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OUR VIEW

Impeachment proceedings about making a statement

In terms of pure dogma driving a political issue, the current impeachment proceeding of President Donald J. Trump would be hard to beat.

And as an example of a sheer waste of time, the effort to impeach the president stands alone.

Don't get the wrong impression. Many of the president's actions and words since the time he stepped into office have been questionable, divisive and, at times, embarrassing. His lack of knowledge of history and his indifference to the truth are gravely disturbing.

But now, dogma is driving efforts on both sides of the political fence on this current federal legislative fight, and that is truly discouraging.

Throughout our history the democratic foundation of this nation weathered similar political ills, and, when our legislative system works best, its hallmark is compromise.

Our nation now, though, often represents an unhinged element of democracy where the person who can yell the loudest is the one who is listened to. Facts are twisted and discarded. Our problems, it seems, are



AP Photo/Susan Walsh
House Intelligence Committee Chairman Adam Schiff, D-Calif., center, flanked by House Democratic Counsel Daniel Goldman, left, and ranking member Devin Nunes, R-Calif., uses his gavel as former U.S. Ambassador to Ukraine Marie Yovanovitch testifies before the House Intelligence Committee Friday on Capitol Hill in Washington.

almost always someone else's fault. The Democrats are to blame. The Republicans. Or migrants are the biggest problem, or the Chinese. The list of potential villains grows daily, and perfectly well-educated people — men and women who are products of our educational system — descend into a dark chasm of political misin-

formation and warped doctrine.

We have evolved into a mass of citizens who choose a side and then believe whatever "facts" that political clan proposes. Whether they are true doesn't matter.

Which brings us back to the impeachment proceedings. The procedure is a simple one. Congress

investigates, then the House of Representatives must pass — by a majority — articles of impeachment. Once the articles are passed, the individual is impeached.

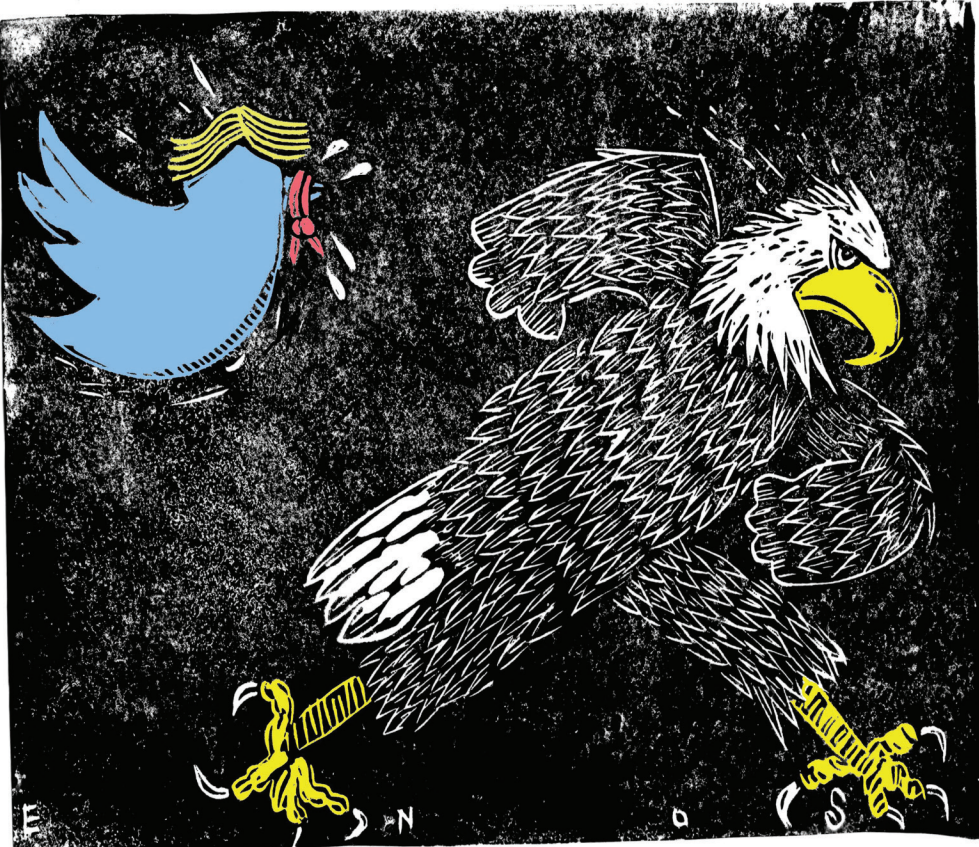
Next the Senate tries the accused. If it is the president, then the Chief Justice of the United States presides over the proceedings. Conviction — which is the key word — requires a two-thirds supermajority vote of those senators present. The result of a conviction is the removal from office.

So why is it a waste of time in this case?

Simple. Democrats control the House. Republicans control the Senate. The chances the president would be convicted in the Senate are miniscule. The chances he will be impeached in the House are nearly a forgone conclusion.

So, in the end, it isn't really about an unjust smear on our system of government by the president. Instead it is about making a statement.

