

O EAST OREGONIAN PINION

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OUR VIEW

Businesses can't wait to locate where taxes and fees are high

Businesses in Oregon face \$1 billion in newly passed taxes earmarked for education reform. Climate change legislation pending in the Legislature promises to increase fuel and energy costs for all businesses, and those businesses that will be required to buy carbon emissions permits will see huge increases in costs.

As you might expect, business interests have testified that these increased costs could push some businesses to leave the Beaver State.

"So what," says Oregon state Sen. James Manning, a Democrat from Springfield.

"I say leave the state," he said from the Senate floor. "Somebody else will come in. I get so sick and tired of hearing that."

And to make sure he was not misunderstood, he double down.

"We can't tax corporations because they will leave," he said. "Let 'em leave. Somebody else will come in."

It's probably a common sentiment among supporters of increased taxes and fees. It's just rare that anyone says it out loud.



EOMG File Photo

Businesses in Oregon face \$1 billion in newly passed taxes earmarked for education reform. Climate change legislation pending in the Legislature promises to increase fuel and energy costs for all businesses, and those businesses that will be required to buy carbon emissions permits will see huge increases in costs.

Manning had an honorable and distinguished military career. Since leaving the Army he has served on the Eugene Police Commission and has been involved with a number of non-

profit organizations. He has served on the Eugene Water and Electric Board and as a small claims mediator for the Lane County Circuit Court.

Prior to joining the Army, Man-

ning worked as a state corrections officer and as a police officer. All noble undertakings.

But like many in the Legislature, Manning has never owned or operated a private business, never met a payroll and never paid the taxes businesses are required to pay. He has had scant experience receiving a wage from a private business thus charged.

Let 'em leave. The employees left without jobs will be happy to know that other companies looking to locate where costs are high will swoop in and offer them another situation. The communities where a mill or factory is shuttered have nothing to worry about. Neither do local vendors and contractors who depend on the exiled companies for their livelihoods.

Somebody else will come in. Won't they?

Tax the gross receipts of existing businesses, raise their energy costs and hike their fees to the extent that leaving Oregon becomes an attractive option and we'll find out.

That could be an expensive lesson in economics for the Legislature, but it will be Oregonians who pay the tab.

OTHER VIEWS

Why isn't Trump a real populist?

"I love the poorly educated." So declared Donald Trump back in February 2016, after a decisive win in the Nevada primary. And the poorly educated love him back: Whites without a college degree are pretty much the only group among whom Trump has more than 50% approval.

But in that case, why has Trump been unwilling to do anything, and I mean anything, to help the people who installed him in the White House?

News media often describe Trump as a "populist" and lump him in with politicians in other countries, like Hungary's Viktor Orban, who have also gained power by exploiting white resentment against immigrants and global elites. And there are indeed strong and scary parallels: Orban has effectively turned Hungary into an authoritarian state, retaining the forms of democracy but rigging the system in such a way that his party has a permanent lock on power.

It's alarmingly easy to envision the U.S. going the same way, and very soon: If Trump is reelected next year, that could mark the end of America's democratic experiment.

But Orban's success has depended in part on throwing his base at least a few bones. Hungary has instituted a public jobs program for rural areas; offered debt relief, free schoolbooks and lunches; and so on, paid for in part by a significant rise in taxes.

True, those public jobs pay very low wages, and Orban has also practiced crony capitalism on a grand scale, enriching a new class of oligarchs. But there's at least a bit of actual populism — that is, policies that actually do offer some benefits to the little guy — in the mix.

In 2016, on the campaign trail, Trump sounded as if he might be a European-style populist, blending racism with support for social programs that benefit white people. He even promised to raise taxes on the rich, himself included.

Since taking office, however, he has relentlessly favored the wealthy over members of the working class, whatever their skin color. His only major legislative success, the 2017 tax cut, was a huge break for corporations and business owners; the handful of crumbs thrown at ordinary families was so small that most people believe they got nothing at all.

At the same time, he keeps trying to destroy key provisions of Obamacare — protection for preexisting conditions, premium subsidies and the expansion of Medicaid — even though these provisions are highly popular and have been of enormous benefit to states like Kentucky and West Virginia that favored him by huge margins.

As if to symbolize who he's really working for, Trump on Wednesday will give a Presidential Medal of Freedom to Art Laf-

fer, best known for insisting that tax cuts for the wealthy pay for themselves. This is a classic zombie idea, one that has been repeatedly killed by evidence, but keeps shambling along, eating our brains, basically because it's in plutocrats' interest to keep the idea in circulation.

And here's the thing: White working-class voters seem to have noticed that Trump isn't working for them. A new Fox News poll finds that only 5% of whites without a college degree believe that Trump's economic policies benefit "people like me," compared with 45% who believe that the benefits go to "people with more money."

Trump may believe that he can make up for his pro-plutocrat tax and health policies with tariffs, his one significant deviation from GOP orthodoxy. But despite Trump's insistence that foreigners will pay the tariffs, an overwhelming majority of noncollege whites believe that they will end up paying more for the things they buy.

Oh, and remember Trump's promises to bring back coal? His own Energy Department projects that coal production next year will be 17% lower than in 2017.

Now, this doesn't mean that there will necessarily be large-scale defections on the part of Trump's beloved "poorly educated." On the other hand, health care — where his betrayal of past promises was especially obvious — seems to have played a big role in Democrats' midterm victory. And he is certainly more vulnerable than he would be if he engaged in even a smidgen of actual populism. Why won't he?

