

O EAST OREGONIAN PINION

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OUR VIEW

Voters should reject Measure 30-145

Umatilla County voters passed the county's Second Amendment Preservation Ordinance in November 2018, which prevents the county from using resources to enforce state or federal laws that infringe on the constitutional right to keep and bear arms, and grants the sheriff the authority to rule on the constitutionality of those laws.

This November, Umatilla County voters will vote on a related measure, the Second Amendment Sanctuary Ordinance.

Here is the summary of Measure 30-145 from the voters pamphlet: "No agency of the Umatilla County Government or employee of the county will knowingly and willingly participate in any way in the enforcement of any law or regulation issued regarding a personal firearm, firearm accessory or ammunition, or utilize any asset or county funds to engage in any activity that aids the state or federal government in the enforcement or any investigation for the enforcement of any law or regulation issued regarding a personal firearm, firearm accessory or ammunition. Failure to comply with the ordinance may subject the county official or employee to liability for injured parties in a lawsuit, including payment of attorney fees."

This is likely to be found unconstitutional. Oregon Revised Statute 166.170 gives the Oregon Legislature sole authority to regulate firearms. And only the courts can overturn state or federal laws.

This "sanctuary ordinance" is symbolic, and the county's "preservation ordinance" would not be altered or removed by the passage or failure of the sanctuary ordinance.

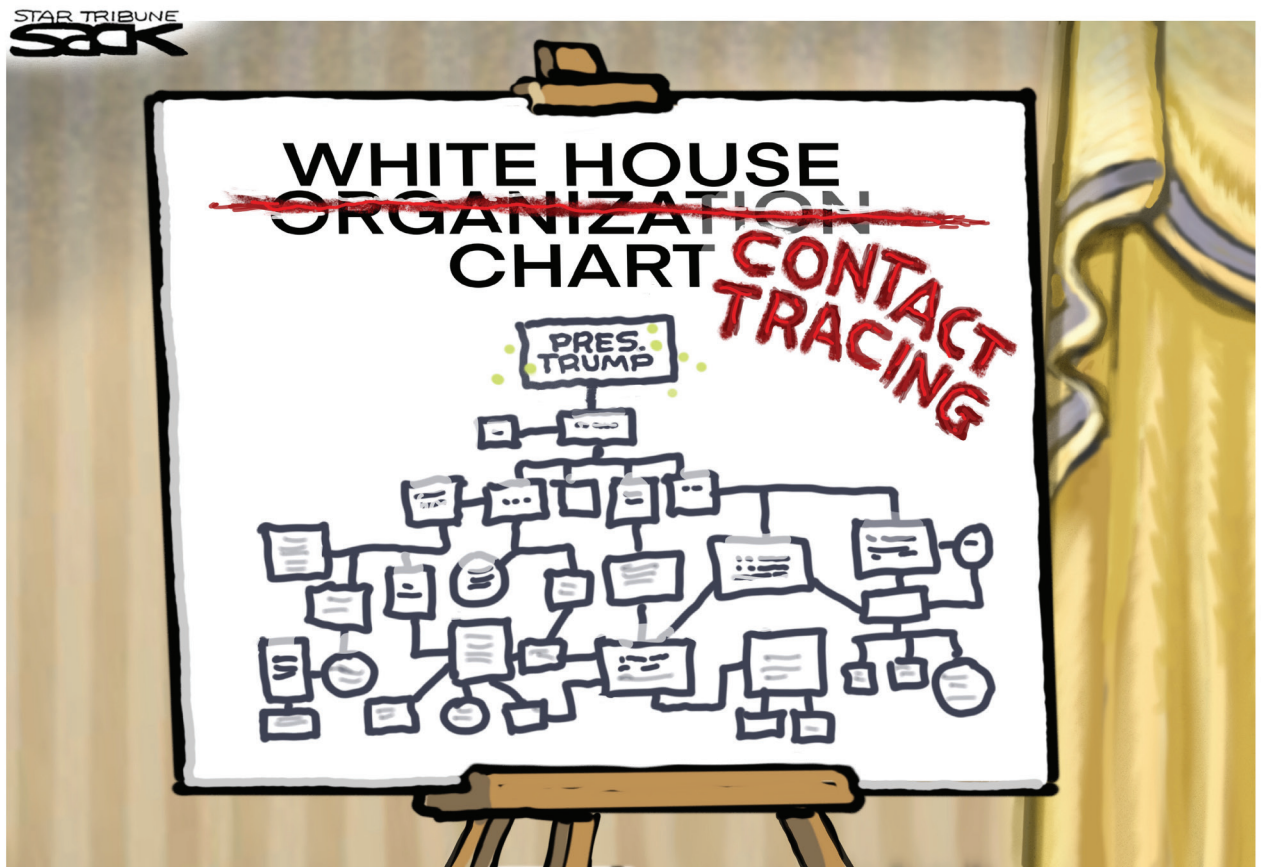
Rob Taylor, a gun rights activist from Coos County, who is behind a number of Second Amendment ordinances, has stated that the intent is to challenge "sanctuary city" laws, which limit a municipality's cooperation with federal government efforts to enforce immigration laws.

