

OUR VIEW

Voters deserve to have final say

Politicians like to talk a lot. Americans — voters — get that. We all — perhaps subconsciously — take into account the role politicians play in our great experiment and understand that doing a lot of talking for an elected leader is often just part of the gig. Yet voters need to listen when politicians start to pontificate and there is no better example of that premise than the recent remarks by Oregon Democratic Senate Majority Leader Ginny Burdick’s comments regarding the new cap-and-trade bill, Senate Bill 1530.

As many readers may know, a cabal of Democrats decided to once again lead the carbon emission limit one-trick pony out onto center stage during the current 35-day legislative session.

A bill with similar goals was put on ice during the last session and died an unceremonious death, after a walkout by Republican lawmakers in June 2019.

Opponents to the bill cite a range of problems with the proposed legislation and some Republican lawmakers, including Sen. Bill Hansell, R-Athena, have proposed the carbon emission proposal be placed before voters for a final say.



AP Photo/Anna Reed

The Senate Chamber is viewed on the first day of the short legislative session at the Oregon state Capitol in Salem on Monday. No matter what your feelings about climate change, it should be clear to just about all Oregonians that the Legislature’s Democrats are determined to push through Senate Bill 1530, the proposed cap-and-trade bill, during the current 35-day legislative session.

Burdick told a group of reporters that the “new cap-and-trade bill was too complicated for voters to understand, and therefore the people shouldn’t be allowed to decide this issue at the ballot.”

If you just had to reread that statement again — to be absolute sure your eyes

were not deceiving you — we understand.

Because such a statement is not only surprising but amazing in its implications.

Essentially the message sent is voters are stupid. That’s Oregon voters.

Burdick’s argument — such as it is — remains a prototype of electoral ignorance

and is about as condescending an argument as one can possibly imagine.

Perhaps Burdick — and other lawmakers who seem to be confused — should be required to attend mandatory Civics 101 classes to understand how democracy works.

Democracy isn’t a closed arena where elected leaders are the final arbitrators of what is right and what isn’t or who deserves to be included and who does not.

Politicians work for the voters. In the end it is the people — not politicians — who have the final say in a democracy, and if we were on the sidelines regarding voter participation in the carbon emission limit plan we are not now.

Our lawmakers are going to waste a lot of time debating about this newest carbon emission limit plan so a specific political agenda can be shoved through to law. We urge legislators to remove the bill’s emergency clause, which would allow it to go into effect immediately.

That’s just not wise.

Voters, indeed, should have the final say on whether the state should adopt a carbon emission plan.

That’s because they’re not stupid.

OTHER VIEWS

Trump misses opportunity during State of the Union address

A triumphant but low-key President Trump took to center stage Tuesday night at the U.S. Capitol to deliver his third State of the Union address.

The president had recently returned from maligned Iowa where, in the Republican caucus, he smothered his two GOP challengers, former U.S. Representative Joe Walsh and former Massachusetts Governor William Weld. President Trump received 97% of the vote. And with his Senate acquittal a forgone conclusion, President Trump, in buoyant spirits, touted the economy, low unemployment rates and his successful U.S.-Mexico-Canada trade agreement.

The policy that President Trump can’t get right, and which could be his strongest hand, is immigration. During his address, President Trump stayed on safe ground regarding his immigration achievements and future hopes. The president praised Immigration and Customs Enforcement, and slammed sanctuary cities. He pushed for a new law that would ban providing medical benefits to illegal aliens. And President Trump endorsed a merit-based immigration system, a view he and his advisors — daughter Ivanka and son-in-law Jared Kushner — have previously promoted.

But imagine if President Trump had deviated from safe terrain and instead relied on the last 55 years of immigration history and its consequences to make his case for sensible legal immigration reductions, and for stricter border and interior enforcement.

Beginning in 1965, Presidents Lyndon Johnson, Ronald Reagan and George H.W. Bush signed into law three major immigration acts: the Immigration and Nationality Act of 1965, the Immigration Reform and Control Act of 1986 and the Immigration Act of 1990.

