

O

EAST OREGONIAN

PINION

CHRISTOPHER RUSHKATHRYN B. BROWNANDREW CUTLERWYATT HAUPT JR.JADE McDOWELL

PublisherOwnerEditorNews EditorHermiston Editor

Founded October 16, 1875

OUR VIEW

Democrats must work with GOP on climate bill

Oregon Republicans most likely understood at the end of the last session that the controversial carbon emission issue wasn't going to go away.

Already, one of the architects of the carbon emission reduction bill that failed during the last session is hard at work crafting a new proposal.

Readers probably remember that Senate Republicans walked out of the 2019 session, a decision that destroyed hopes by Democrats to push their favored carbon emission blueprint into law.

The bill was designed to slash the state's greenhouse gas emissions and generate funds to use on a host of environmental programs.

There is also, apparently, a push by an environmental group to put a carbon emission reduction measure before voters.

Sen. Michael Dembrow, D-Portland, the lawmaker who led the effort for the carbon emission reduction legislation, is working to simplify a new bill and that should be good news for everyone, especially voters.



AP Photo/Andrew Selsky, File
Lawmakers convene at the Oregon Senate in Salem on June 29, 2019, after the minority Republicans ended a walkout they had begun on June 20, 2019, over a carbon-emissions bill they said would harm their rural constituents.

That's because the original piece of legislation was a confusing tome that created a host of questions from critics.

A more narrowly tailored piece of legislation is needed because there isn't any doubt — or shouldn't be — that climate change is real and we all need

to discover a way to address it.

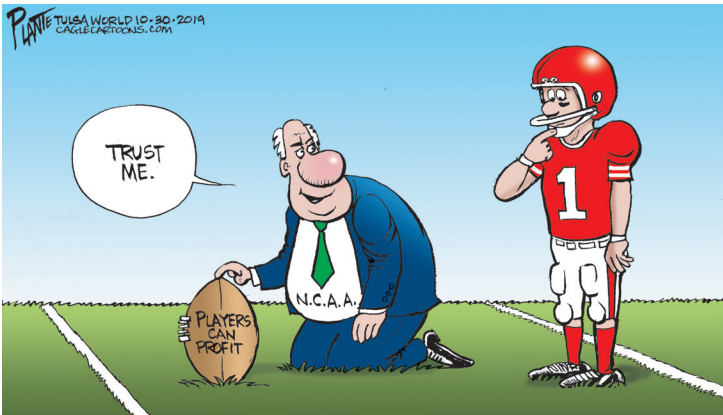
But we can't develop a solution on the backs of the rural residents of Oregon. Nor barge ahead with a solution that ignores the valid concerns of those of us who live and work and play in the great rural areas of Oregon.

Dembrow and his Democratic supporters on a new carbon emission bill must find a middle ground with Republicans on this issue, and that is going to be a pretty tall order.

The well between the two parties on this issue has, indeed, been poisoned. But that shouldn't mean lawmakers throw up their hands and walk away. This is an important issue, and just because it was bungled in the last session doesn't mean it should be discarded. What must be avoided is another long, drawn-out political battle that ends with the minority party walking away from the capital.

No one is going to say finding a solution will be easy. It won't be. Democracy is a messy business sometimes, and the last session's battles over the carbon reduction initiative clearly reinforce that scenario.

The Democrats staked their legislative success last session on a bill that was essentially a prototype on political overreach. They must work with their political brethren in both the House and Senate to find a viable solution.



YOUR VIEWS

Trump is proof ‘anyone can become president’

Donald Trump was inevitable, an overdue inoculation to the two-century-plus experiment of American democracy with which we have gotten by. In our outdated system, the Trump presidency arrived to demonstrate the significant weakness in the way we do our quadrennial political business: Trump's election proves the truth of our national myth that, indeed, “anyone can become president.”

This truth is inevitable, much as Adolf Hitler was during the democratic state of his time; a fluke in a normally healthy political system. Thank God Trump came along rather than someone like Hitler. His election — solely a result of the Electoral College vs. the popular, “each person gets one vote” majority, and the truth of the myth that anyone (U.S.-born) can become president — was surprising in that it didn't happen a lot sooner.

What do Trump and Hitler share? Both have fairly radical ideologies and a total lack of formal experience in public service. Both are self-aggrandizing narcissists who could never admit to being wrong or making an error in judgment. The difference between the two, however, is important. While both are strident examples of deviousness, Adolf Hitler was the much more intelligent and charismatic of the two. And to his credit, Hitler was obsessed with something that was beyond him: the 1000-year Reich. Trump is only interested in personal wealth, nothing more, thank God.

What to do about it? Get rid of the Electoral College and strictly abide with the will of the majority of the citizens for every quadrennial term. Contenders should not be allowed the office before passing tests in basic U.S. history told from a variety of perspectives, tests in civics that measure the knowledge one has of how government works according to the collection of American codices (i.e., Constitution, Bill of Rights, Declaration of Independence), and finally, a thorough psychological evaluation by an independent body of mental health specialists to determine psychological competency for the office. This is not only wise but in our

best interests to do so, no matter who occupies the office. Trump is blatant proof of this.

