

O EAST OREGONIAN PINION

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OUR VIEW

Back to school

The first day of school is a day that matters. It's a day of hope and excitement, from the most wide-eyed kindergartner to the seasoned senior. It's a day of butterflies in the stomach, of catching up with old friends and making new ones. It's a day where expectations are set, not just for the next eight months but for the next stage in life. Education is the foundation on which our society is built. It's a monumental task we give our teachers and administrators when we ask them to prepare our children, and by extension the future itself. We want reading, writing and arithmetic, but we also want kindness, curiosity and conscientiousness. We want them to learn the value of exercise and critical thinking, music appreciation and the scientific method. We expect a lot. Most other societal issues — crime, economy, politics — are easily traced

back to education, or lack thereof. It's no wonder both of Oregon's gubernatorial candidates have released education plans promising to increase our state's standing in the U.S. We've taken issue in the past that the hours are too short in Oregon. Both Gov. Kate Brown and challenger Knute Buehler are vowing to increase the number of days required. Our only caveat would be to require expanded educational hours, not just days. For some of our rural districts, providing transportation and meals five days a week is a real cost concern, and the four-day option with longer school days has helped make ends meet. Both candidates have also talked about giving better support to teachers. Buehler suggests debit cards loaded with \$250 for teachers to spend on classroom needs. Brown suggests creating stronger mentoring and development programs. The plans are available on each



Staff photo by E.J. Harris

Teacher Theresa Stangel reads instructions for students to write a short biography about themselves in a Bulldog catering class Monday at Hermiston High School.

candidate's campaign website, and there's a lot of crossover between them. The biggest question that each must answer is how to fund the increases necessary to make real change, or whether there are cost-free changes that could have an impact. But while these ambitious promises

remain fodder for debate, our educators are back at work in the real world. We wish them well and offer our support. We have high expectations, but realize it's our job as parents and community partners to come alongside and help where we can. It's a job that really matters.

OTHER VIEWS

In D.C., a rare relationship without pretense and B.S.

There are people in Washington who hate each other but who, for public consumption, pretend not to hate each other. What was almost refreshing about the relationship of Sen. John McCain and President Trump was that there was no such pretending.

A number of Trump's 2016 Republican primary rivals who serve in the U.S. Senate — Marco Rubio, Lindsey Graham, Ted Cruz and Rand Paul — said some pretty vicious things about Trump during the campaign, and of course, Trump said vicious things about them. Now, some of them have future political ambitions that would not be served by feuding with a president of their own party. Others are just trying to get things done and recognize the will of the voters. Whatever the reason, all have made their peace with Trump. Some are actually friendly with him.

The notable thing about McCain, who even before he fell ill was approaching the end of his Senate career and whose own runs for the White House were in the past, was that he never felt the need to even feign positive feelings for his party's leader.

In a way, the two men together, McCain and Trump, struck a blow for genuineness amid the phoniness of official Washington.

Their antipathy played out in a series of escalating attacks on each other in 2015, as Trump began to make waves in the Republican presidential primary.

It started when Trump announced his candidacy on June 16, 2015. He pounded on Mexico, accusing the country of taking American jobs and giving little in return. "When Mexico sends its people, they're not sending their best," Trump said. "They're sending people that have lots of problems, and they're bringing those problems with us. They're bringing drugs. They're bringing crime. They're rapists. And some, I assume, are good people."

That did not sit well with McCain, the longtime comprehensive immigration reform advocate and moving force behind the Senate's Gang of 8 immigration bill. During a June 30 town hall in Arizona, McCain was asked about Trump. "I don't pay much attention," McCain said, according to an account in the Arizona Republic. (Some of this column is based on the Republic's helpful timeline of the McCain-Trump relationship.) Later, McCain said he didn't think Trump's campaign would last and added, "I just disagree with his comments about the, quote, Mexicans."

The paper's headline was, "John McCain the latest to pummel the Donald." It wasn't much of a pummeling, but Trump no doubt took notice.

Trump scheduled a rally in Phoenix on July 11. Two days before, the Republic ran



BYRON YORK
Comment

a story headlined, "Trump shunned by Arizona's GOP establishment ahead of Phoenix visit." McCain went on MSNBC to tell host Andrea Mitchell that he found Trump's rhetoric offensive. "When he comes to Arizona, he will find that we Arizonans cherish our Hispanic heritage and influence," McCain said. "We cherish the music, the culture, the food."

