

O EAST OREGONIAN PINION

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OUR VIEW

Oregon lawmakers need to take a timeout

There is no better example of political failure than the move by Republican lawmakers to walk away from the Oregon Legislature Thursday.

But before the usual blame machine cranks up in an effort to saddle GOP lawmakers with all the responsibility, voters should take a step back and carefully review this most recent brush up at the Legislature. That's because a careful assessment will show there is plenty of blame to go around.

Senate Republicans walked away in an effort to derail Oregon's ambitious — and complicated — climate change legislation. House Bill 2020 — designed to slash the state's carbon emissions — is entirely a creature of the Democratic super majority and, as such, should be a big red flag for voters.

We wrote earlier in this space that the bill isn't ready for prime time and we still believe that. The bill is a byzantine, muddled example of good intentions gone awry. What's worse, Democrats crafted the legislation and then brushed off — repeatedly



EOMG File Photo

Republicans in the Oregon Senate have walked out to stall a vote on controversial climate change legislation.

— Republican attempts to reach a compromise on issues in the bill they felt hurt Oregonians. Instead of compromise, discussion and debate — hallmarks of Democracy — the majority party at the Legislature acted in a unilateral manner more in line with leaders of a third-rate banana republic than lawmakers steeped in the

traditions of Thomas Jefferson and James Madison.

Republicans in the Legislature are not without fault. Let's face it, the GOP in Oregon has made a number of political miscues during this legislative session but this time, and on this issue, they are in the right.

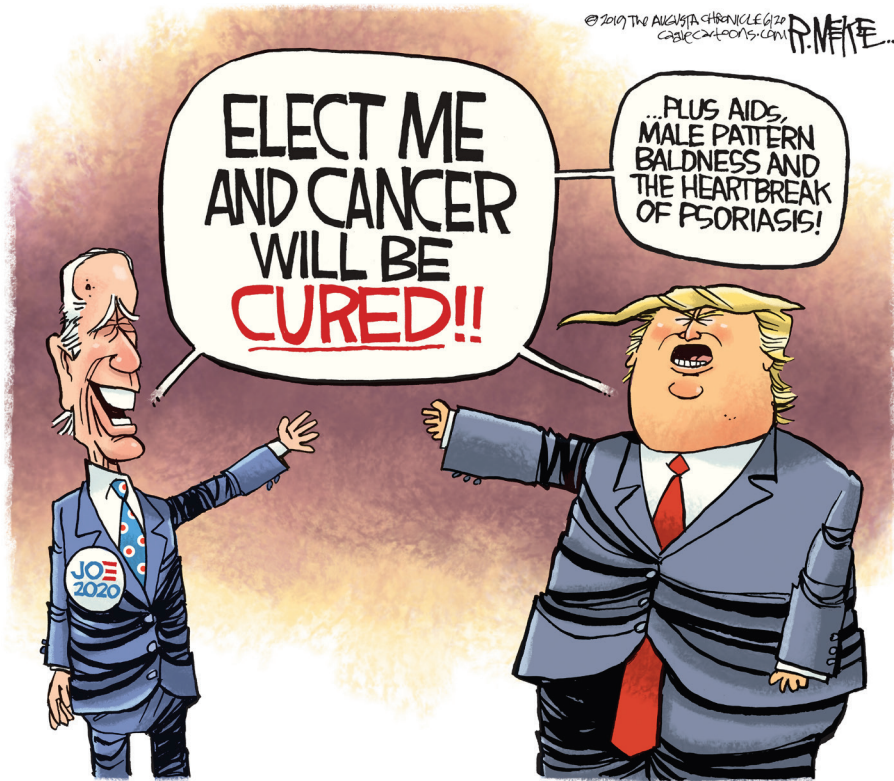
With a super majority, the

Democrats have the power to shove through whatever legislation they want. Democracy, though, isn't about applying unchecked power. It is about seeking the best solution from a variety of different political viewpoints. It is about compromise.

To make matters even worse — which hardly seem possible — Gov. Kate Brown delivered on a threat to use the state police to bring GOP lawmakers back to the Legislature if they departed.

That means we — the state of Oregon — have descended to the low level of detaining elected lawmakers, transporting them back to Salem and shoving them into the Senate to be present so the Democrats can pass their legislation. Such an action, while disgusting, also isn't Democracy. It smacks of totalitarianism.

Oregon lawmakers need to take a timeout, reflect on what is at stake, and then return to the Legislature with the goal of seeking a compromise. The core element of Democracy is compromise. We need more of that instead of political grandstanding.



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OTHER VIEWS

Leave bill is too complex, too expensive

Bend Bulletin

If Oregonians are lucky, the legislative clock will run out before lawmakers make House Bill 2005 law. The bill creates a new and expensive insurance program to provide paid family, medical or "safe" leave to almost every working person in the state. Safe leave would be available to employees who have been victims of harassment, stalking, domestic violence and the like or whose dependents or minor children have been victims.

Giving workers paid time off to deal with their personal lives, whether the problem is illness, the appearance of a new child, or personal safety is a good idea. That said, the decision should be left to the employer, not mandated by the state. Currently workers may take unpaid family and medical leave under both state and federal law.

This bill has all the problems a state-run program might be expected to have.

Among them, employers who needed to replace workers on leave could run into problems because the bill makes clear workers on leave could have their old jobs back with no loss of seniority or other benefits. Jobs with highly technical work requirements might be hard to fill on a temporary basis. That's just for starters.

The measure would set up a

state insurance program and trust fund that would pay for leave, with employees providing 60% of the funds through a payroll tax of up to 1% and employers providing the remaining 40%.

In addition, the Legislative Fiscal Office estimates the bill would cost the state Employment Department more than \$15.5 million in the 2019-21 biennium, and nearly \$38 million in the following biennium. Too, government at all levels would be required to pay into the insurance fund for their employees, as would private employers with more than 25 employees.

Cost and a complex set of rules regarding record-keeping aside, HB 2005 would allow the state to obtain liens against all personal and real property of anyone, employer or employee, who failed to repay too-generous benefits or missed tax payments into the program. That, in turn, could lead to the seizure and sale of the employee's or employer's property.

Oregon already is considered a tough place to do business, with high personal income taxes, a plethora of regulations on everything from wages to time off, in addition to some of the most restrictive land use laws in the country. This measure would only make that reputation worse, and it should be allowed to die.