

O EAST OREGONIAN PINION

ANDREW CUTLER
Publisher/Editor

KATHRYN B. BROWN
Owner

ERICK PETERSON
Hermiston Editor/Senior Reporter

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OUR VIEW

Solving the state's child care conundrum

We would like to see more action on increasing the supply of child care in this legislative session. Gov. Kate Brown has proposed \$100 million in additional funding for child care. Considering the extent of the child care shortage in Oregon, this is not enough to make a big impact, but at least it's a start.

The pandemic has exacerbated the pre-existing shortage of child care for infants, toddlers and preschoolers. Parents of young children have had to leave the workforce or cut back their hours when child care providers have had to temporarily — or in many cases, permanently — close.

Most Oregonians have become familiar with the term “child care desert” and understand this is not just a problem for families with young children. It has become a major workforce problem for businesses and organizations throughout the state. Lack of child care makes it difficult to recruit and retain employees, and is a big reason for employee absenteeism.

There is a wealth of research proving that economic investments in high-quality child care and early childhood education pay dividends in the short term as well as the long term.

Most brain development occurs in the first five years of life, so it's important for very young children to have a lot of exposure to new experiences — reading, talking, singing, playing — and to be nurtured by their caregivers who are responsive to their physical and emotional needs.

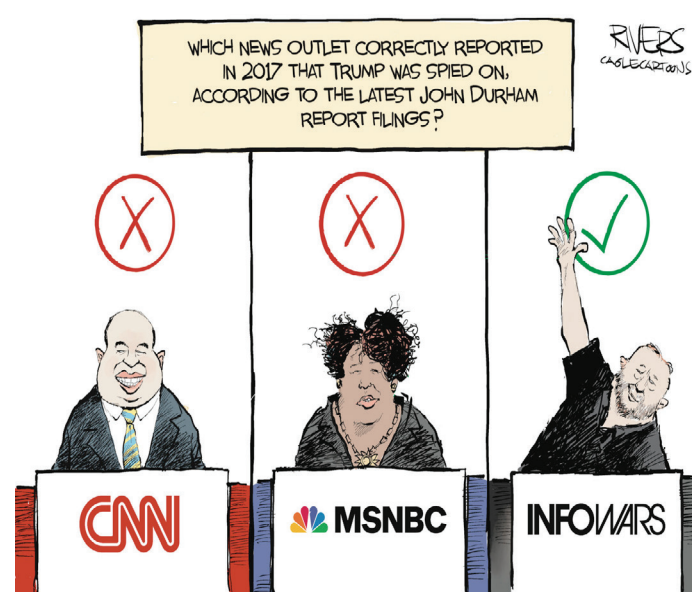
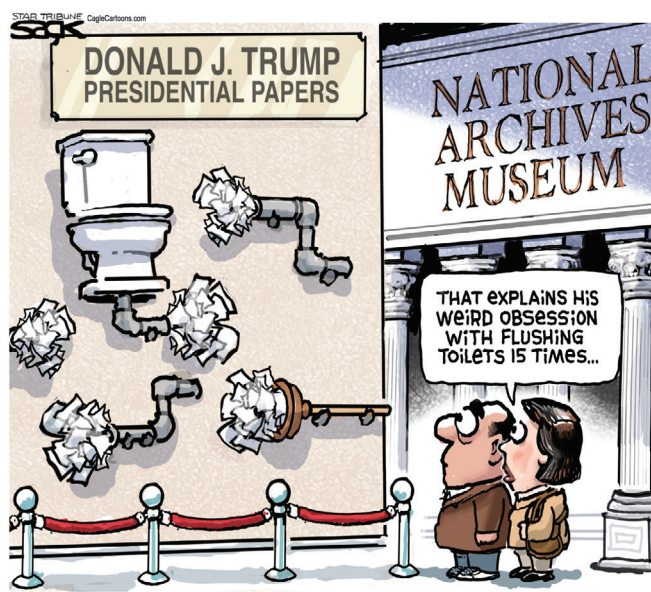
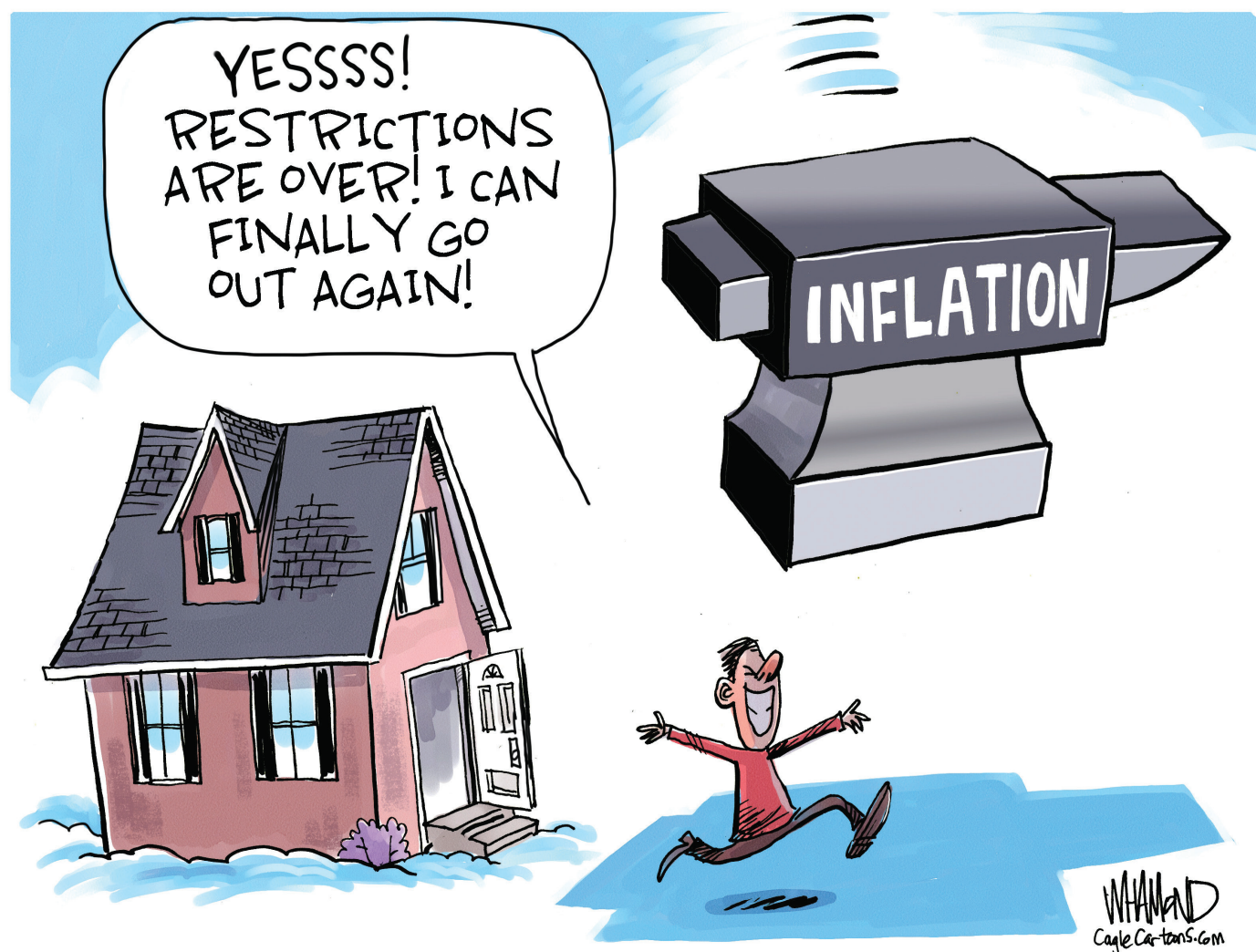
There is no doubt that children enrolled in high-quality child care and preschool programs do better in kindergarten and are more likely to graduate from high school. They are more likely to earn higher wages as adults and less likely to end up in jail.

To have a dramatic positive effect on the child care shortage, the Oregon Legislature is going to need to come up with more than \$100 million.

