

O EAST OREGONIAN PINION

CHRISTOPHER RUSH
Publisher

KATHRYN B. BROWN
Owner

ANDREW CUTLER
Editor

WYATT HAUPT JR.
News Editor

JADE McDOWELL
Hermiston Editor

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OUR VIEW

State needs to be more open about data breaches

Keeping your personal information private is, well, a losing battle. Companies can track your cell-phone location even if you think you have blocked tracking. Companies can track locations you visit on the internet. And companies frequently say they value the trust you put in them with your personal information, though they may share it with mysterious “trusted partners.”

Then there are those times when data is outright stolen. As many as 5,000 city of Bend utility customers may have had their credit or debit card information taken. Code was apparently inserted into the software the city uses from its vendor CentralSquare, allowing the information to be copied. This wasn’t a Bend-only thing. It has apparently happened elsewhere with the vendor’s software.

The incident exposed to us some weaknesses of Oregon’s data breach notification law.



EO file photo

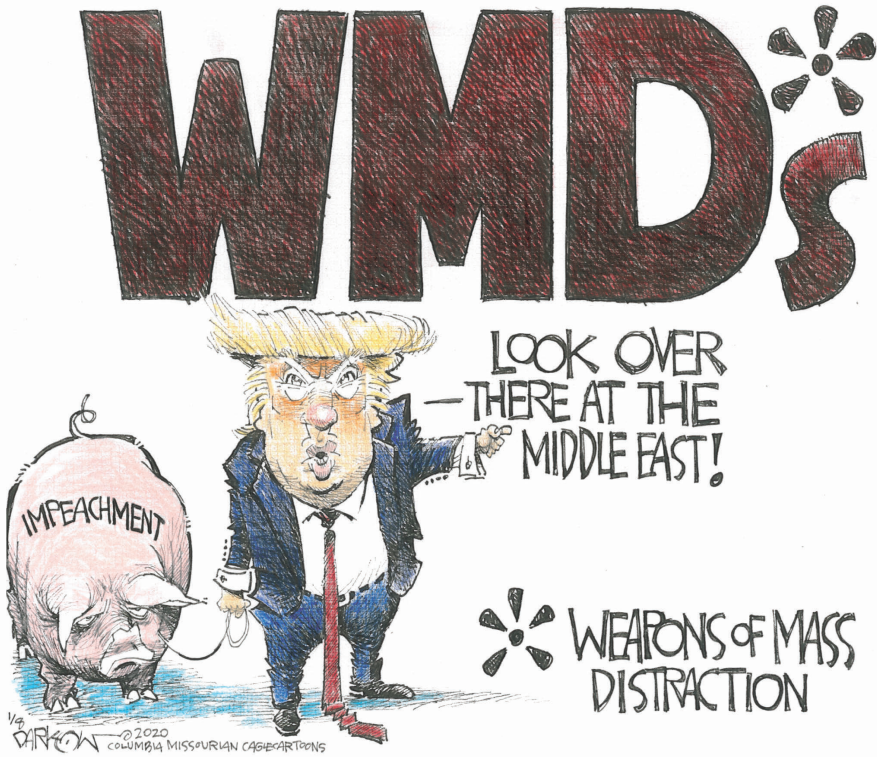
The Oregon House passed the “Equifax bill” in 2018 to prohibit companies from charging for a security freeze after a data breach and other protections.

State law basically requires “a business or state agency to notify any Oregon consumer whose personal information, as defined, was subject to a breach of security,” as the Oregon Department of Justice’s website says. “The law also requires that a sample copy of a breach notice sent to more than 250 Oregon consumers must also be provided to the Oregon Attorney General.”

That’s fine. But the information about breaches in Oregon that the department publishes on its website is not very useful. It lists the entity that reported the breach, when the breach occurred, when it reported the breach, when the breach was discovered, and when notice was provided to customers.

That’s fine, too. It’s not as useful as it could be. How many people may have a breach affected? What was the nature of the information released or taken? What were the entities, software or other factors involved? What is known about how it was done? No, we aren’t suggesting the state publish a how-to guide for hackers.

Data breaches are, it seems, going to be part of life. Our understanding of them and ability to combat them are not helped as much as they could be by the information that the state publishes.



OTHER VIEWS

Congress has to reclaim its war-making authority

It didn’t take long for “World War III” to become a trending topic on Twitter in the hours after news broke that a drone strike by U.S. forces resulted in the death of a top Iranian military commander.