The collective and inarguable results of those three laws have been significant increases in immigration that’s contributed to U.S. population growth, and a huge bump in the numbers of employment-based temporary visas issued that have displaced American workers. Illegal immigration has also spiked, reaching a total of anywhere from 11 to 22 million. Yale University and Massachusetts Institute of Technology researchers found evidence that 22 million is accurate, and discredited the conservative 11 million.

A Pew Research analysis reported that the U.S., despite repeated allegations of being anti-immigrant, has more immigrants than any other country in the world. More than 44 million U.S. residents were born abroad, slightly fewer than one in seven

among the overall population. The Migration Policy Institute documented that, as of 2017, more than 18 million children with at least one immigrant parent were born in the U.S.

Since 1965, the number of immigrants in the U.S. has quadrupled. Assuming the status quo remains unchanged, the Census Bureau projects that by 2065 immigrants and their children will represent 88% of U.S. population growth when the population will exceed 400 million. The dramatic level of population growth that immigration contributes to is unsustainable, and worthy of an intelligent congressional debate that the president could, and should, insist on.

As for immigration’s effect on jobs, the more than one million immigrants that enter the U.S. annually receive lifetime-valid employment authorization documents. Piling on, the Immigration Act of 1990 created the U.S. tech workers’ biggest nightmare, the H-1B visa, and the shameful citizenship for sale visa, the EB-5. Immigration, especially in such high numbers, means looser labor markets, the exact opposite of what U.S. workers deserve.

Finally, for reasons known only to President Trump, he again studiously avoided mention of E-Verify, the federal program that helps ensure that only citizens and legally present immigrants can hold U.S. jobs. By an 81% majority, Americans support E-Verify because, among its other benefits, it will help working-age blacks and Hispanics without a college degree find employment.

If President Trump truly wanted to help “flourishing families” and to sustain the “blue-collar boom” — two phrases he used in his address — he would vocally advocate for less immigration, which would translate into more available jobs and higher wages.

Immigration helped carry President Trump to the White House, and he once endorsed lower immigration levels. President Trump could distinguish himself from his Democratic presidential opposition, which favors open borders, and gutting interior enforcement.

The president’s moment to make a strong, fact-based immigration reduction argument in his SOTU address has passed, but it’s not necessarily gone forever. President Trump’s 2020 re-election campaign should reinforce the lower immigration levels that Americans want.

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YOUR VIEWS

SB 1530 a wolf in sheep’s clothing

We’ve been bombarded by a constant litany about all the corruption in Ukraine by the oligarchy. I was curious about the definition of this type of government. The dictionary shows this to be a form of government in which all power is vested in a few persons or in a dominant class or clique; “government by the few.” A state or organizations so ruled.

Words related to “oligarchy” include domination, monopoly, high-handedness, unreasonableness, coercion, authoritarianism and imperiousness.

We were dismayed by the tragic revelation that this describes Oregon’s government ruled by Gov. Kate Brown and her elitist supporters. It is understandable why Brown’s administration has utter disregard for the concerns of the 31 counties that did not vote for her. It is obvious that Brown’s supporters have total disdain for the Oregonians that did not vote for her.

Sen. Ginny Burdick was asked by a reporter why the emergency clause was being placed on Senate Bill 1530, which eliminates the opportunity to send this proposal to the Oregon voters. She stated the bill was “too complicated” and would be hard to understand by the common voters, so the Legislature must pass it and eliminate any opportunity for Oregonians to have a voice in the matter.

SB 1530 is being promoted as an environmental bill, but it will devastate agriculture, timber, commercial fishermen, miners and transportation, and raise the cost of everything Oregonians use. It is a wolf in sheep’s clothing. It is especially discouraging that Oregonians are not being told about the huge costs associated with this tax bill, which will cost them in every way and in reality will make a minuscule difference, if any, on the environment.

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