

# O EAST OREGONIAN PINION

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## OUR VIEW

# Choosing between American values and commerce

We welcome last week’s news that China has agreed to buy between \$40 billion and \$50 billion in U.S. agriculture products as part of a “cease fire” in the ongoing trade war between the two countries.

President Trump has agreed to suspend planned hikes in tariffs on Chinese goods as talks continue. Unfortunately, the cease fire does nothing to eliminate punishing tariffs on U.S. goods that are already in place.

But talks continue. China is an important trading partner for farmers and ranchers in the Pacific Northwest. Any improvement in trade relations between the United States and China is good news for farmers.

Yet our enthusiasm for this recent development is tempered by other actions of the Chinese government that made the news last week.

Exercising his First Amendment rights, Daryl Morey, the general manager of the Houston Rockets basketball team, tweeted his support for demonstrators in Hong Kong protesting a proposed ordinance that they fear would put residents and visitors to the region under the jurisdiction of the mainland Chinese communist government.



AP Photo/Nati Harnik  
**A loader piles soybeans at the Frontier Co-op in Schuyler, Neb. China says it will buy more U.S. soybeans, but has shown no patience for those who criticize its policies.**

American basketball is very popular in China, and China is very important to the National Basketball Association. Beijing responded by threatening to call off a series of planned NBA exhibition games in China. Morey pulled his tweet and apologized to the Chinese government. The Rockets disavowed Morey and the NBA groveled. And the NBA isn’t alone. With billions of dollars at stake, just about everyone that does business in China works hard not to run afoul of the leadership.

Google and Facebook facilitate censorship. Hollywood tempers its scripts to avoid touchy subjects such as Tibet, the Dalai Lama, the Tiananmen Square massacre and the sovereignty of Taiwan. Apple has given a state-run company control of its iCloud operation in China, along with the encryption key that has given the government access to emails, text messages, photos and other data of Chinese customers. Nike pulled the products of one of its affiliated brands from Chinese shelves

after its principal designer tweeted support for Hong Kong protestors. In contrast, Disney remained silent when the actress playing the title role in its live-action movie “Mulan” tweeted her support for the police beating Hong Kong demonstrators. The People’s Republic of China is a totalitarian, communist regime that doesn’t tolerate departures from the party line. It uses forced labor, it persecutes religious minorities, it imprisons dissenters in “re-education” camps, it is said to harvest the organs of detainees. Unfortunately, it’s also an economic powerhouse that isn’t afraid to throw its weight around. None of this seems to have anything to do with agricultural exports to China. To our knowledge, the Chinese have not put the arm on American farmers and ranchers to moderate their views. But what happens if a social media-savvy soybean farmer acknowledges in a tweet that Chinese President Xi Jinping resembles Winnie the Pooh? (He does, and it’s a sore spot.) U.S. agriculture might have to make the choice between American values and \$24 billion in Chinese sales. It’s a hard choice to contemplate.



## YOUR VIEWS

### School board misrepresenting bond’s effect on taxes

Well here we go again, this time the school board is using a smoke and mirror program to confuse you over increased taxes. They state that, if passed, the tax will not increase as it is a deferred tax issue. Make no mistake: Nothing is free and the tax, while it may take a year or so, we will surely pay an additional tax on top of the \$84 million passed in 2008, and will run for many more years. The estimated additional tax is \$1.40 per \$1,000 of assessed property and will hit all personal property owners, no doubt raising rental fees for those people also. The proposal is for about the same as defeated two years ago. Ask yourself why we need more property purchased when we already have sprawling campus-like schools and blocks and blocks of school property. Also, I was surprised to see an article in the *East Oregonian* written by Rep. Greg and Sherri Smith supporting tax issues in Hermiston. It would seem to make sense if you live in Heppner, where you pay no taxes in Hermiston, then you should butt out of our issues. We are very capable of handling our own business, thank you.

**Jim Tiede  
Hermiston**

### Disabled Oregonians deserve equality in life and work

People with disabilities have the right to

live, work and enjoy our communities like everyone else. No one should be excluded from our world just because they experience a disability. Yet, most of our schools, workplaces, sidewalks, and shops were built with only people without disabilities in mind. Nearly 30 years ago, a groundbreaking federal civil rights law for people with disabilities — the Americans with Disabilities Act — brought hope of profound change. As your article shows, turning the promise of that law into reality is something Oregonians with disabilities fight for every single day. Our organization helps the roughly 950,000 Oregonians who experience disability have the opportunity to pursue their dreams. All parts of our communities should be open to everyone — from the the classrooms that our children learn in and the workplaces where we earn a living to the streets that we cross. Our organization also helps promote financial independence and empowerment of people with disabilities who would like to work, but need information about how work will impact their disability benefits. Lifting decades-old barriers that are relics from a time when we didn’t plan to create communities that included people with disabilities is an urgent undertaking. The health and well-being of Oregonians with disabilities depends on it. But the benefits will be felt by all Oregonians. Everyone’s lives are richer when all of us feel like we truly belong.