The local backers of this ordinance have stated that their motivation is to prevent any new gun control bills that may pass the Oregon Legislature from taking effect. Earlier this year, the Oregon Legislature considered House Bill 4005 requiring firearms to be secured with a trigger or cable lock, and Senate Bill 1538, which would let cities, school districts and colleges ban concealed weapons on their property. Neither has passed into law at this time.

We live in a country that leads the world in gun ownership and gun deaths, where mass shootings are not unusual events, where more than 300 people are shot by a gun each day, and where our citizens are killed by guns 25 times more often than the citizens of other wealthy countries.

We don't believe that laws requiring universal background checks prior to gun purchases, safe gun storage or "red flag laws" (temporarily preventing a person in crisis from accessing a gun) infringe on the rights outlined in the Second Amendment of the U.S. Constitution.

We recommend a "no" vote on Umatilla County Measure 30-145.



Maintain the foundation of our democracy



DANIEL
WATTENBURGER
HOMETOWN

If you are reading this column on a printed news page or behind the paywall of the *East Oregonian* website, I will make the assumption you are an active voter. Those who pay for their news are far more likely to be engaged with other civic duties, not to mention more informed about candidates and issues and motivated by their own role in the electoral process.

I will not spend my time or yours imploring you to register or to turn in your ballot, though I do hope you share that message with your less engaged friends and family. Umatilla County ranked dead last in voter turnout in May at 37.6% and we've got a lot of work to do if we want to begin using our full political voice.

I also will not suggest or recommend who or what you vote for this November. This is a great space for those discussions, and I hope you engage openly and vigorously in the coming month. But I believe there's something even greater at stake.

I'm asking you, as a newspaper reader and citizen, to firmly stand up for the foundational principle of our democracy — a free and fair election, regardless of the outcome.

(A quick note: Some readers enjoy disputing the term "democracy" to

define our form of government, favoring "republic" because we rely on elected representatives to pass laws rather than voting directly on each issue. Because this column deals with the democratic ideology of voting, I use the former. If you want to debate the terminology, please find your nearest high school civics teacher.)

The erosion of Americans' trust in government has been well documented. It's no wonder, as the two-party system has so tirelessly and effectively worked to demonize the opposition that we actively despise and discredit their members as soon as they take office.

And how long can we chip away at roughly half of our elected officials before we start taking chunks out of the bedrock to try to make them fall?

If we are led to doubt the basic foundational process of an election and the results it leads to, we are on a fast path to national crisis and ultimately critical failure. It is in every American's best interest that the electoral institution and tradition be treated as a shared middle ground instead of a battleground.

This places heavy importance on accusations of voter suppression or fraud. Institutionalized or personal action that keeps a citizen from registering or voting, or intentionally submitting an illegitimate ballot, cause lasting damage to our faith in the process.

Regardless of one's political affiliation, we should treat such reports with serious scrutiny. Since the founding of our democracy there have been efforts to disenfranchise and diminish certain

citizens' right to vote. It took three constitutional amendments and nearly 200 years to establish the right for all adults (regardless of race or gender) the right to a ballot (regardless of income). Any effort to tamper with that right should be scrutinized and condemned.

As for fraud, we must demand clear and accurate descriptions of its occurrence and full legal reckoning for its participants. We know it is rare, and that there are checks built into the system to ensure ballots are collected and counted correctly and in good faith. Any attempts to imply widespread malfeasance without evidence should also be viewed critically and harshly.

