

O EAST OREGONIAN PINION

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OTHER VIEWS

Liberal parents, radical children

When I meet someone who runs an organization in a blue state, I often ask: Do you have a generation gap where you work? The answer — whether the person leads a college, a nonprofit, a tech company, an entertainment company or a publication — is generally the same: Yes, and it's massive.

DAVID BROOKS
Comment

The managers at these places, who are generally 35 and older, are liberals. They vote Democratic and cheer on all the proper causes of the left. But some of the people under 35 are not liberals, but rather are militant progressives.

The older people in the organization often have nicknames for the younger set: the Resistance, Al-Jazeera, the revolutionaries. The young militants are the ones who stage the protests if someone does something deemed wrong.

If a company fires an employee for writing an inappropriate memo or uttering an inappropriate phrase, it's usually because there's been a youth revolt. If a speaker is disinvited from a festival or from campus, it's often because of a youth revolt. If a writer is fired for a tweet, or an editor has to resign from a literary review because of an unacceptable article, it's often because of a youth revolt.

This generation gap is completely unsurprising. At pivotal moments of cultural change, such gaps open up, as the older generation breathes in one atmosphere and the younger generation breathes in another. After the turmoil of the late 1960s and early 1970s, Midge Decter wrote an outstanding book called "Liberal Parents, Radical Children." We're seeing a

similar chasm today.

On the left, the big difference is over meliorism. The older liberals are appalled by President Donald Trump, alarmed by global warming, disgusted by widening income inequality, and so on, but are more likely to believe the structures of society are basically sound. You can make change by voting for the right candidates and passing the right laws. You can change individual minds through education and debate.

The militants are more likely to believe that the system itself is rotten and needs to be torn down. We live in a rape culture, with systemic racism and systems of oppression inextricably tied to our institutions. We live in a capitalist society, a neoliberal system of exploitation. A person's ideology is determined by his or her status in the power structure.

Two great belief systems are clashing here. The older liberals tend to be individualistic and meritocratic. A citizen's job is to be activist, compassionate and egalitarian. Boomers generally think they earned their success through effort and talent.

The younger militants tend to have been influenced by the cultural Marxism that is now the lingua franca in the elite academy. Group identity is what matters. Society is a clash of oppressed and oppressor groups. People who are successful usually got that way through some form of group privilege and a legacy of oppression.

The big generational clashes generally occur over definitions of professional excellence. The older liberals generally believe that the open exchange of ideas is an intrinsic good. Older liberal journalists generally believe that objectivity is an important ideal. But for many of the militants, these restraints are merely masks



for the preservation of the existing power structures. They offer legitimacy to people and structures that are illegitimate.

When the generations clash, the older generation generally retreats. Nobody wants to be hated and declared a moral pariah by his or her employees. Nobody wants to seem outdated. If the war is between the left and Trumpian white nationalism, nobody wants to be seen siding with Trump.

Plus, the militants have more conviction. In the age of social media, virtue is not defined by how compassionately you act. Virtue is defined by how vehemently you react to that which you find offensive. Virtue involves the self-display of a certain indignant sensibility, and anybody who doesn't display that sensibility is morally suspect.

The generation gap on the right is less dramatic. It's less politically important because the young don't influence the GOP much; the old Trumpians do.

But over the long run it will matter. The boomer conservatives, raised in the era of Reagan, generally believe in universal systems — universal capitalism, universal democracy and the open movement of

people and goods.

Younger educated conservatives are more likely to see the dream of universal democracy as hopelessly naïve, and the system of global capitalism as a betrayal of the working class. Younger conservatives are comfortable in a demographically diverse society, but are also more likely to think in cultural terms, and to see cultural boundaries.

Whether on left or right, younger people have emerged in an era of lower social trust, less faith in institutions, a greater awareness of group identity. They live with the reality of tribal political warfare and are more formed by that warfare.

I guess the final irony is this: Liberal educated boomers have hogged the spotlight since Woodstock. But now events are driven by the oldsters who fuel Trump and the young woksters who drive the left. The boomers finally got the top jobs, but feel weak and beleaguered.

David Brooks has been a senior editor at *The Weekly Standard*, a contributing editor at *Newsweek* and *the Atlantic Monthly*, and he is currently a commentator on "The Newshour with Jim Lehrer."



YOUR VIEWS

Don't underplay value of Round-Up volunteers

Your conclusion of your editorial of today that "Round-Up Leadership Takes All Kinds" brings out some great thoughts but has also missed a very important point and contains misrepresented facts that could lead to altered history, a history that is very important to the success of the Pendleton Round-Up.