Let's protect the still-worthy experiment in governing we call American democracy so that it will not only be a viable and safe form of government decades from now, but evidence that we have reached the edge of the abyss with Donald Trump but not have gone over the edge — yet — with an inevitable Adolf Hitler.

Matthew Henry Pendleton

Invest in Hermiston students to show we value their future

In 2011, I was the first in my family to graduate high school and go on to college. I was able to achieve this because my teachers cared about me. They knew my story, they knew my challenges, and they took the time to make sure I had the support I needed to be successful.

The best teachers wear many hats. They go above and beyond what is taught in the classroom. They have the ability to transform people's lives.

With class sizes growing each year, I fear that the capacity for teachers to really get to know their students and provide all the support necessary for their future success is limited. There is so much value in relationship building and ensuring that our youths feel connected. It creates a sense of belonging and ownership that benefits the entire community in the long run.

The Hermiston School District is proposing Measure 30-130 that will fund classroom space, making room for the growing student population.

By investing in our students today, we are showing them we care about their future. We are showing them Hermiston is a place that values their education and supports their development. We will send a message that Hermiston is a place worth returning to and helping build up.

Please join me in saying Yes to Hermiston Schools.

Zaira Sanchez Hermiston

OTHER VIEWS

Republicans have James Madison spinning in his grave

Maybe they thought they were standing up for principle.

How else can you explain the Republican lawmakers who dramatically barged into a closed-door meeting of the U.S. House Intelligence Committee on Oct. 23 to protest an ever-expanding impeachment probe of President Donald Trump?

Whatever principle they were defending — in this case, the fairness and transparency of the Democrat-led impeachment probe — collapsed utterly in the media circus that quickly enveloped the proceedings.

“I led over 30 of my colleagues into the SCIF where Adam Schiff is holding secret impeachment depositions,” Rep. Matt Gaetz, R-Fla., tweeted on Wednesday morning, referring to the “Sensitive Compartmented Information Facility” that is used when matters of the most urgent secrecy are being discussed. Democrats, not without reason, criticized Republicans for bringing their phones into an area where phones are explicitly banned for security reasons.

As it turned out, more than half of the self-styled “protesters,” who acted with Trump's blessing, were free to attend the hearing and ask questions. Throughout the political sideshow, Gaetz sounded more like a cable news anchor than an elected member of the world's greatest legislative body.

The stunt was visible confirmation that congressional Republicans have surrendered their constitutionally mandated oversight responsibilities, and now simply serve as clueless adjuncts to an increasingly unstable chief executive who's just one tweetstorm away from eviscerating them in the most public — and often most personal — of terms.

Somewhere, James Madison, who warned against the dangers of demagogues, is spinning in his grave at the legislative branch's acquiescence to the other end of Pennsylvania Avenue.

An Oct. 20 poll by the Public Religion Research Institute paints a vivid picture of the starkness of the current partisan divide of the impeachment debate.

While overall support for impeaching Trump and removing him from office has grown steadily since February 2017 (the month after he took office), when it was 30%, to the 47% where it has hung steadily since October 2018, the divides among the partisan faithful are far more stark.

Nearly eight in 10 Democrats (78%) say

Trump should be impeached and removed from office, according to the PRRI poll.

Support among Republicans has remained steadfast, with 94% saying he should not be impeached and removed from office, the poll found. It adds that “feelings are essentially unanimous” among white evangelical Protestants and Republicans who turned to Fox News as their primary source of news.

Just a handful of elected Republicans have stepped up to criticize Trump for his now-infamous phone call with Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky, where he sought a quid pro quo for dirt on Biden. It's only gone downhill from there, with others in the White House's orbit swept into the probe.

They include Utah Sen. Mitt Romney, who has called Trump's attempts to solicit foreign meddling in the 2020 election “wrong and appalling.”

Romney hasn't made up his mind on impeachment. Romney told Axios' Mike Allen that he's looking for “as much information” as he can get, and wants to “make an assessment consistent with the law and the Constitution” if the House ends up sending impeachment articles to the Senate, which seems a pretty good bet at the moment.

Last week, Florida Republican Rep. Francis Rooney said he was open to impeaching Trump. A day later, he announced he'd retire in 2020. And Rep. Justin Amash, the Republican turned independent from Michigan, has said he'll join House Democrats on impeachment.

Unfortunately, at least right now, there are more Republicans in the Gaetz camp and not enough on Romney's side of the ledger — at least publicly. Republicans, who nurse grievances against Trump in their hearts while remaining publicly supportive of the president, may decide there's a point of no return where they'll have to be as loyal to Trump as the president has been to them.

Which is to say, not at all.

Because in Trumplandia, loyalty is a one-way street. And that's the point at which Trump may become the third president to be impeached by the House — and the first in American history to be convicted in the Senate.

And maybe then Madison can rest easy again.

John L. Micek is a syndicated columnist.

