

O EAST OREGONIAN PINION

CHRISTOPHER RUSH
PublisherKATHRYN B. BROWN
OwnerDANIEL WATTENBURGER
Managing EditorTIM TRAINOR
Opinion Page Editor

Founded October 16, 1875

OUR VIEW

Stage is set for Buehler vs. Brown

Knute Buehler has proposed 10 gubernatorial debates, crisscrossing the state. Gov. Kate Brown should accept his offer.

Oregonians throughout the state deserve the first-hand opportunity to evaluate the ideas, aspirations and leadership skills of their next governor.

Even better would be to include Independent and third-party candidates in some of those debates so as to more fully reflect Oregon's political spectrum.

And even better than better, one of those debates should be in Umatilla County and focus on issues that matter to Eastern Oregonians.

There is irony in Buehler's debate proposal. Until winning the Republican gubernatorial nomination on Tuesday, he largely had been absent from the GOP debates and joint appearances. That strategy worked, enabling the more-moderate Buehler to triumph in a GOP field crowded with conservative candidates.

Brown, who faced only token opposition in the Democratic gubernatorial primary, on Tuesday called for Buehler to join her in three debates and at least two joint appearances before newspaper editorial boards.

By nightfall, Buehler had upped the ante to 10 debates, saying Brown's



Knute Buehler

proposal was yet another example of her not being bold enough. Yet one question for voters to ponder is whether Buehler as governor would be the bold, potentially decisive politician who emerged Tuesday or the reticent, off-stage candidate of the Republican primary.

In any case, Brown and Buehler have much to discuss in front of voters.

This election is an evaluation of what Oregonians could expect from



Gov. Kate Brown

either politician. But it also is a referendum on Brown's leadership since replacing Gov. John Kitzhaber three years ago.

That makes state management — the governor's role as CEO — a dominant issue. It won't be enough for Buehler to say he will lead where Brown failed. He must specify how he would accomplish his goals, how he would bring the state together and how he would prevent the management

missteps of recent years.

As for Brown, she has to show that she governs for the entire state, not just her Portland political base. She must own the missteps, as well as the triumphs, of her tenure. She must reveal what she has learned on the job and how that would serve Oregonians for four more years.

Voters should hear the specifics for how each candidate would:

- Strengthen Oregon education and help all Oregon students achieve their potential.
- Confront the costs of the Oregon Public Employees Retirement System and public-employee health care.
- Overcome Oregon's lack of mental health resources and its high suicide rate, especially here in Eastern Oregon.
- Prepare for drought, wildfires and a host of other environmental issues.
- Bridge the economic, technology and transportation gap that separates rural and urban Oregon.

Debates will be a waste if all the candidates do is throw jabs at each other. That is what Buehler did six years ago in running against Secretary of State Brown. He lost the election, but she got caught up in parrying his jabs instead of defining herself.

Oregonians want, need and deserve robust discussions about our state's future.

OTHER VIEWS

Gaza border violence shows how extremism corrupts

As you know, everybody sees the Middle East through his or her own narrative. Conservatives see it through the "front line in the war on terror" narrative and defend Israel's actions on the Gaza border fence this week. Progressives see it through the "continued colonialist oppression" narrative and condemn those actions.

I see the situation through the "extremism corrupts everybody" narrative. My narrative starts with the idea that the creation of the state of Israel was a historic achievement involving a historic wrong — the displacement of 700,000 Palestinians.

For two generations, in what we can call the Yitzhak Rabin era, the leaders of Israel and of Palestinians tried, sometimes dysfunctionally and bloodily, to address this wrong and find two homelands around the pre-1967 borders.

But sometime in the 1990s, a mental shift occurred. Extremism grew on the Israeli side, exemplified by the ultranationalist who murdered Rabin, but it exploded on the Palestinian side. Palestinian extremism took on many of the shapes recognizable in extremism everywhere.

First, the question shifted from "What to do?" to "Whom to blame?" The debates were less about how to take steps toward a livable future and more about who is responsible for the sins of the past. The central activity became moral condemnation, with vindication as the ultimate goal.

Second, the dream of total victory became the only acceptable dream. In normal politics, certain long-standing debates are never really settled; competing parties instead reach an accommodation that works in the moment. But extremists stop trying to win partial victories, insisting that someday they will get everything they want — that someday the other side will magically disappear.

Third, extremists over time replace strategic thinking with theatrical thinking. Strategic thinking is about the relation of means to ends: How do we use what we have to get to where we want to go? Theatrical thinking is both more cynical and more messianic: How do we create a

DAVID BROOKS
Comment

martyrdom performance that will show the world how oppressed we are?

Palestinian politics has shifted. It shifted from 1967 thinking to 1948 thinking. If you read the Palestinian leader Mahmoud Abbas' April 30 speech or much of the commentary published over the past week, it's clear that some powerful Palestinians now believe that the creation of the

state of Israel is the wrong that needs to be addressed, not the expansion and occupation.

When faced with an extremist, you have two choices: counter the extremist mindset with your own or reject that mindset and double down on pragmatism.

By and large, Israel has taken the former path. The shift from the politics to that of Benjamin Netanyahu is a move from pluralism to ethnocentrism, from relentless engagement to segregation. It's a shift from tough realism to the magical thinking that Palestinians are somehow going to go away.

