

OUR VIEW

Police body cams a great idea

The Pendleton Police Department made a great leap forward recently when it rolled out its new body camera policy. Each of the city’s 24 sworn officers will be equipped with a camera that will record calls for service. Chief Stuart Roberts said the cameras will help with the preservation of evidence — clearly a critical element for law enforcement — but he also mentioned that the cameras will provide credibility. That creditability is probably one of the most singular key elements to the body cameras. The body cameras will furnish the police with a real-time record that should cut through the fog during a routine pullover or a serious incident. We live in a time when every action by government agencies — from law enforcement to the White House — is under unprecedented scrutiny. That is part of democracy, and most of us can understand the need. Still, too often second-guessing and Monday morning quarterbacking has muddled the context of a specific incident. A high-pro-



Staff photo by Ben Lonergan
The Pendleton Police Department recently purchased 12 Axon Body 2 body cameras for officers to wear, as part of a three-year deal with Axon Inc. The deal — valued at \$41,144.60 — includes cloud storage of video files.

file crime occurs, the police are involved, and then there is an arrest. From that point, the rhetoric machine gets spun up and soon the facts begin

to fade into the background. Chances are there will probably never be any type of serious, high-profile incident involving our local police

force. After all, we live in a small community tucked into a relatively quiet corner of the state. But if an incident did occur, then the local police geared up with the body cams are going to have an instant record that can be used as a key piece in the total puzzle of a crime. Statistics show that police body cams cut down on the unnecessary use of force and complaints against officers drop. That’s because the body cams provide that essential backup and, perhaps, a stabilizing force during a high-stress situation. Best of all, though, the cameras work to enhance not only the job of the officer but also encourage confidence in the police. The residents of Pendleton should feel a tremendous amount of assurance that their police are working diligently to do their jobs in the most effective and transparent manner. Transparency in a democracy is crucial to its success, even transparency in a small town in Eastern Oregon. The body cams are a great idea. Kudos to the Pendleton police.

OTHER VIEWS

A rare display of nonpartisanship on immigration

In what has become an annual display of businesses’ addiction to cheap labor, commerce leaders are lobbying the acting Department of Homeland Security Secretary, Chad Wolf, to increase the H-2B visa cap. The H-2B is a seasonal, temporary, nonagricultural visa with a current 66,000 cap, and is frequently used in landscaping, hospitality and construction industries — blue-collar jobs where wages have been stagnant for years. Last year, the cap was increased by 30,000 visas. Adding foreign-born workers to an economy that President Trump touts as the greatest in America’s history would be counter-productive and hurtful to middle-class U.S. workers who are just starting to benefit from a tight labor market. A record-high 158.8 million Americans are currently employed. The H-2B visa has a long history of being used by employers to pass over qualified Americans and, under the false labor shortage narrative, hire instead cheap, pliant foreign-born labor. A U.S. Government Accountability Office report confirmed that multiple employers in numerous states violated wage, housing and documentation standards among H-2B workers. And a Buzz Feed News expose based on Labor Department statistics and titled “All You Americans Are Fired” found that “many businesses go to extraordinary lengths to skirt the law, deliberately denying jobs to American workers so they can hire foreign workers.” Last week, the Congressional Budget Office reported that mass immigration, which the U.S. has experienced for decades, adversely affects the wages of Americans who compete directly with new immigrants for employment. Expansionists argue that immigration grows the economy, a half-truth. More people mean a bigger economy, but per capita income suffers. From the CBO: “And there are many new immigrant workers to compete with. Immigrants account for about half of all newcomers to the workforce each year.” The CBO concluded that wages are negatively affected in whatever category in which American workers must compete in a labor market artificially inflated by mass immigration. The degree to which Americans have suffered because of a surfeit of immigrant labor is eye-opening. Census Bureau data from the first quarter of 2019 show that 5

million adult immigrants without a bachelor’s degree have been allowed to settle in the country just since 2010. As a result, wages have stagnated or declined for the less educated. Since 2000, the bottom quarter of earners saw just a 4.3% real-wage increase — equivalent to an annual raise of just 0.2%. An immigrant labor overage most adversely affects teenagers, U.S.-born blacks and other minorities. Despite pleas from big business that H-2B visa hikes are necessary to offset an acute labor shortage, and even avoid bankruptcy, numerous non-partisan studies find no evidence of scarcity. Among other respected bipartisan organizations, the Economic Policy Institute, a liberal, pro-immigration, Washington, D.C.-based research firm found “no evidence at all of labor shortages in the labor market.” The H-2B visa has been so flawed for so long, and has been so harmful to American workers, that even hard-core pro-immigration Democratic senators have written to Wolf and Labor Secretary Eugene Scalia urging them to reject corporate crocodile tears about worker shortages. California Sen. Dianne Feinstein, Connecticut Sen. Richard Blumenthal and Illinois Sen. Richard Durbin, all of whom throughout their long congressional careers have consistently voted in favor of more employment-based visas, joined their Republican colleagues Iowa Sen. Charles Grassley and Arkansas Sen. Tom Cotton to object to increases in the existing 66,000 cap. In their letter to Wolf and Scalia, the senators asserted that the H-2B visa incentivizes employers to hire foreign nationals and pass over qualified Americans. President Trump is the wild card in the equation. From time to time, the president has demonstrated an understanding about how excessive immigration hurts American workers. But President Trump’s recent comments about the need for more skilled immigration, talking points taken straight from the Chamber of Commerce’s playbook, have the pro-American labor lobby on edge. As is often said around Capitol Hill, when it comes to President Trump’s thinking, no one ever knows. Joe Guzzardi has written about immigration for more than 30 years. Contact him at jguzzardi@pfirdc.org.



JOE GUZZARDI
COMMENT

JOHN BOLTON READS FROM HIS BOOK



YOUR VIEWS

Rural residents must protest job-killing laws

I was glad to read in our last weekly paper that Timber Unity has planned a protest on Feb. 6. It will be at the state Capitol building. I noticed it was on a weekday. Whoa, how can the loggers, truckers, mill owners and their workers afford to lose a day of production, lost profits and wages? Then I recalled that Gov. Brown and her liberal socialist majority had revived their global warming alarmist-inspired rules and restrictions — laws that, if passed, would cripple many companies and result in thousands of jobs lost. They might have been passed at the last legislative session, but our courageous Republican minority had the courage to walk out and prevent a vote,

in spite of Kate ordering the state patrol to force them to come back. This brings back sad memories of the tragic death of Lavoy Finicum beside the road from Burns to John Day, a dark day in our state history. I now believe that the answer to the question is: How can we afford not to attend? Our industries, jobs, and economic security are hanging in the balance. If you value your job security, please go to Salem on Feb. 6. Display your disapproval of these chaotic job-killing laws to the people who are making them. Just follow the log trucks up First Amendment Road to the Capitol building. I hope every log truck in Oregon can be there. May God Bless the U.S.A., the president, and Oregon.

Norman Neal
Roseburg

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, S-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