

O EAST OREGONIAN PINION

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OUR VIEW

Congress should legalize industrial hemp

We support efforts underway in Congress to make industrial hemp a legal crop for U.S. farmers.

Hemp is a variety of *Cannabis sativa* that lacks the chemical properties that produce pot's high. Nonetheless, it is classified with marijuana as a Schedule I controlled substance under federal law.

Hemp has been grown for fiber for centuries. Colonial Virginia required its cultivation in 1691 and it became an American staple until the 20th century. By the 1930s it had been lumped together with marijuana and made illegal by most states — some say at the bidding of cotton interests.

During World War II the federal government encouraged farmers to grow hemp to replace jute and other fibers from Japanese-held areas in the Pacific necessary for the manufacture of rope. The plant proved so prolific that farmers in the Midwest still struggle to stamp it out of ditches and fence rows more than 70 years later.

In the meantime, products — clothing, foodstuffs, cosmetics and essential oils — made from hemp outside the United States have become a staple in almost every



Mateusz Perkowski/EO Media Group

Hemp grows in an Oregon field. Congress needs to take the next step and legalize the crop nationwide.

store in the country. So while the federal government bans hemp production in the United States, it approves for importation products made from the same vile weed.

That's the government for you.

As several states have legalized and regulated marijuana production and trafficking, there has been an effort to liberalize policies on hemp production. The mishmash of state legalization schemes and

the lack of much processing capacity has left would-be growers in a lurch. For years we have advised farmers against growing hemp because of the considerable potential downsides should federal narcotics agents decide to swoop down on the farm.

But the law could soon change.

Senate Majority Leader Mitch McConnell, a Republican from Kentucky, has inserted language into his chamber's

version of the farm bill to make hemp legal again.

"We've won the argument that this is not about marijuana," McConnell said about hemp. "Now we just need to pass the law. And I'm in a uniquely well-situated position to make that happen."

That he is.

Hemp is not marijuana. Concerns that hemp fields will be used to conceal illicit marijuana grows, one of the main reasons many have opposed its legalization, are probably overblown.

Hemp is clearly a crop that has commercial applications. Before growers can capitalize on that potential, processing infrastructure needs to be built and both raw materials and finished product must be able to move freely across state lines. Eastern Oregon farmers and soils could choose to diversify their crop rotation and their business. They should have that right.

First, though, it must be legal.

It's not clear that hemp is the highest use of prime ground and precious water. And it remains to be seen if it can be lucrative for growers once restrictions are lifted.

But farmers should have hemp in their portfolio and the chance to make something of it. Hemp should be made legal.

OTHER VIEWS

Republican or Conservative, you have to choose

The never-Trumpers are having an interesting debate over the question, Is it time to leave the Republican Party? George Will and Steve Schmidt say yes: The Trumpian rot is all the way down. Bill Kristol says not so fast: Once Donald Trump falls, the party could be brought back to health, and the fight has to be within the party as well as without it.

My instinct is that we can clarify this debate by returning to first principles. Everybody in the conversation is conservative. Where do conservative loyalties lie? How can we serve those loyalties in these circumstances?

Conservatism was founded during the 18th-century Enlightenment. In France, Britain and the American colonies, Enlightenment thinkers were throwing off monarchic power and seeking to build an order based on reason and consent of the governed. Society is best seen as a social contract, these Enlightenment thinkers said. Free individuals get together and contract with one another to create order.

Conservatives said we agree with the general effort but think you've got human nature wrong. There never was such a thing as an autonomous, free individual who could gather with others to create order. Rather, individuals emerge out of families, communities, faiths, neighborhoods and nations. The order comes first. Individual freedom is an artifact of that order.

As Scruton put it in his bracing primer, "Conservatism: An Invitation to the Great Tradition," "The question of which comes first, liberty or order, was to divide liberals from conservatives for the next 200 years."

The practical upshot is that conservatives have always placed tremendous emphasis on the sacred space where individuals are formed. This space is populated by institutions like the family, religion, the local community, the local culture, the arts, the schools, literature and the manners that govern everyday life.

Membership in these institutions is not established by rational choice. We are born into them most of the time and are bonded to them by prerational cords of sympathy and affection. We gratefully inherit these institutions from our ancestors and pass them along to our descendants.

Over the centuries conservatives have resisted anything that threatened this sacred space — sometimes from the state. In their different ways, communists, fascists, social democrats and liberals tried to use the state to perform many functions previously done by the family, local civic

organizations and the other players in the sacred space.

Conservatives fought big government not because they hated the state, per se, but because they loved the sacred space. The last attempts to build a conservatism around the sacred space were George W. Bush's "compassionate conservatism."

They both fizzled because over the last 30 years the parties of the right drifted from conservatism. The Republican Party became the party of market fundamentalism.

Market fundamentalism is an inhumane philosophy that makes economic growth society's prime value and leaves people atomized and unattached. Republican voters eventually rejected market fundamentalism and went for the tribalism of Donald Trump because at least he gave them a sense of social belonging.

The problem is he doesn't base his belonging on the bonds of affection conservatives hold dear. He doesn't respect and obey those institutions, traditions and values that form morally decent individuals. His tribalism is the evil twin of community. It is based on hatred, us/them thinking, conspiracy-mongering and distrust. It creates belonging, but on vicious grounds.

