

# O EAST OREGONIAN PINION

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## OUR VIEW

## Statewide officials, statewide perspective

A ballot initiative to carve California into three states reminds us of another idea that surfaced three years ago in eastern Oregon and Washington. It's goal was to make those largely rural regions a part of Idaho, whose state government is more agriculture-friendly.

Idaho leaders have staked the state's future on agriculture, while many Washington and Oregon leaders appear to be more interested in other, more urbane pursuits. When they do take note of agriculture, they tend to focus only on certain niches instead of the overall industry.

The proposals to redraw the borders of California, Oregon, Washington and Idaho are efforts to gain more recognition from statewide office holders.

In California, a state with nearly 40 million people, the urban areas have an overwhelming amount of political clout in Sacramento. Farmers and ranchers find themselves ignored or treated as second-class Californians. Issues important to them often take a backseat to urban concerns, because that's where the votes and the lobbyists are.

While politicians are expected to represent their districts, they also have a duty to learn about and

### California split on November ballot



represent the state as a whole. What's good for Los Angeles, San Francisco and San Diego is important, but not to the detriment of the other parts of the state — and vice versa. A statewide perspective means keeping the interests of all Californians in mind.

It's the same way here in Oregon. Residents of our side of the state, and our rural neighbors to the north in Washington, depend on farming, ranching and timber, and are also underrepresented in Salem and Olympia. Geography doesn't help — the fact that the Cascade Range splits the states makes the problem even worse. Westside politicians rarely make the trek over the mountains to the eastside — unless they are campaigning for office. If they win, eastside interests usually take a backseat to westside priorities.

Proponents say splitting California or adding eastern Washington and Oregon to Idaho would provide a bigger voice for all in the new states. We doubt it.

Drawing more lines on a map isn't needed. What's needed is politicians who take the time to learn about the rural areas of their states and look out for the interests of all citizens, not just those in their home districts with the biggest wallets.

## OTHER VIEWS

## What GOP suspects about FBI Trump-Russia probe

The struggle to uncover the FBI's conduct in the Trump-Russia probe has made some congressional investigators deeply suspicious of the bureau. But what do those investigators think actually happened in the Trump-Russia affair — at least, what do they think the FBI did?

First, they're convinced the FBI has something to hide. In the last 12 months, the bureau has, at various times, ignored, slow-walked, resisted and downright stonewalled congressional requests, not to mention subpoenas, for information on the Trump-Russia investigation.



BYRON YORK  
York  
Comment

Each time the bureau hunkered down, suspicion grew on Capitol Hill. The FBI seemed particularly reluctant to reveal to Congress not what Russians did, or what people in the Trump circle did, but what the bureau itself did.

When did the investigation start? How did it start? What measures did the FBI, its lawyers and its informants employ? Getting facts out of the FBI has been a long and arduous task.

First to cause serious suspicion was the Trump dossier. Eyebrows were raised when investigators learned that the FBI, at the height of the 2016 presidential campaign, offered to hire a former British spy who was collecting allegations about Trump and Russia.

House Intelligence Committee Chairman Rep. Devin Nunes pushed for information. Among other things, he learned that the former British spy, well-connected with the FBI, was paid by the Hillary Clinton campaign and the Democratic National Committee. That apparently did not matter to the bureau.

Then Nunes and others wondered: What did the bureau do with the sensational allegations in the dossier? That gave birth to the so-called "FISA abuse" investigation, when Republicans looked into whether the FBI used unverified allegations from the Trump dossier in proceedings before the Foreign Intelligence Surveillance Act court. It turned out the FBI did just that, to win a wiretap on Carter Page, who for a short time was a volunteer on candidate Trump's foreign policy advisory board.

Congressional investigators came away with the impression that the FBI was hiding something. It was.

Now, Congress is trying to get information about the informant(s) the FBI used in the Trump-Russia probe, and precisely what those informants did.

As part of that line of inquiry, investigators have discovered a number of instances in which Trump figures were approached, sometimes by people with FBI connections, with offers of derogatory information on Clinton. Each incident was before the FBI says it began the Trump-Russia investigation, code-named Crossfire

Hurricane, on July 31, 2016.

