

# O EAST OREGONIAN PINION

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THURSDAY, JANUARY 21, 2021

Founded October 16, 1875

A4

## OUR VIEW

# \$15 minimum wage would hit rural economy hard

Fulfilling a campaign promise, Joe Biden wants to boost the federal minimum wage to \$15 an hour.

Farmers, whose livelihoods and property are on the line, are right to be wary of the possibilities.

Proponents suggest that employers are able either to absorb increased labor costs, or increase prices to offset costs without negative impacts to employees.

It's political claptrap.

Advocates say boosting the minimum wage will give millions of Americans a much-needed raise — or, at least, the ones lucky enough to keep their jobs. Politicians and proponents somehow miss the fact that hard-pressed employers will scour their operations for ways to reduce their payrolls to offset the increase. In addition to layoffs, many will switch to part-time and on-call employees as ways to save money.

Mechanization and automation, which eliminate jobs, will also become more attractive.

This wage hike would hurt small businesses the most. Big chains can absorb the increase, safe in the knowledge that their smaller competitors won't be able to keep up. Those smaller ag operations and processors in labor-intensive sectors will be forced to sell out to larger competitors.

And it's not only businesses that will feel the pinch. Local governments and school districts will also have to raise wages, or cut staff.

President Biden put his proposal to increase the minimum wage into his \$2 billion COVID relief package. He most likely believes reluctant lawmakers — even many moderate Democrats have balked at the \$15 figure — will have a tougher time saying “no” if it's wrapped in the flag of pandemic aid.

But Congress needs to be cautious. The result will be fewer jobs, fewer businesses and a weaker rural economy. Putting the thousands of businesses battered by government reaction to the virus on a better footing makes more sense than increasing their costs.

Those seeking higher minimum wages want to use other people's money to make political points with their supporters.

Proponents of higher minimum wages may be disappointed to find out that a robust economy, not governmental fiat, benefits workers most.



## The birth of a snowflake



MARY  
WISTER  
EYE IN THE SKY

Whenever the National Weather Service issues a winter weather advisory or a winter storm warning due to snow, we get mixed reactions from the public. Some love snow, some hate it.

No matter how a person feels about winter weather, there is a unanimous fascination with snow. Watching trillions upon trillions of snowflakes fall to the ground and accumulate to form piles of snow is like watching a miracle unfold. There is power in numbers. A snowflake weighs approximately one millionth of a gram. A cubic foot of snow contains around a billion snow crystals. Multiply that by thousands of square miles from a snowstorm, and the number of snowflakes increases exponentially.

To think, it all begins with a speck of dust. As dust or other particles in a cloud encounter freezing temperatures, the water vapor in the cloud freezes to the particle. The particle may get lofted into the cloud where it could grow and experience different temperature and

moisture conditions to form various branches of the ice crystal.

Eventually, the crystal becomes heavy enough to fall to the ground. You may have heard the saying, “No two snowflakes are alike.” That is scientifically true, as it's impossible for two ice crystals to form under the exact same temperature and moisture conditions. However, scientists have discovered that many snowflakes are almost identical, even examined under a strong microscope.

All snowflakes have a six-sided structure, which is another mesmerizing

*“IF WINTER MAKES YOU WANT TO CRAWL UNDER THE COVERS AND WAIT UNTIL SPRING, THERE ARE WAYS TO MAKE WINTER FUN.”*

fact about snow. Water vapor molecules collected together to form ice always form in hexagons. Depending on its life inside the cloud, snowflakes can fall as various six-sided shapes including dendrites, columns and needles.

If winter makes you want to crawl under the covers and wait until spring, there are ways to make winter fun.

Play with snow. I'm not talking about making snow angels (although nobody is too old for snow angels). Be your own scientist and research snow. Monitor

the weather conditions to determine if the size of snowflakes and their moisture content are dependent on the air temperature, humidity and wind (the answer is yes).

Examine individual snowflakes on black construction paper using a magnifying glass. Find the moisture content of snow by taking a core sample of the snow depth, then melt the snow and pour the liquid into a rain gage. Typically, the ratio is 10:1 (that is, 0.10 inch of liquid for every inch of snow). For the true scientist, determine the pH levels of snow using pH test strips. For kids of all ages, there is a world out there waiting to be explored.

There are miracles every day that we take for granted. As you watch snow fall from the sky, think how one snowflake that weighs one millionth of a gram combine with other tiny snowflakes and forms a massive amount of snow in a matter of hours.

It's truly fascinating.

*Mary Wister is a meteorologist and fire weather program manager at the National Weather Service in Pendleton. Wister serves as an incident meteorologist when large wildfires or other natural hazards necessitate an Incident Management Team's quick response to protect life and property.*

## YOUR VIEWS

### It's up to all of us to make our world better

I am an Episcopalian and a member of Lions Club International. We believe in peace and respect of all peoples.

It behooves all to behave in an honorable way and respect laws. If any of us do not, then this causes harmful outcomes. So, I am expecting all persons whom I address above and all citizens of United States of America to behave in this way.

Every human is a child of God and deserves our honor.

There is entirely too much rancor, disrespect and anger among many citizens in our country. If all leaders, Christians (including other religions), Lions, and citizens who strive for a peaceful, strong country to be a respected leader in the world, all of us need to work toward this. I include all Republicans, Democrats and any other political persuasion to work together.

From this day forward, we all must respect and work together. This definitely includes our White House,

Congress, Senate, Department of Justice, Supreme Court (and all courts), Department of Defense, etc. This definitely includes all states, their legislatures, courts and etc. This includes all past persons of any of the aforesaid in the early part of this paragraph!

Yes, this may be hard, as we are all fallible human beings. However, if we are not very careful, actions taken may (very likely) make things worse in our wonderful country.

I sincerely believe most Americans wish to have a country that allows and encourages all to follow the Bill of Rights and the Constitution of the United States of America.

Bill Taylor  
Pendleton

### Rivoli story a walk down memory lane

So pleased to hear that the Rivoli will have a new life. The recent story brought back many childhood memories.

When I was 10, every Saturday was

spent at a matinee at the Alta or Rivoli theater, usually watching the “good guys” Roy Rogers or Gene Autry, two cartoons and newsreels that were the window to the outside world before television. You could stay and watch the films as many times as you wanted. My weekly 50-cent allowance that I worked so hard for got me a ticket, popcorn, a small drink and candy. Today that would cost me about \$27.

Later as a teen, one of my first jobs was selling tickets, ushering and working the candy counter at both theaters. I think those times were the origin of my lifetime appreciation of films.

The Matlock family owned the theaters then, and one year Mrs. Matlock took a trip to New York City. She brought back a lace handkerchief for me from Sak's Fifth Avenue and, being from a small town in the West, it was the most sophisticated thing I ever owned then. I still have it, even though I have made a few trips to NYC myself since then.

Patricia Hansen Ahern  
Oakly, California

### EDITORIALS

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