Almost simultaneously, those who’d never heard of the now-late Qasem Soleimani until cable news and social media blared his name began debating whether the latest escalation in tensions between the United States and Islamic Republic of Iran would inevitably result in a hot war between the two countries.

There is bipartisan agreement that the airstrike personally ordered by President Donald Trump meant that there was one fewer terrorist in the world. And there is some wisdom to that, considering Soleimani was believed responsible for the deaths of hundreds of Americans during the Iraq War.

But – and this is a significant but – Congressional leaders had not been briefed on the attack, and expressed fears that the White House was moving toward yet another undeclared war in the region.

While the administration has made positive noises about wanting to draw down the American presence in the Middle East, as was the case during last year’s disastrous withdrawal from northern Syria, its actions have not matched the rhetoric.

The Washington Post reported late last week that the U.S. was deploying an additional 3,500 service people to the region in the wake of that Iranian vow to extract “severe revenge.” That’s on top of the battalion of 750 soldiers sent to Kuwait.

The additional security is undoubtedly necessary, as American installations across the Middle East brace for retaliation. But it’s also a reminder of how easy it would be for the United States to slide into another conflict in a part of the world that’s claimed thousands of American lives and trillions of dollars in American resources.

As president, Trump has broad latitude to prosecute foreign policy. But the

War Powers Act requires the executive branch to brief Congress within 48 hours of unauthorized military action.

New York Mag’s Ed Kilgore writes that the administration is likely to claim it had grounds to act under the congressionally enacted Authorizations of Military Force in 2001 and 2002 that, respectively, gave the nation the Forever War on Terror, and an Iraq War that doesn’t seem to want to ever end.

Not surprisingly, House Speaker Nancy Pelosi, D-Calif, raised serious questions about the legality of the attack, saying it had been carried out without legislative authorization. In reality, Republicans and Democratic administrations have been abusing their war-making authority for decades. That includes the Obama administration’s pernicious preference for drone strikes.

Think about this: The United States last issued a formal declaration of war after the bombs fell on Pearl Harbor in 1941. Every military action since has come without a formal declaration of war. Though some, such as the Korean War and the 1990 Gulf War, have come with congressional authorizations or through United Nations resolutions, as was the case with the Bosnian War under President Bill Clinton in 1992-93.

It might be too late to get the genie back into the bottle. But this slow creep of executive power is one that badly needs to be reversed. Which means it’s a mistake to dismiss Democratic complaints about White House overreach.

The president wields no power more terrifying – nor more broad reaching – than the ability to wage war. But he (and someday she) wields that power in all our names, not just his own.

That’s what declarations of war – and congressional authorizations – are for: to ensure we speak, as a nation, with one voice.

It’s a quaint notion, perhaps, but it’s one worth remembering before we blunder into another endless war.

John L. Micek is a syndicated columnist.



JOHN L. MICEK
COMMENT

YOUR VIEWS

Trump ready to sacrifice his country for spite

There aren’t a lot of people out there that remember when President Nixon was going through his impeachment journey. I was still young but I remember my parents, during those final days of Nixon’s stay at the White House, always talking about the worry about whether the president would push the big red button that would set off a nuclear weapon.

The administration knew Nixon wasn’t all there, and they held their breath and had a close watch on him during the president’s final days in office.

And here we are again. Only this time we don’t have someone in the White House with his finger on a button but with all the insanity this man-child has been showing and nobody in his party willing to take responsibility for his actions. This person is willing to do worse than Nixon would have even considered.

He has always found it easy to throw anybody under the bus. This disgraced president is now and always has been ready and willing to take our country down with him — the country he is suppose to have cared so much about, to

make it so great again. He wants to take out as many of our young people as he can to pay back those that have been mean to him.

He is going to throw his biggest temper tantrum yet, and it will cost our country a lot of lives. These lives will be on the shoulders of him and the Republicans that didn’t have the guts to stop him.

**Bernie Sanderson
Hermiston**

Keep short session to housekeeping, not major legislation

When we were considering going to annual sessions, the short session was promised to be merely housekeeping, budget items that needed some adjustment. No major legislation.

Tell the Legislature to keep that promise.

Cap and trade is much too complicated to be rushed through and properly vetted. Horrible things result from legislation that is rushed. Consider it in 2021.

**Granella Thompson
Weston**