

O EAST OREGONIAN PINION

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OUR VIEW

Congressional inaction made HB 2015 inevitable

In the final day of the session, the Oregon Senate passed House Bill 2015, a measure that will allow illegal immigrants and other Oregonians who can't prove their legal residence status to get an Oregon driver's license.

We can appreciate the arguments supporters make for the measure, and don't find them to be completely without merit. While the new law will undoubtedly benefit illegal immigrant workers and their employers, we regret the state has been forced to act where Congress has refused.

Anyone now applying for an Oregon driver's license must provide proof of legal presence in the United States, proof of full legal name and proof of current address.

In July 2020, the state will begin offering, as an option, commercial and noncommercial driver's licenses and identity cards that meet strict federal standards, the so-called Real ID. To obtain Real ID-compliant documents, the applicant will have to provide proof of legal presence, date of birth, legal name, Social Security number and address.

Beginning Oct. 1, 2020, anyone



DMV/Capital Press

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boarding a commercial aircraft or entering a secure federal facility must have a Real ID or a passport.

HB 2015 provides that on Jan. 1, 2021, the Department of Transportation will no longer require proof of legal presence to issue a standard, non-Real ID noncommercial Oregon driver's license. Applicants for non-Real ID commercial licenses would

still have to prove legal presence.

It is essentially a recasting of Measure 88, a ballot initiative supported by many ag groups that failed to win voter approval in 2014.

Supporters say issuing licenses to illegal immigrants will make Oregon roads safer because they will have to pass the written and driving test. Having a license will make it more

likely they will obtain the required insurance. That's all good.

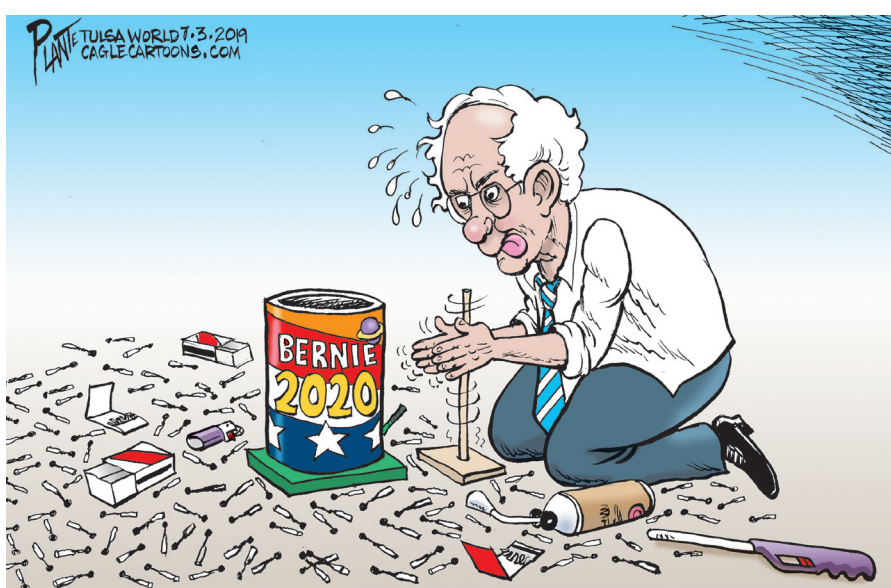
The licenses will allow illegal immigrants to legally drive to their jobs — jobs that they cannot legally hold.

Eighty percent or more of farm workers are in the country illegally and are ineligible for legal employment. They present forged or appropriated credentials — licenses, Social Security cards and immigration documents — to employers, who in turn accept them in good faith. As long as an employer has no knowledge that a worker is ineligible the law holds the employer harmless.

It is a wink-and-a-nod arrangement made necessary by a severe labor shortage and an immigration system hopelessly mired in politics. We hope HB 2015 doesn't make it harder for employers to pull off the charade.

We continue to believe that federal reform should have been the first step in the normalization of the status of illegal immigrants. Action by Congress would have made HB 2015 unnecessary.

But, congressional inaction made the Legislature's action inevitable.



YOUR VIEWS

Be part of the climate change solution

House Bill 2020 may or may not have been the best way to limit the effects of climate change on Oregonians. Doing nothing is definitely the wrong way to reduce the effects we all are feeling now and will feel in increasing severity in the near future. Democrat and Republican lawmakers share responsibility for the failure of our legislature to find a way that fairly distributes the pain of changing the way we live and conduct our business in order to avoid the worst consequences of climate change.