There is a built-in system to eliminate someone who the voters believe no longer best represents their views. It is called an election.



YOUR VIEWS

President Trump is nothing but a con man

A New York state court recently ordered "The Donald" to donate \$2 million to several charities as a fine for misusing his own charitable foundation for his own personal business and political benefit. This is just another example of "The Donald" being his usual con man self.

Back in 2016, right before that election, another court ordered "The Donald" to reimburse students at his now-defunct Trump University their tuition fees and other expenses because he failed to provide the professional training he advertised he would. Also, about the same time, even another court ordered "The Donald" to reimburse members at one of his private golf clubs their membership dues, again for failing to provide what he claimed he would. Long story short, he bilked all of these people. Then, to add insult to injury, he tried to play the "victim" in every one of these situations.

This most recent con job was probably the lowest, if that is possible, as he used veterans causes as the basis for raising funds, which he then used to benefit himself via his re-election campaign. And

"The Donald" is commander-in-chief? Is it just me, or does anyone else see the hypocrisy here? Remember, "The Donald" evaded, or conned, the military draft back when the Vietnam War was at its height.

Wait. It gets even better. "The Donald" even admitted, among other things, he misused his own charity foundation to pay \$10,000 for a 6-foot portrait of ... who else? "The Donald" himself, of course. He also agreed to pay back \$11,525 to his foundation, which he improperly and unethically used on sports memorabilia and champagne.

Trump's foundation will be dissolved and its remaining funds will be split among legitimate charity funds, including City Meals on Wheels, the United Negro College Fund and the U.S. Holocaust Memorial Museum.

Based on his documented record, "The Donald" has a long history of being a con man, and he is not going to change. Nationally elected leaders should be held to a higher ethical bar, and not the bare minimum — which, of course, "The Donald" does not even come close to meeting.

Bob Shippentower
Pendleton

OTHER VIEWS

Pendleton should tighten its belt, not ask for more taxes

When will the city of Pendleton act with greater fiscal responsibility? Everyone acknowledges the degrading condition of Pendleton's roads as a result of deferring years of maintenance, but the city's only response has been attempting to extract more funds from its citizens. The city thinks this is a messaging issue. It's not, it's the message.

The recent online funding survey only included options for new revenue streams, nothing about tightening the city's belt to find funding from existing revenue. The city seems to have fallen into the same problem as every other level of government: expanding into all sorts of programs they aren't intended to do. The city's core responsibilities are streets, water/sewer service, the police department and the fire department. Everything else, such as the library, parks & rec, warming station, movies in the park, sports leagues, etc., are optional and can be trimmed or eliminated to meet budget constraints.

The city has also invested in projects that appear to be heavily exaggerated or just a waste of money. Here are a few examples: local improvement districts (LIDs). The city has been crying for years about the housing shortage but has relied on LIDs to provide taxpayer funds to Portland and Tri-Cities developers to build housing here with the hope that future property taxes will pay the funds back. Ask the city how Sunridge Estates worked out. If there was such a huge demand then builders wouldn't require taxpayer funding or rental vacancy tax breaks. One developer has six of his 32 newer rental units vacant but wants taxpayer funds to build more.

Another example is the city hiring a consultant for \$23K to see if the street lights can be upgraded to LED lights to save money. They did not contact the electric utility company to find out the same information at no charge.

Another example is the UAS park. This is a \$11.2M project that only benefits out-of-the-area businesses by building them new hangar buildings, roads, etc. Local residents will never be able to

see the secret UAS park they paid for. The city claims this will create \$328M in economic development over the next 10 years. That's nearly a third of a billion dollars. The city also claims the UAS park will create 626 jobs. I call BS on all of these estimates. With all of this projected incoming money, road maintenance shouldn't be a problem.

Another example is the Road to Nowhere. The 2000s-era gas tax paid for this but has yet to have one business build along its borders. I don't know how much money was spent on this road but it is used very little. It's a beautiful road, though.

Another example is the Bridge to Nowhere — \$660K for a bridge that serves five or six houses and a small RV park. Heavy farm and utility trucks used this bridge without incident. If this bridge was so dangerous, why didn't the city condemn it?

Another example is the 200 interest-free solar loans the city gave out in the last 10 years. These are negative investments right from the start, with the city losing the interest over the life of the loan. If a citizen wants to install solar panels on their house, that should be their financial responsibility. The wood stove loan program is a similar money loser, with the only upside being it positively affects the city's air quality.

I don't feel the city should be loaning anyone money, they're not in the banking business. I propose the city looks at trimming their budget by eliminating some full-time employees, contracting out lawn and landscape maintenance for city properties to contractors, using city vehicles for another year or two before replacing them, eliminating the warming station, using consultants less and going directly to the organization they want information from, etc. Any sort of fees on lodging, tickets, or gas taxes, etc., will be paid not only by Pendleton city residents but the public in general.

Enough with governments always wanting more money.

Doug Triebelhorn is a resident of Pendleton.



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COMMENT