More people did not attend the 2018 Round-Up; that record, 58,998, still stands from Round-Up 2010. Folks in 2018 just paid more for a ticket — a ticket that quite honestly is still a great deal, to an event that is beyond compare in the rodeo world.

This quote "Not all are willing to give up the old ways, where a few decades of sweat equity was a primary requirement for a seat on the board" is a misguided thought that is a misleading representation of the discussion at the recent stockholder meeting. Decades have never been discussed as a requirement.

As represented by the amended bylaws and the discussion that I heard at the stockholders meeting, there are stockholders that want the 1,700-plus volunteers to be considered first as the competent and dedicated pool of candidates for directorship where there is no doubt many that have the knowledge, skills and abilities of all kinds to be a dedicated director — a pool that should receive consideration before going beyond. The

amended bylaws even provide this in that if an appropriate volunteer with represented years in service is not the choice, the board simply needs to make it a unanimous selection before offering the individual to the stockholders for consideration. Noting this, the stockholders understand the importance of who sits at the board table. A paradox in its own right, the board did not and by history has seldom brought a unanimous decision for a director to the stockholders. You see, even the board has its own ideas on a qualified director, so please do not lay volunteerism as a needed quality solely on the stockholders.

It is my view that your editorial has done an injustice to many of the 1,700-plus volunteers, some of the 60 or so past directors who are a part of 500 active stockholders, and even the current directors where spirited conversation that results in a defined direction of The Round-Up Association is characterized as an element of not moving forward. The history of the Round-Up is filled with these discussions by true, passionate and knowledgeable folks that have in fact moved the Round-Up forward each and every year and will continue to do so into the next 100 years — guidance an editorial like yours attempts to, if not discredit, underplay. Traditions and history have made it a success to today and will for the future.

Carl Culham
Athena

OTHER VIEWS

OHA must take responsibility for mentally ill patients

Medford Mail Tribune

More than a year after Gov. Kate Brown fired its director, the Oregon Health Authority still can't seem to avoid controversy and questions about its ability to manage the state's massive Medicaid program. The OHA's most recent scandal involves severely mentally ill patients kicked out of locked facilities at the recommendation of an outside contractor hired to determine the patients' eligibility for Medicaid benefits.

In a lengthy investigative report, *The Oregonian* found that in at least three cases, vulnerable patients were injured after they were discharged from locked facilities over the objections of care providers that they were not capable of managing their own affairs. In many cases, patients were told they no longer qualified for care, but the state had no place else to send them, resulting in extra charges to leave them in place.

The contractor, Kepro, was instructed to review patients' eligibility for care with the goal of reducing the average length of stay in locked residential facilities. The federal Justice Department also was pressing the state to make sure more mentally ill people were living in community settings.

Kepro's contract says the more people the company disqualifies from Medicaid eligibility, the more money it can make — \$1,000 extra per person disqualified, up to \$10,000 a month. But OHA director Patrick Allen insists the incentive language isn't resulting in bad decisions denying care.

Still, *The Oregonian's* reporting found Kepro was moving faster to deny coverage than OHA's ability to keep up, prompting Allen to tell his staff to instruct Kepro

to slow down its work. That instruction apparently never got to Kepro; the agency can't say why.

Other things the agency can't say: It doesn't know why the contract with Kepro calls for cutting the average length of stay in locked facilities by 64 percent rather than the 20 percent figure the state and the Justice Department had agreed on. And it doesn't know how many of the hundreds of people Kepro recommended for removal from locked facilities ended up hospitalized, homeless or dead.

The specific cases in the newspaper's report are chilling. They include a 54-year-old woman with severe schizophrenia who was moved out of a locked facility over the objections of her care providers. She walked away from the unsecured facility she moved to, went missing for a week and was found catatonic and suffering from exposure. Another schizophrenic patient went off his medication and drank bleach within weeks of being moved from a locked facility into an apartment. A professional guardian told the newspaper that six of her clients wound up in a higher level of care after Kepro disqualified them; one is in jail on assault charges.

Allen maintains the overall data show a drop in hospitalizations after discharge from a locked facility, from 9 percent before Kepro's contract started to 6 percent the next year.

But overall performance data aren't much comfort to the families of patients who suffered because they were discharged when they should not have been. Human beings don't fit neatly into statistical pigeonholes. It's the Oregon Health Authority's responsibility to manage the state's Medicaid program as efficiently as possible, but also to protect the vulnerable people who receive care.

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