My extended family is watching a 50-year-old pine forest on our small part of the Blue Mountains being ravaged by mountain pine beetle. The past decade of drought has left our trees unable to fight off the attack of the bugs that always live around us. We see increasing conflict over water allocation: not just between farmers, ranchers and fish but also between orchardists and wheat growers, alfalfa growers and cities. We now expect to suffer weeks of heavy smoke in our air with health effects for all of us and life-threatening effects for some. What will it take to convince us that we need to stop passing our pollution into our air and water while there is still hope of a livable future?

We should not be encouraging our legislators to continue partisan in-fighting and instead should be collaborating with them to find ways to cut our pollution and to mitigate the worst economic consequences of those corrective measures. Fighting pollution produces more economic winners than losers, but if you are one of the losers who is being priced out of an historic way of life, it still hurts badly.

How can Oregon help the truckers and loggers and farmers whose livelihood is threatened make the changes to new technologies and practices that can reduce their carbon emissions and their water consumption?

I hope my fellow East Oregonians who think House Bill 2020 was not a good solution will contact their legislators with ideas for a better solution to the very real problem of climate change. If you are one of the people who still thinks there is no climate change or that it doesn't urgently require action to slow it, I hope you will broaden the sources from which you get your news and learn just how big a threat we are facing. We can't let another year go by doing nothing.

Lindsay Winsor
Milton-Freewater

Who decides which streets are repaired?

As I sit here watching asphalt trucks go up my street, I start wondering what the residents of Byers, Despain, Third Street, and other needful streets would think if they knew that a street that was not as needy was seen to before aforementioned streets. But all they have to know is this work is being done on Bob Patterson's street: a new water main and paving over past two budget cycles.

I know our director of public works will have a good answer why his block should be a greater priority than Byers or other more needy streets. Just ask him what street is next: Northwest Eighth between Furnish and Giliam? Rob Corbett's street. Just wondering. Our government at work.

Larry Platek
Pendleton

Newspaper staff brings passion to their work

Sixty days. That's how long I've been editor of this great newspaper. While that isn't a terribly long time inside the big picture, I have been able to determine few things about this area in that time.

The first one probably resonates the most. This is a great area. I can't say or write that I was completely unfamiliar with Pendleton or Umatilla County before I left my communications and public relations job in La Grande. What I wasn't aware of was the great people that make this area such a fine place to live and work. In the small amount of time I've been in Pendleton, I've met many good people who are enthusiastic about their home and the people who live here.

The other element to my first 60 days I find significant is the *East Oregonian*. I've worked at many newspapers in my career and this is clearly one of the better places I've worked at.

The staff of the newsroom and the people who work in our other departments are focused on providing a quality product for our readers. That means one of the biggest potential hurdles for a new editor — enthusiasm — is already present.

Our newsroom also symbolizes the kind of dedication and hard work that are necessary for any newspaper to be successful. Work as a reporter isn't an easy gig anywhere and it can offer up its own set of

unique challenges in a rural, local area.

Yet our newsroom is occupied by individuals that have shown me in the past 60 days that they truly care for our community. That kind of concern and attention from our reporters is essential if we are to be successful in the future.

Our newsroom has proven it is flexible enough to take advantage of shifting opportunities — and news stories — on a regular basis.

That is crucial for readers. Readers need to know that those providing their news are ready to tackle any subject — no matter how mundane — in an effort to keep them informed.

The newspaper industry has changed — since the day I decided to step into the profession. When I started out in this business, the online product wasn't as important as it is now. When I began as a journalist, the world was a little different, a little slower and slowly stumbling into a faster future.

We present the news differently now as social media and the online product continue to gain in relevance. Yet our fundamental mission remains the same: Inform people and give them an unbiased review of what is important in their community.

I am grateful I was chosen to be the editor of this great newspaper and I am excited for what lays ahead. We are already off to a good start.



ANDREW CUTLER
COMMENT



Unsigned editorials are the opinion of the East Oregonian editorial board. Other columns, letters and cartoons on this page express the opinions of the authors and not necessarily that of the East Oregonian.

The East Oregonian welcomes original letters of 400 words or less on public issues and public policies for publication in the newspaper and on our website. The newspaper reserves the right to withhold letters that address concerns about individual services and products or letters that infringe on the rights of private citizens. Letters must be signed by the author and include the city of residence and a daytime phone number. The phone number will not be published. Unsigned letters will not be published.

Send letters to the editor to editor@eastoregonian.com, or via mail to Andrew Cutler, 211 S.E. Byers Ave. Pendleton, OR 97801