Consider this: All kindergartners in the Pendleton School District attend school at the Pendleton Early Learning Center. In 2014-15, the cost to remodel Hawthorne School to transform it into PELC was \$13 million (funded by a bond local voters passed). The price would be far higher today due to increasing construction costs.

In comparison, the nonprofit Pendleton Children's Center estimates it will cost about \$6 million to acquire and renovate property to create a center to care for 150 children age 5 and under. The organization is dependent on donations and grant funding.

If the state of Oregon is serious about building child care capacity in communities where there is a demonstrated shortage, \$100 million wouldn't go far.



YOUR VIEWS

River Act a step in right direction

Like many of our Northeastern Oregon friends and neighbors, we support the River Democracy Act proposed by Oregon Sens. Ron Wyden and Jeff Merkley.

Meaningful action addressing life-threatening climate change is overdue. Our waterways pay a heavy price for our drive to squeeze every last penny from natural resources. Centuries of destructive practices have damaged every ecosystem on earth and threaten planetary life itself.

Our full-speed-ahead enterprise destroys plant and animal species at mass extinction rates, canceling them from our intricate web of life. In light of climate change and biodiversity collapse, destructive “business as usual” practices are worse than senseless. We know better. Passing the River Democracy Act is a modest, yet important, step towards protecting and

restoring our natural world.

The River Democracy Act does not “lock up” our public lands. They remain as accessible as ever. Wild and Scenic designation allows restoration of these waterways and protects them from future degradation. Wyden and his staff have carefully listened to stakeholders and specifically addressed their concerns in the bill.

Maps abound: A state-wide map depicting all of the proposed stream reaches is found at tinyurl.com/rdamap. The River Democracy Act itself forms an atlas, its stream names and geographic details easily found on any map or GPS device. Acquiring ourselves a detailed map of Killamague Creek, we find its reach length is indeed 4 miles, contrary to a public official's complaint it was but 2 miles.

We need long-range thinking to protect the natural systems on which all life depends. Two years ago local citizens, businesses and organizations answered

the call for nominations, did their homework and made their recommendations, since reduced to protecting just 4% of Oregon's waterways. The River Democracy Act represents local knowledge and expertise in managing local resources for a sustainable future.

Thank you, senator. Now is the time to pass the bill. Our kids, grandkids and future generations will thank you, too.

Mike Higgins and Mike Beaty Halfway

What happened to cattle was unethical

As a retired cattle rancher from the Snake River country, I know how important it is to get cattle out of the high country by snow time.

What happened to the Dean Ranch cattle was unethical, in my opinion.

Three important things in ranching are: 1) good care of your livestock; 2) good

care of your land, because without good grasslands you cannot have good livestock; and 3) good ethical animal husbandry.

What's the meaning of ethical? It is honesty, integrity, impartiality, fairness, loyalty, dedication, responsibility and accountability. It is also the practice of protecting livestock welfare.

In ranching, livestock is your bread and butter. They are your main income, so you have to do all you can to keep them alive and healthy as possible. To have a successful operation, you have to have respect for livestock.

Every season, every month and every day has its own set of tasks when ranching.

While you may get away with putting off undesirable tasks in the world outside of ranching, it doesn't work like that when you're a rancher.

Failure to be ethical and to plan ahead is a recipe for disaster.

Casey Tippet Joseph

CONTACT YOUR REPRESENTATIVES

U.S. PRESIDENT

Joe Biden
The White House
1600 Pennsylvania Ave. NW
Washington, DC 20500
Comments: 202-456-1111

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

Cliff Bentz
2185 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515
202-225-6730
Medford office: 541-776-4646

GOVERNOR

Kate Brown
160 State Capitol
900 Court St.
Salem, OR 97301-4047
503-378-4582

REPRESENTATIVES

Bobby Levy, District 58
900 Court St. NE, H-376
Salem, OR 97301
503-986-1458
Rep.BobbyLevy@state.or.us

Greg Smith, District 57
900 Court St. NE, S-415
Salem, OR 97301
503-986-1457
Rep.GregSmith@state.or.us

SENATOR

Bill Hansell, District 29
900 Court St. NE, S-415
Salem, OR 97301
503-986-1729
Sen.BillHansell@state.or.us

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SEND LETTERS TO:

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