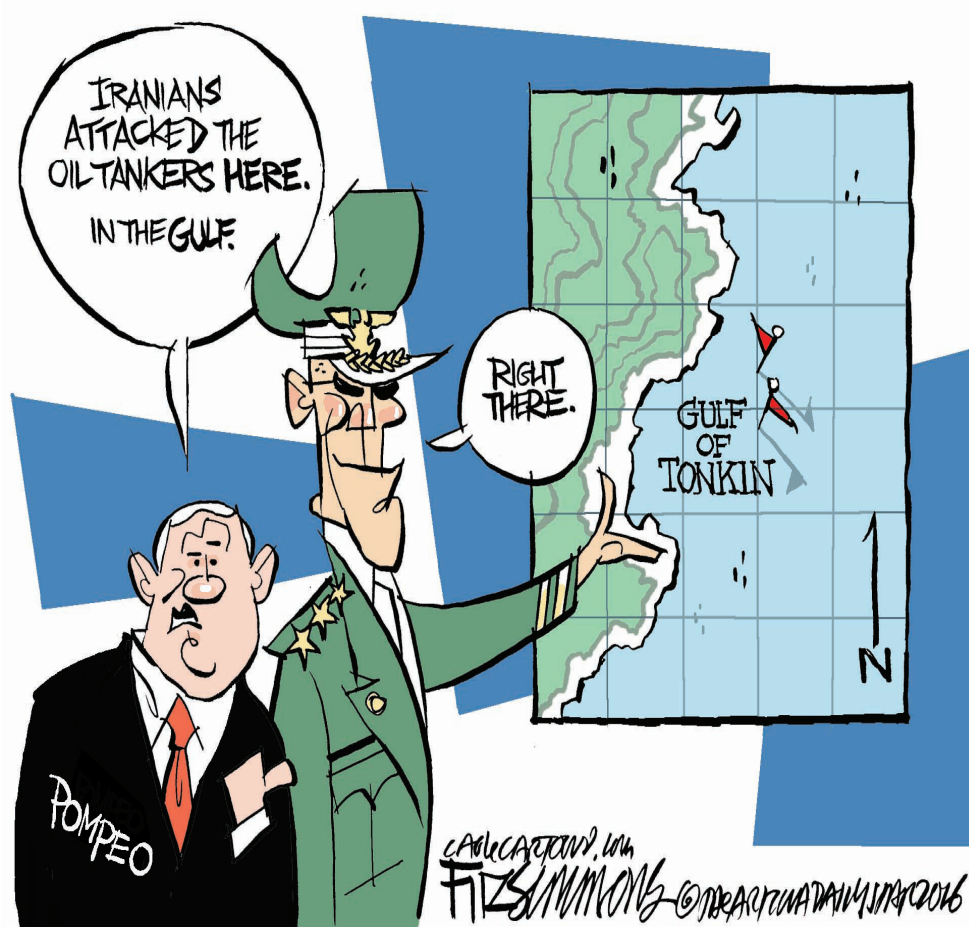
Part of the answer may be personal: Trump's whole career shows him to be the kind of man who, if anything, takes pleasure in taking advantage of people who trusted him.

Beyond that, however, for all the talk about how "it's Trump's party now," he still needs the support of the GOP's big-money interests. For now, the party establishment is happy to provide cover for the administration's corruption, closeness to Russian President Vladimir Putin, and all that.

But that could change. If Trump ever did anything that might hurt the rich or help the poor, many Republicans might suddenly discover that self-dealing and accepting help from hostile foreign powers are actually bad.

Whatever the reasons, the simple fact is that Trump isn't a populist, unless we redefine populism as nothing but a synonym for racism. At least some in the white working class seem to have realized that he's not on their side. And Democrats would be foolish not to make the most of this opening.

Paul Krugman is a columnist for the *New York Times*



YOUR VIEWS

Whisky Fest headliner one to skip

Get ready Southwest Pendleton — Whisky Fest is coming again. In fact, get ready Pilot Rock because you will be able to hear it too.

I am so excited now — Whisky Fest has chosen someone named Post Malone to perform this year. Since I had never heard of this guy, I did some reading on him. Supposedly he is a "melting pot of country, grunge (my personal favorite), hip hop and R&B." He has teamed up with some of the best, including Justin Bieber and Young Thug (right up there with Frank Sinatra). Some of his big hits include Psycho, Go Flex, Fade and White Iverson. Somehow none of these made my favorites list?

I encourage you to go to one of the lyrics computer sites and read some of the words of these songs. The EO won't allow me to print any of these lyrics because they are chock full of obscenities, sex, violence and prostitution. Every tune I read was completely disgusting and obscene. Of course there is very little actual singing

involved here. Yes folks, this is what a lot of your kids are listening to under those headphones many wear now constantly.

Old Post is also a walking billboard as he has about 35 tattoos — many on his face. He admits they were "a spur of the moment decision." There is the Playboy logo under the right eye, a "stay away" warning above the right eye (don't worry Post I will), images of Elvis, John Lennon and Kurt Cobain on the fingers. You remember Cobain as frontman for the band Nirvana based in Seattle. He was very talented but also a drug addict who took his own life. There is also a barbed wire across Post's forehead, a gun wrapped by a snake on the left arm, praying hands with a gun on the right arm and a bison skull on the throat — just to name a few. What a handsome fellow this guy really is.

OK then southwest Pendleton, plan to be out of town that night or go buy a high-quality set of hearing protection. I'm sure Whisky Fest will be another big success.

David Burns
Pendleton

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