**Jake Cornett, executive director  
Disability Rights Oregon  
Portland**

## OTHER VIEWS

# Put your hands together for Pete and Amy

If only the Democrats could fight like the Washington Nationals. The new National League champs won four straight on the way to the World Series, with great pitching and clutch hitting. End of story. Or as Joe Biden would say, “Period!” But alas, every month or so, we get a three-hour marathon of umpteen presidential candidates talking in 90-second bursts, and all we can do is try to parse the rhetorical mire. As Biden said Tuesday night, “These debates are kind of crazy, because everybody tries to squeeze everything into every answer that is given.” And will any of Tuesday night’s squeezed answers move the needle in the Democratic race as we trudge closer toward actual voting in Iowa? I have no idea (nor do you). And that frees me up to focus on the sub-narrative that I found most compelling — namely, the stellar performances of two moderate underdogs, Pete Buttigieg and Amy Klobuchar. Democrats are typically torn between the aspirational and the practical. In 2019, their hearts tilt toward the aspirational (Medicare for All and other progressive dreams), but many fear — with good reason — that if they overreach, they risk alienating swing voters in key Electoral College states, thus imperiling ousting a criminal “president” and putting him on a path to jail. I doubt that Buttigieg or Klobuchar can win the nomination, but during the debate they did the Democrats a big favor by slamming the brakes on some of the most runaway aspirations. When Elizabeth Warren recycled her summer debate performance — again refusing to say whether Medicare for All (government health care) would require a middle-class tax hike in the short term — Buttigieg pointed out that she never explains “how a multi-trillion-dollar hole in this Medicare for All plan is supposed to get filled in.” Bernie Sanders intervened to say that, yes, taxes would indeed go up, which I bet Warren did not appreciate. And Klobuchar pounced all over that before pointing out the popular public option is more doable in Congress: “The difference between a plan and a pipe dream is something that you can actually get done.” That was the moderate underdogs’ big theme: being practical and getting stuff done, rather than dreaming too big and risking a disastrous election loss. It surfaced

again when Beto O’Rourke — desperate to revive a dead candidacy — decided to talk up his politically suicidal issue of gun confiscation. Or, as O’Rourke calls it, “mandatory buyback.” Buttigieg jumped all over that, schooling O’Rourke that the gun violence crisis requires urgent, practical solutions: universal background checks “that we finally have a shot to actually get through,” a ban on the sale of high-capacity magazines, red flag laws that would disarm domestic abusers and prevent suicides. In short, “We cannot wait for purity tests. We have to just get something done. ... We are this close to an assault weapons ban. That would be huge. And we’re going to get wrapped around the axle in a debate over whether it’s ‘hell, yes, we’re going to take your guns?’” Warren didn’t like all the cautious talk. Later in the debate she said that various unnamed candidates “think that running some kind of vague campaign that nibbles around the edges of big problems in this country is a winning strategy. They are wrong. ... Democrats will win when we give people a reason to get in the fight.” Did Joe Biden (still the front-runner in some polls, but not in others) gain or lose ground Tuesday night? Did Warren? Who knows. But Buttigieg and Klobuchar, in the second tier, probably raised their profiles. As Democrats toy with their most progressive dreams, a some Midwestern common sense can’t hurt. Toward the end, Buttigieg said: “I don’t agree with Senator Warren that the only way forward is infinite partisan combat. ... Think about what (a new) president can do to unify a new American majority for some of the boldest things we’ve attempted in my lifetime — (a public health care option) for all who want it ... an assault weapons ban, which would be a huge deal. ... Yet there are some here on this stage who say it doesn’t count unless we go even further.” Moments later, Klobuchar referenced the debate’s Ohio locale and said: “You know, this isn’t a flyover part of the country to me. The heartland is where I live. And I want to win those states that we lost last time. ... But we can’t get any of this done unless we win.” Amen to that.

*Dick Polman is a nationally syndicated columnist.*