Starting in late May or early June 2016, a Cambridge University professor named Stefan Halper, who was a longtime FBI informant, contacted Page, and also Trump campaign official Sam Clovis, and finally Trump volunteer adviser George Papadopoulos, seeking contacts and information on the campaign. The Daily Caller's Chuck Ross has reported that Halper "randomly asked

Papadopoulos whether he knew about Democratic National Committee emails that had been hacked and leaked by Russians."

In early June 2016, a Russian lawyer who was working closely with the opposition research firm Fusion GPS, which had commissioned the Trump dossier, asked for and received a meeting with top Trump campaign officials, including Donald Trump Jr., by promising dirt on Clinton. The meeting came to nothing.

In late May 2016, a Russian who had apparently been an FBI informant for years contacted an associate of Trump campaign official Michael Caputo, and later met with Trump figure Roger Stone, reportedly offering dirt on Hillary Clinton. Stone told *The Washington Post* the Russian asked for \$2 million, and the meeting went nowhere. The Russian said he was not working for the FBI when he met Stone.

Stone has on a variety of occasions denied he met with any Russians during the campaign — so take that into account when considering his credibility. The problem for congressional investigators is that the probe has become a two-front battle: dealing with the untrustworthiness of some of the figures in the investigation, while also fighting the FBI to learn the basic facts of what happened.

Lawmakers would not be shocked that Roger Stone might lie to them. But they expect the FBI to be open and transparent with constitutionally empowered oversight committees.

The bottom line is that some Republicans are wondering whether in the above instances, and perhaps others, someone actively tried to frame or entrap or set up Trump figures. And they wonder whether the FBI knew about it or played some sort of role in it.

The suspicions are behind the House move to force the FBI to give up information. Last Friday, top House lawmakers met with bureau and Justice Department officials to demand compliance with House subpoenas.

Some Republicans believe the FBI will, finally, comply. Maybe that will happen, and maybe it won't. But the only thing that can reduce suspicion in the current atmosphere is more openness.

Byron York, *The Washington Examiner*



## YOUR VIEWS

### We must strive for justice, not abject cruelty

We can all do better. We can demand that the government deliver justice consistent with our values. 2,000 children are now being held in shelters and in some instances in temporary earthen shelters. On Monday, Dr. Colleen Kraft, current president of The American Academy of Pediatrics, visited a Texas facility for children ages 12 and under after her colleagues to her she needed to see what is happening.

She reported that in a "toddler" shelter, she witnessed a 2-year-old girl crying uncontrollably. Those who supervised the infant were instructed that they were not allowed hold or comfort her. It doesn't take a doctor to realize that this causes trauma. I am a retired from corrections and the justice system. I'm absolutely convinced that we can find solutions to our border issues without being cruel. Cruelty is not justice.

Doug Harder  
Pendleton

### Policy of separating families has no place in this country

This letter is directed to my current representative in Congress, Greg Walden: While I often disagree with your policies throughout the many years that you've served in Congress, I know you personally to be a dedicated representative that clearly has a grasp of issues important to eastern Oregonians. I appreciate your efforts to promote economic growth and family wage jobs for our local communities, and your work on behalf of veterans.

However, I absolutely no longer trust you, the president, his administration or other silent members of Congress to represent the mission and values of the United States as an humanitarian country.

The policy of separating children from parents at our southern border is cruel and unnecessary. The law does not require systematic separation of families entering the U.S. to flee persecution, crushing poverty, violence or danger in their home countries.

Not only does it traumatize young children, it forces federal prosecutors to arrest, detain and prosecute every single "illegal entry" misdemeanor defendant, while they could be focusing on human trafficking, violent crime, financial fraud, drug cartels, etc.

Do you agree with President Trump's claim that Democrats actually want MS-13 gang members to "infest" our country because they "view gang members as potential voters?"

This is not leadership. I'm dumbfounded that you apparently don't recognize that this rhetoric and unnecessarily cruel policy won't work toward finding a solution to deterring illegal immigration.

Are you afraid to publicly rebuke the heroic lack of integrity and leadership of the current administration because of a possible voter backlash, preventing you from re-election?

I'm disappointed in the United States abdication of global leadership in many areas including humanitarian issues, climate change and trade policy. It's especially disheartening to watch silent members of congress stand by and allow it.

Dee Holzman  
Hood River

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