

EAST OREGONIAN OPINION

CHRISTOPHER RUSH
PublisherKATHRYN B. BROWN
OwnerANDREW CUTLER
EditorWYATT HAUPT JR.
News EditorJADE McDOWELL
Hermiston Editor

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OUR VIEW

Same day registration could improve turnout

State Sen. Mark Hass, D-Beaverton, believes Oregonians would be better served if they could register to vote right up through Election Day. The change, he argues, would improve voter turnout, and that's not a bad thing.

The state constitution requires would-be voters to have registered "not less than 20 days" before the next election. They also must live in Oregon for the six months preceding the election, and Hass does not propose changing the residency requirement.

But, as Hass notes, the 20-day requirement may have made sense when it was enacted in 1986. The era of modern technology had not yet taken hold, and county clerks favored the Ballot Measure 13 that established the 20-day registration cutoff.

Voters agreed, though elected officials, the League of Women Voters and other groups all opposed it, argu-



OPB Photo/Bradley W. Parks, File
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ing that the registration deadline would reduce voter participation in elections because fewer people would be eligible to vote. A *Bend Bulletin* editorial

about the measure noted that in 1986, some 71,000 voters registered in the 20 days before the general election, and in 1980, more than 100,000 registered in

that same time period.

Supporters of the measure argued the deadline would cut fraud and save money, and the measure passed handily.

Yet, Hass is correct in noting that technology has advanced so much since 1986 that it no longer takes 20 days to verify that those who have registered are, in fact, entitled to vote. He would let voters decide the matter, and, assuming they approved the change, he would charge the secretary of state with establishing what documentation to use to establish voter eligibility.

Hass wants to be his party's candidate for secretary of state in 2020, and he no doubt sees changing the registration deadline as something that voters will favor. But he's also likely right in his belief that same-day registration will get more Oregonians to the polls. It's a change worth trying.

OTHER VIEWS

The word Trump should never use

When I hear the word "lynch," I immediately think of the black experience of torture, persecution and dehumanization that was so prevalent in the first half of the last century in the American South. I also think of the murder of Leo Frank, a Jewish business owner who was convicted of raping young Mary Phagan, had his sentence commuted, but was kidnapped by an angry mob from his prison cell and hanged from a tree. I think, too, of the 11 Italian men who were lynched in New Orleans after having been acquitted of killing an Irish police officer.

This Jewish man and these Italian men shared one very fundamental characteristic with the legions of African Americans murdered by racists: They were not considered white. Jews were "others," and Italians were considered one step removed from blacks on the racial spectrum. That's our history. According to Merriam Webster, which provides a race-neutral definition of the word, to lynch someone is defined as "to put to death (as by hanging) by mob action without legal approval or permission."

But we all know that there is nothing "race neutral" about the word.

When Billie Holiday sang her masterpiece "Strange Fruit," a song that made famous a poem written to protest American racism, particularly the lynching of African Americans, we know that she was not singing about anyone other than a black man. If 14-year-old Emmett Till had been white, his whistling at a white woman would not have ended with him swinging from a tree. That's just a fact.

I bring this up because last week, President Donald Trump tweeted that an impeachment inquiry against him is a lynching.

Trump is well known for saying things off the cuff and "shooting from the hip," something that delights his most loyal supporters. But invoking the word "lynching" to describe his current situation is offensive and tone deaf. It overlooks the historical connotation of

the word.

Some are frustrated that people are reacting strongly about the use of the word. They point to Rep. Jerry Nadler of New York, who more than 20 years ago used it to describe the Clinton impeachment. Where, they ask, was the outrage for that? I agree that Nadler and the liberals are hypocritical in screaming about Trump's use of the word now if, as I suspect, they had no problem using it to describe a white victim — their white victim — back then. But yesterday's Democratic hypocrisy does not excuse Trump today. Conservatives who chafed at being called "deplorable" by Hillary Clinton can't seriously

dismiss the president's use of lynching as a big nothing-burger.

When I posted about this on my Facebook page, some of the friends I most respect implied that I was being oversensitive. They wondered why I was being "triggered." They asked me if it was wrong for Clarence Thomas to use the phrase "high-tech lynching" to describe his Supreme Court nomination process that was, according to many people — including me — an exercise in character

assassination.

I shouldn't have had to remind them that the odds Justice Thomas had relatives who'd been lynched were significantly higher than the odds that President Trump's family lived that tragedy.

The point is this: Some words have profound historical meaning. I think abortion is mass genocide, but I cringe when people call it a holocaust. There was one Holocaust, and that word is taken. The same thing with lynching. Being annoyed that a partisan crew is making your life hell doesn't give you the right to appropriate someone else's dark tragedy.