While McCain stayed away, Trump's rally was big. And of course, Trump fired back at McCain. "We have incompetent politicians, not only the president," Trump said. "I mean, right here, in your own state, you have John McCain." Trump later told reporters that McCain was "very weak on immigration" and could be beaten for re-election "if the right person" ran against him.

Of course, McCain struck back. On July 16, talking to *The New Yorker*, McCain said, "This performance with our friend out in Phoenix is very hurtful to me, because what he did was he fired up the crazies."

That same day, an enraged Trump, via Twitter, demanded that McCain apologize to the "amazing Americans" who attended the rally. And then: "@SenJohnMcCain should be defeated in the primaries. Graduated last in his class at Annapolis — dummy!"

In retrospect, all that was just setting the stage for the nuclear explosion that occurred two days later, on July 18. At an event in Iowa, Trump, who never served in the military, disparaged McCain's experience as a prisoner of war in Vietnam. "He's not a war hero," Trump said. "He was a war hero because he was captured. I like people who weren't captured."

Trump's remarks set off a huge uproar, with some in the press expressing outrage on McCain's behalf. (McCain's own public reaction was subdued.) The conventional wisdom was best captured by Politico, which declared, "Donald Trump might finally have crossed the line."

Finally, there was July 27, 2017, the night McCain's thumbs-down vote killed the GOP's long-held hope — and Trump's campaign promise — to repeal Obamacare. The irreparable breach between McCain and the president became even more irreparable. A dying McCain specified the president be excluded from his funeral, and when McCain passed away, the president delayed releasing a routine proclamation in recognition of his life.

The relationship between the two men ended as badly as it began. But always — and rarely for Washington — without pretense.

Byron York is chief political correspondent for *The Washington Examiner*.



YOUR VIEWS

Time for our elected leaders to work for their constituents

With all of the media coverage the last few days on the passing of Senator John McCain of Arizona, it occurred to a multitude of Americans that it is way past due for our elected leaders to put aside their petty, partisan politics and polarizing polemics and get about the business of doing what is best for their constituents, not special interests, not just the wealthy or the lobbyists representing them.

Dr. Jake and Cathy Cambier
Pendleton

Parades a poor use of scant tax dollars to honor veterans

Our nation and its tax dollars do not need to have multi-millions of dollars spent on parades. The most meaningful way to express our "gratitude and pride" in our armed forces is to put the many millions into helping our military and veterans with their basic needs. The funds for those purposes are stretched beyond their limits or neglected altogether because of the lack of money.

The use of \$50 million (or far more) wisely is giving heartfelt thanks to our military members in a meaningful manner. The president surely wants to make wise use of tax dollars. Our national debt needs to be our focus if we are ever to be able to reduce it.

Darlene Abney
Pendleton

Walden listens to donors, but not his constituents

The writer of a recent letter to the editor believes that Greg Walden's inaccessibility to his constituents is because he's too busy

"doing his job." Really? Walden's job as a congressional representative is to represent his constituents. How can he represent his constituents if he doesn't meet with us, talk to us and hear our opinions and concerns? And he hasn't been listening for a long time.

If Greg were listening to us, he would not have:

- Voted, over fifty times, to repeal the Affordable Care Act, because that would have taken health insurance away from more than 130,000 people in his district.
- Voted to remove protections to people with pre-existing medical conditions, because that will result in 27 percent of Oregonians, including 64 percent of farmers and ranchers, being denied health insurance.
- Remained silent on Trump's trade war, which is hurting our ag communities and leading to higher prices for every single person in his district.
- Blamed the increasingly devastating wildfire seasons entirely on fuel loads in our forests without acknowledging the huge role of climate change and committing to leadership on climate action.

So, who is he listening to? That's easy. His big corporate donors: the pharmaceutical industry (over \$500,000), the oil and gas industry (over \$286,000) and the telecommunications industry (over \$257,000).

Jamie McLeod-Skinner is a fresh face and not a Washington insider. She's traveled 40,000 miles through all 20 counties in our district, listening to people and learning about their concerns. She knows the job description and she's showing up to do it. That's why I'll be voting for her in November.

Angelique Loscar
Bend

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