Our democracy is bigger than the politicians it empowers, but its strength relies on our collective effort. The system devised and revised by our forebearers is now up to us to build upon and defend.

We should all take the opportunity this and every election season to not just proselytize for our chosen candidates, but for the act of voting itself. I know I'm preaching to the choir here, but the ability to fill out a ballot and have your voice heard is a core promise of living in a free country.

Without this foundation, there is no democracy left standing.

Daniel Wattenburger is the former managing editor of the East Oregonian. He lives in Hermiston with his wife and children and is an account manager for Pac/West Communications. Contact him at danielwattenburger@gmail.com.

YOUR VIEWS

Bonham should repay taxpayers for campaign materials

Having been an appreciative supporter of Rep. Daniel Bonham, I was profoundly disappointed to recently learn that his election-timely "Legislative Update," received last week, had in fact been paid for by taxpayer dollars, and not by his personal campaign funds, despite the fact that it arrived in voter mailboxes 45 days prior to the election.

Such timing conflicts with the intent of the state rules, which specify a 60-day blackout period for taxpayer-funded newsletters by those representatives seeking reelection — rules designed precisely to prohibit the kind of thing that Bonham's mailing effected, which was to smuggle campaign promotion under the guise of a legislative update, at taxpayer expense.

While it turns out that Bonham's flyer did not violate the letter of the rule (which permits the 60-day period to include the time involved for printing and mailing, after the flyer leaves the legislator's hands), the fact that it clearly violates the spirit and intent of the rule is extremely troubling to me, since it points to a lack of judgement and ethical integrity on Bonham's part.

While Rep. Bonham has publicly expressed regret for the timing of the flyer, citing "a hectic year," his regret

would seem less empty and more consequential, and his integrity less in question, were he to voluntarily repay the taxpayers the \$14,439.36 we spent on his campaign materials. I hope and expect that he will choose to do so.

**Donna Henderson
Maupin**

Morrow County deserves to have Jim Doherty as county commissioner

Jim Doherty is in a November runoff to be reelected as county commissioner in Morrow County. I have been watching Jim since meeting him over a year ago, and he will get a vote from me.

I encourage everyone registered to vote in Morrow County to vote for him as well. Jim looks at situations from all angles and attempts to steer decisions

in a manner that will benefit everyone in the county. Jim works hard advocating for our county in Salem. Jim spends time trying to understand the way things operate and is not afraid to push for improvement even when it is unpopular. This behavior is exactly what we need in our local government.

As a business owner raising my family in Morrow County, I want Jim Doherty working for me as county commissioner. I know that with him in office, someone is thinking of each individual and each entity when making decisions. Jim has been commissioner for one term, and during that time he has developed and adapted. I believe he will only become more effective with time in office.

Please join me in voting to retain Jim Doherty. Morrow County deserves to have Jim Doherty as part of our team.

**J. Fletcher Hobbs
Boardman**

EDITORIALS

Unsigned editorials are the opinion of the East Oregonian editorial board. Other columns, letters and cartoons on this page express the opinions of the authors and not necessarily that of the East Oregonian.

LETTERS

The East Oregonian welcomes original letters of 400 words or less on public issues and public policies for publication in the newspaper and on our website. The newspaper reserves the right to withhold letters that address concerns about individual services and products or letters that infringe on the rights of private citizens. Letters must be signed by the author and include the city of residence and a daytime phone number. The phone number will not be published. Unsigned letters will not be published.

SEND LETTERS TO:

editor@eastoregonian.com,
or via mail to Andrew Cutler,
211 S.E. Byers Ave. Pendleton, OR 97801

LETTERS DEADLINE

The East Oregonian does not run endorsements of more than 400 words. The East Oregonian will institute a deadline for letters to the editor, so we can be fair with all the letters we receive and allow for responses before Election Day, if necessary.

We run the letters on a first-come, first-served basis. Please submit your endorsement letters to the editor by noon Friday, Oct. 23. You can email them to editor@eastoregonian.com, or mail them to East Oregonian, c/o Andrew Cutler, 211 S.E. Byers Ave., Pendleton, 97801.

We will publish our last letters on Saturday, Oct. 31. Any letters received after the deadline will not run. Election Day is Nov. 3.