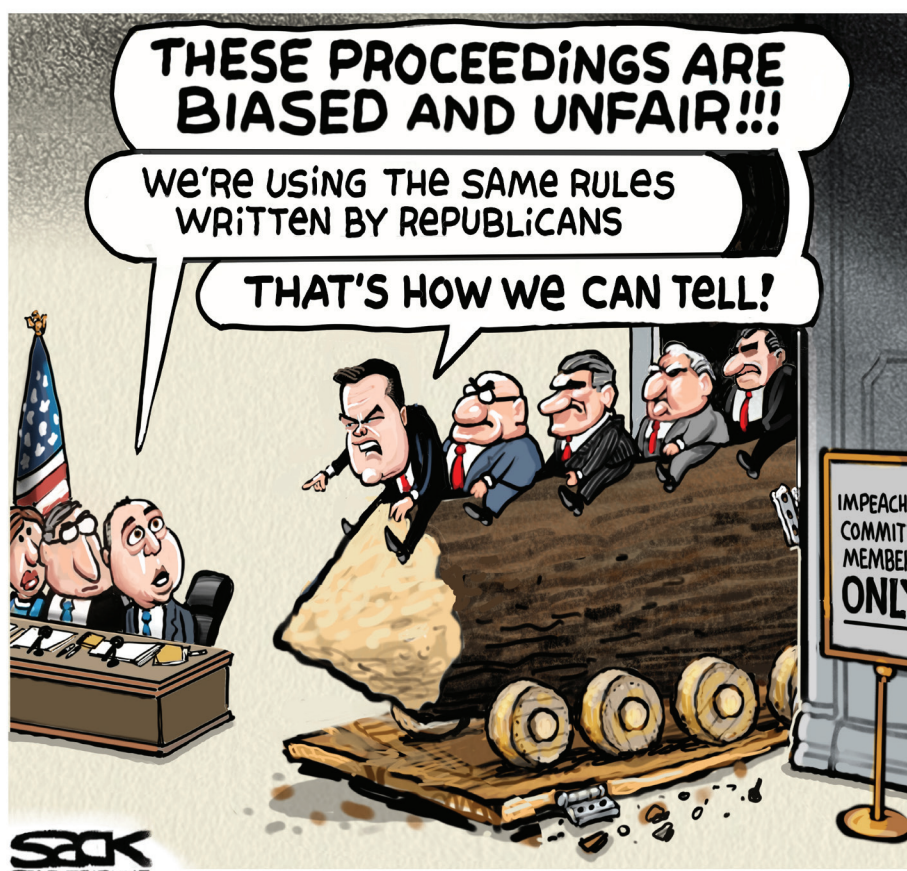
Call it railroading. Call it a witch hunt. Heck, I'd even agree.

But leave the word lynching alone.

Christine Flowers is a syndicated freelance columnist.



CHRISTINE FLOWERS
COMMENT



YOUR VIEWS

Taxes should be paid by all, not just a few

I've been very pleased to see letters to the editor written against the Hermiston school bond. Does Hermiston need school expansion? Yes, without question. The problem is who pays for it.

We live in a state without a sales tax, a state that has one of the most progressive income taxes in the country — meaning, only a very small percentage of the population actually pays any tax. Now we are supposed to be on board for yet another bond that increases property tax assessment. The story that it doesn't increase taxes is smoke and mirrors, and not true. Because a bond was to be paid off, thus reducing property tax, but this reduction doesn't occur, it is still a tax increase! I for one was looking forward to paying less property tax!

The problem in Oregon is that the very few are expected to foot the bill for everyone else. The need for additional schools is almost all due to immigrant population increase. Of this population, only a very small percentage own property, thus not funding the school bond in any way. These are just facts, not a political statement.

I will be voting against the bond proposal not because it's not needed. I will be voting against it because the state of Oregon must find a way

to have everyone contribute to its expenses, not just the few.

Jeremy Anderson
Hermiston

Pelosi a poster child for political destruction

Perhaps what Congress should be worried about is Nancy Pelosi. I suggest that she be investigated for treason against the United States.

I am neither Democrat nor Republican. I am just a retired U.S. Navy submariner. It appears to me that Pelosi does not care about America, she is solely obsessed with impeaching Trump.

Some may not agree with me when I say that I have seen every president since Truman, and Trump is the best of that group. Impeaching Trump would have several bad consequences, one being the end of the USA as a global power. We do have many enemies in this world. I guess she forgot about that (or just does not care), and does not care that the weakness she intends for us would be devastating to our position in the world.

George Washington said political parties will be the destruction of this country. Pelosi is a poster child for what the father of our country was suggesting.

William Laffen
Umatilla

CONTACT YOUR REPRESENTATIVES

U.S. SENATORS

Ron Wyden
221 Dirksen Senate Office Bldg.
Washington, DC 20510
202-224-5244
La Grande office: 541-962-7691

Jeff Merkley
313 Hart Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510
202-224-3753
Pendleton office: 541-278-1129

U.S. REPRESENTATIVE

Greg Walden
185 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515
202-225-6730
La Grande office: 541-624-2400

REPRESENTATIVES

Greg Barreto, District 58
900 Court St. NE, H-38
Salem, OR 97301
503-986-1458
Rep.GregBarreto@state.or.us

Greg Smith, District 57
900 Court St. NE, H-482
Salem, OR 97301
503-986-1457
Rep.GregSmith@state.or.us

SENATOR

Bill Hansell, District 29
900 Court St. NE, S-423
Salem, OR 97301
503-986-1729
Sen.BillHansell@state.or.us