

O EAST OREGONIAN PINION

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OUR VIEW

Trust the governed when making COVID rules

Oregonians are a little more than halfway through Gov. Kate Brown's two-week "freeze," but there has been much more public resistance to this latest effort to slow the spread of COVID-19 than to her original stay-at-home order in March.

The new rules restrict or close many businesses, curtail activities and put a six-person limit on gatherings. Brown ordered the Oregon State Police to work with local police to limit social gatherings and use their discretion to cite, fine or arrest violators.

"I'm not asking you, I'm telling you," Brown said.

That has led some to resist outright and to refuse to take even minimal precautions. That's wrongheaded.

The danger from COVID-19 is real. Wearing masks, maintaining social distancing and taking steps to keep surfaces clean are not a threat to individual liberty.

Still, legitimate concerns have been raised to this one-size-fits-all, top-down approach.

- Fifty-one elected officials from 11 rural Eastern Oregon counties wrote to Brown last week asking she allow restaurants and bars to stay open, to fully reopen schools, to reopen state agencies to the public and to allow religious leaders to use their own judgment in operating their places of worship. They hope to establish a dialogue with Brown.

- The state's restaurant association sued to block the order. The hospitality industry has been devastated by the reaction to the pandemic. The association argues that the order will put thousands of Oregonians out of work and likely lead to many more establishments never reopening. It mostly wants to force a conversation with the governor.

- Ag operators have been hit by a host of ad hoc regulations dealing with worker safety, housing, and agritourism. Farmers have complained that they had no hand in crafting these regulations, that no one from government came to ask even rudimentary questions about how the industry works, and potential negative impacts are overlooked.

People don't think they have a voice — not only in Oregon, but throughout the region. They want to work with Brown and other governors to develop pragmatic solutions to protecting workers, businesses and slow the rate of infection without destroying the economy.

The Declaration of Independence says that "governments derive their just authority from the consent of the governed." Many Oregonians — many Americans — are straining to recall when they consented to be ruled by diktat sanctioned by never-ending states of emergency.

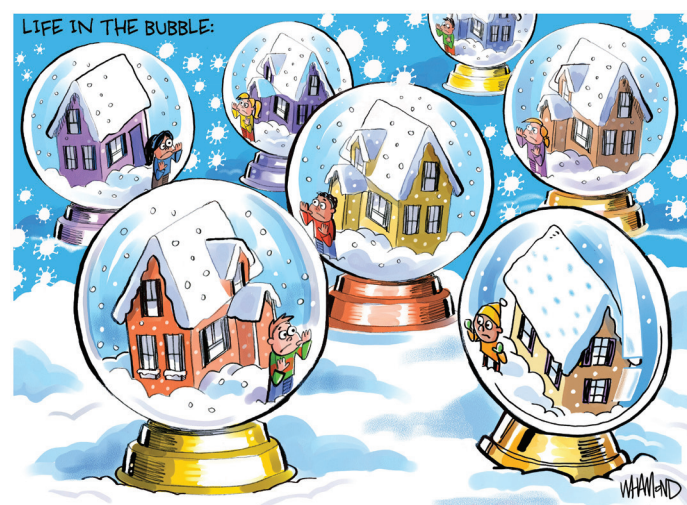
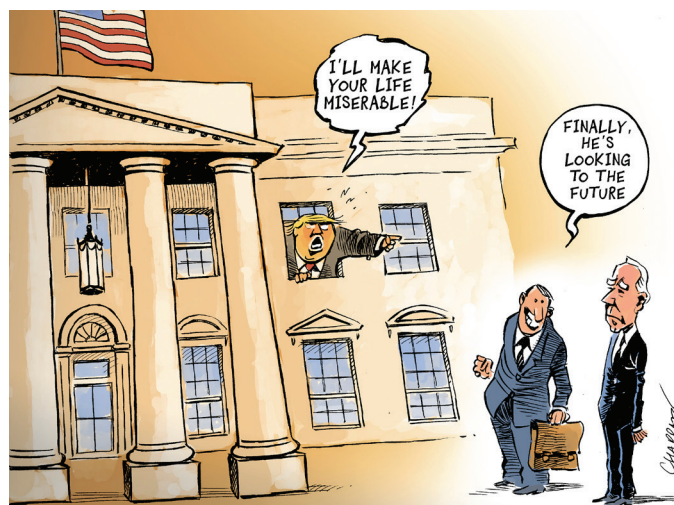
King George wielded none of the arbitrary powers in 1776 exercised by governors today, but provoked a revolution for his failure to listen to his subjects. Governors should take note.

Brown and her colleagues are not tyrants, though their actions have at times seemed heavy-handed and unnecessarily draconian. They are people of goodwill, each with a sincere desire to protect lives.

They extol us to trust science and the experts, even though the science has at times been thin and the experts' advice contradictory.

We ask that they, in turn, trust the people and consult those who are to be regulated before issuing their orders.

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YOUR VIEWS

Let science sort it out

Here's an idea about lifting the COVID-19 restrictions: Open everything up. Those who choose to die can continue to not follow the science, and those who choose to live by following the science may do so. This will be a form of "natural selection."

Michael Bryan
Pendleton

Coyotes may be a danger to the homeless

I want to say something about homeless sleeping outdoors on the river east of the pavilion — if I have your map right, close to where the levee ends. I live in the area. Whoever is sleeping out there is going to maybe get pestered by coyotes. I hear the coyotes roaming and yipping in the area very late at night.

A few years ago, my daughter was up on the levee with her boyfriend and they ran into a pack. These coyotes have little fear of people and would not

leave them be, and tried to herd them. They had a bit of trouble getting away from the coyotes.

Now why are these coyotes there? Well, a lot more deer are coming down out of the hills. This started some years ago when the river level began dropping early in the year — was the city taking out more water for the water supply? I think they closed down a well. I've seen deer crossing the river, deer walking the levee, and a herd of deer shows up in my yard regularly going after my apple tree. I don't mind this necessarily if they eat extra apples, but these deer are really savvy and don't fear humans either. No deer in the headlights here, they watch for cars far too knowingly. I have seen them do it, and I have to really work hard to scare them out past 1 a.m. Coyotes have been following them the last several years, and they don't scare easy either anymore.

What we don't want, of course, is coyotes biting people, maybe rabies shots, etc., so maybe the city should think about this? I'm not saying some-

body should go shoot all the coyotes, only that the homeless people might be a little safer near the park by South-east Fourth and not down at the end of the levee? Worse, if people are sleeping in coyote "territory," will coyotes lose their fear of people more?

Just saying.

Karen Verba
Pendleton

Let's ease the division, not perpetuate it

In reference to "Resident breaks Confederate stamp," it is true that we cannot undo history; however, can/should we not learn from the past and not perpetrate nor carry forth mistaken beliefs? Should we in tumultuous times open our minds and educate ourselves for necessary change to ease the division? Might it be "sinister" to carry forth, honor, revere and glorify shameful histories?

Please think about this.

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