, in 1990 and 2006.



YOUR VIEWS

Elk hunting seasons are too long, animals on private land

Your editorial "Solve persistent Northwest elk problems" hopscoches around the Northwest from Gearhart to Challis, Idaho, to Skagit County in Washington while skipping over finding any local, Eastern Oregon conflicts that might add some local connection to your local readers.

I'm guessing that the circumstances around the "elk problems" in these three locations are different. One fix will not fix them all. Feeding stations like the ones you mention can help, although will not solve all problems. Also hunting elk on the golf courses and streets of Gearhart aren't likely to be accepted either.

Here in Eastern Oregon, we start harassing deer and elk by archery hunting them in August and September, then continue to harass them by rifle hunting them in October through Thanksgiving. Is it any wonder that elk pour off the National Forest in search of some sanctuary on private lands?

Adding to that is that all summer long feed on most areas of the national forests has been gobbled up by cattle allowed through century-old grazing permits (not picking on cattle grazing, it's all part of multiple use). From my experience, by late August and September there is very little quality feed left on the national forests. Then when the first rains come and the warmer lower elevation private lands "green up" a bit then elk are also rewarded for their migration to private lower elevation lands.

We used to have a system where a land owner who had elk and deer problems asked ODFW for assistance and special hunts on their property were arranged. Now it seems we offer land owner preference tags. They can use them, give them to family and friends, or sell them and the hunting rights for extra income. Those tags have closed lots of private lands that were formally open to the public to hunt.

Your suggestion of longer seasons does nothing because if the hunters can't access the elk, they can't harvest the elk. And why suggest trapping and killing elk when there are thousands of hunters with empty freezers and unfilled elk tags who have already paid for the opportunity to harvest an elk?

Nothing is more discouraging than after spending hundreds of dollars for the opportunity to hunt elk on the Umatilla National Forest and not see a legal bull elk to shoot, then to be driving home and have elk including legal bulls cross in front of my pickup on Highway 395 going from non-hunttable private land to more non-hunttable private land.

Rich Zita
Pendleton

Pendleton has gone mad with marijuana dollars

Eventually, when there are too many marijuana grows, they go broke and can no longer afford to operate. Meanwhile, the city of Pendleton gets a big sum of money for each marijuana operation for which the city issues a license.

Why not let the city license multiple marijuana grows and let the grows go bankrupt like they do in other cities in Oregon, so the city can receive more money?

When the overproduction of marijuana drives the price down, marijuana doesn't just end up in the hands of people who aren't supposed to have it. It ends up on our dining room table whether we know it or not.

I contacted the Meat and Poultry Hotline and they said, "The rules about what animals can be fed takes into account the possibility of residues that would end up in the food. The individual states make their own rules about humane handling of livestock." It's time to get mad because there's too much reefer.

Bonnie Bischke
Pendleton