In 2018, the primary threat to the sacred order is no longer the state. It is a radical individualism that leads to vicious tribalism. The threat comes from those two main currents of the national Republican Party. At his essence Trump is an assault on the sacred order that conservatives hold dear — the habits and institutions that cultivate sympathy, honesty, faithfulness and friendship.

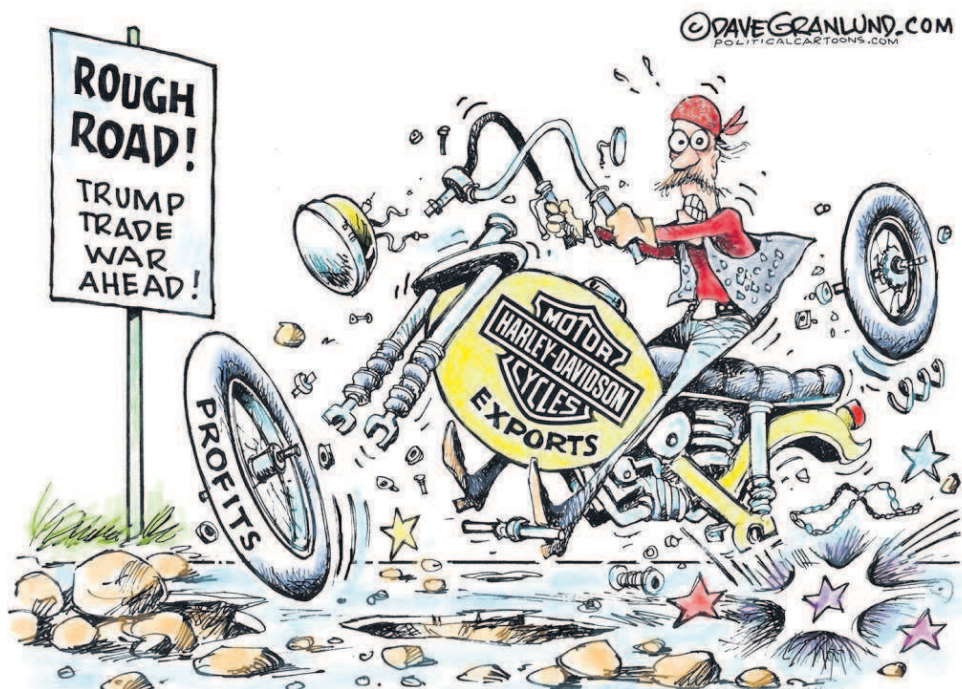
Today you can be a conservative or a Republican, but you can't be both.

The new threats to the sacred space demand a fundamental rethinking for conservatives. You can't do that rethinking if you dismiss half of Americans because they are on the "other team."

When I look at places that are successfully nurturing beautiful communities, which seem most "conservative" in the true sense, I find great pluralism. Burlington, Vermont, is doing it, and so is Salt Lake City.

The next conservatism will be built on the back of these real-life communities, and the way they nurture good citizens and healthy attachments. It will be based on new alliances, which have little to do with your father's GOP.

David Brooks, *New York Times*



YOUR VIEWS

Still time to speak out on Blue Mountains forest plan

I understand that the Blue Mountains Forest Plan Revision will be released on or before June 29. While my public comment was shouted down by staff of the Wallowa-Whitman National Forest supervisor's office, and I nor any other citizens of Eastern Oregon's comments were responded to over the last four years, it will be interesting to see what the path forward looks like in northeastern Oregon for public lands, and how the U.S. Forest Service plans to allow us to use the mountains we love.

Once the plan is released, commenters on the draft Environmental Impact Statement from 2014 will have 60 days to file an objection with the Forest Service on the final EIS. Also, if new information is found in the plan, or a substantial change is found, you will also have an opportunity to file an objection. Along with the formal objection process, you also can file as an "interested person" and there will be a 10-day period to make this request after objections have been filed. An "interested person" is someone who may or may not have objected or commented during the forest plan and amendments process, but who has an interest in supporting or opposing a submitted objection.

After watching the meetings and the treatment of residents at these meetings I can understand why folks chose to remain silent. Forest Service staff were yelling and belittling residents, former staff doing the same. Environmental groups name calling and yelling during "facilitated" meetings, while subsistence users of the forest tried to politely articulate their concerns, only to

be demeaned and belittled.

You will have a chance to have another voice, I would simply ask that you do so.

John D. George
Bates

More business should offer environmentally safe options

I am really thankful to a couple of our grocery stores in Hermiston that are, at least, offering their customers a choice to help the environment. Safeway has joined Fiesta Foods in having paper bags available for my groceries at the checkout stations. I don't know I can take reusable bags but I really like the paper bags because we use them for all our recycle items we sort. That way we can reuse and recycle them also.

We also found Desert Lanes Bowling Alley uses paper instead of styrofoam take-out containers. Thank you to all businesses that are working on the change for our environment. Now if all businesses would follow suit — especially with anything styrofoam and plastic, starting with straws.

Other towns and cities that have already changed back to environmentally safe products have had no effect on their pricing. Please ask when you order or at the register or picking your veggies if they would switch to paper products. With hemp paper products coming into existence, that alone will protect our forests. Let's do the next right thing.

Thank you to Safeway, Fiesta Foods and Desert Lanes Bowling Alley of Hermiston.

Bernie Sanderson
Hermiston

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