It is clearly in Israel's interest to maneuver the Palestinians away from extremism and to weaken the extremists in its own ranks.

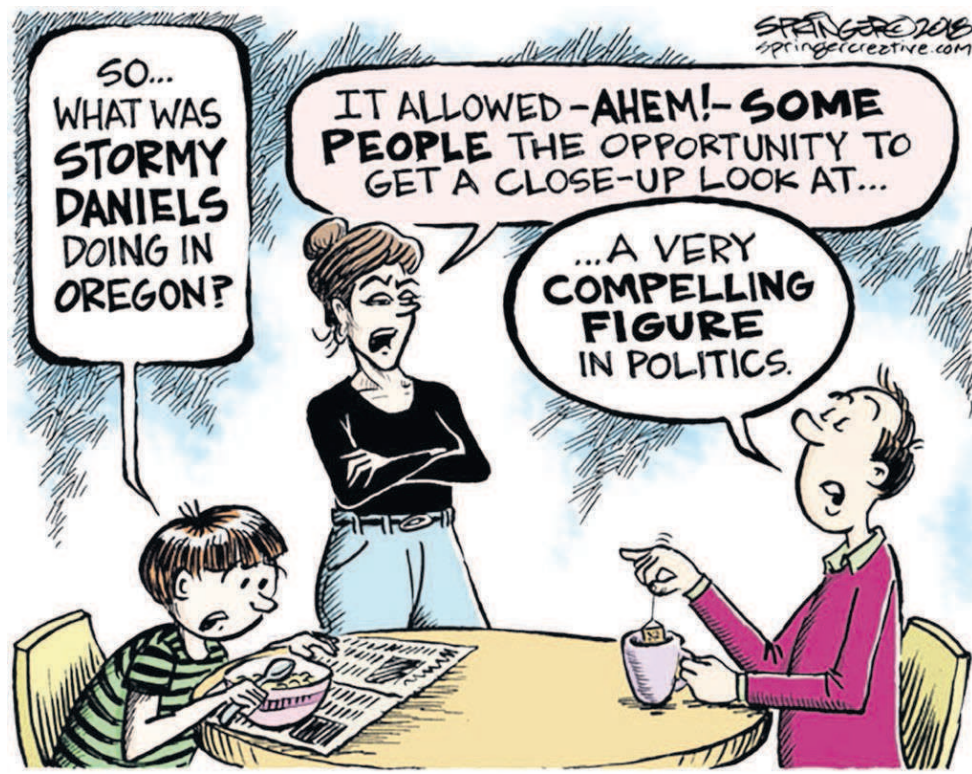
And yet sometimes Israeli policies seem callously designed to guarantee an extremist response.

That's the problem with extremism: It is a flight from reality. It makes you stupider. Instead of cleverly working to advance your own interest in a changing context, you end up shoring your own moral justifications into a whirlwind. Instead of restating your own values — for pluralism, for a compromise, for peace — you end up another soiled part of the climate.

My narrative doesn't absolve the Palestinians from responsibility for their choices. But it doesn't let the Israelis off the hook for their failure to properly confront extremism.

Extremism is naturally contagious. To fight it, whether at home or abroad, you have to answer the angry shout with the respectful offer. It feels unnatural. But it's the only way.

David Brooks became a New York Times columnist in 2003.



YOUR VIEWS

Second Amendment can be amended

Holly Jo Beers recently wrote a very interesting guest op-ed column in this newspaper. It was given the title "Second Amendment cannot be modified." Actually, it can be modified or amended, that is why it is called an amendment.

Further, it could even be removed from the Bill of Rights. And personally, as one citizen, I wish it would be deleted as too much tragedy and harm has been inflicted because it is constantly being manipulated for self-serving purposes.

However, the reality is the Second Amendment will never be removed completely, not as long as there are zealots like Beers rallying the troops. I acknowledge there are tens of millions of citizens across the country that hold the same position as Beers.

The Second Amendment, as it is generally interpreted, is an outdated, anachronistic idea and law whose time has passed by. The Second Amendment is understandable and reasonable in the context of the time period it was enacted. There was basically no law and order to protect the public citizenry and the western frontier was Ohio. For all practical purposes, families basically had to defend

and protect themselves with personal firearms from the dangers and threats of the time.

Beers writes: "We may own as many as we like." So, in the pursuit of happiness that Beers wrote about, she reasons the more guns one owns, the happier one will be. Thus, if one owns a small arsenal one would be an extremely happy person.

I do not define my citizenship by how many guns I own, I define my citizenship by honoring the laws and norms of the community, voting — and of course — exercising my rights, including free expression. I used to live in inner-city Oakland, California, and north Portland, Oregon, both considered high crime areas. However, I never felt the need to carry a gun in those cities for self-defense or protection. So, why would I need an automatic assault rifle here in rural Eastern Oregon?

Many gun owners, including Beers, are clearly worried and afraid they may be disarmed by new gun control laws. On this point, I have nothing to be afraid of as we have zero firearms in our home. And we are just fine, thank you.

If and when IP 43 and 44 are voted on, I will definitely vote yes.

Bob Shippentower
Pendleton

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.