

O EAST OREGONIAN PINION

ANDREW CUTLER
Publisher/Editor

KATHRYN B. BROWN
Owner

ERICK PETERSON
Hermiston Editor/Senior Reporter

SATURDAY, APRIL 2, 2022

Founded October 16, 1875

A4

OUR VIEW

Oregon public at a disadvantage

When President Joe Biden gave his State of the Union speech earlier this month, one part stung.

“If you travel 20 miles east of Columbus, Ohio, you’ll find 1,000 empty acres of land,” Biden said. “It won’t look like much, but if you stop and look closely, you’ll see a ‘Field of dreams,’ the ground on which America’s future will be built. This is where Intel, the American company that helped build Silicon Valley, is going to build its \$20 billion semiconductor mega site. Up to eight state-of-the-art factories in one place. 10,000 new good-paying jobs.”

We know that’s a long quote. That’s what made it sting all the more. Intel chose Ohio for that \$20 billion investment. Not Oregon. Gov. Brown had made courting Intel expansion a priority. Intel went to Ohio.

Congratulations Ohio.

Oregon officials — government and business — responded. A chip industry task force was formed and staffed by the Oregon Business Council. The co-chairs are Gov. Brown, Sen. Ron Wyden and Portland General Electric CEO Maria Pope. There are a lot more big names in government and in business on that task force. It met recently with one of Intel’s top executives. That’s an effort to develop a road map to bring more semiconductor manufacturing and research to the state, according to reporting by The Oregonian.

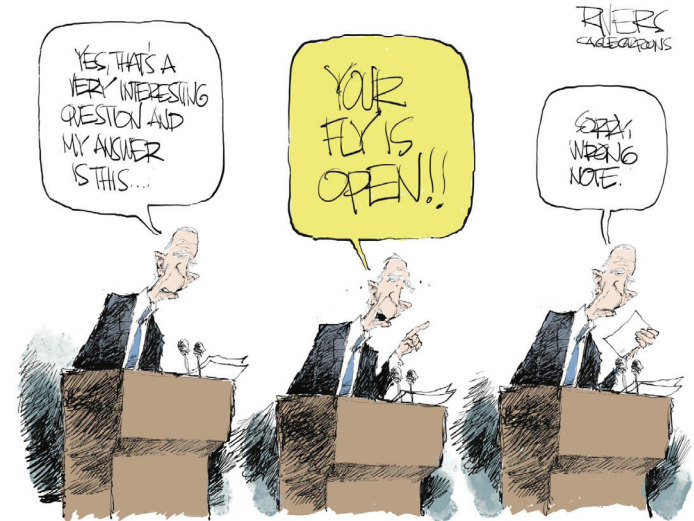
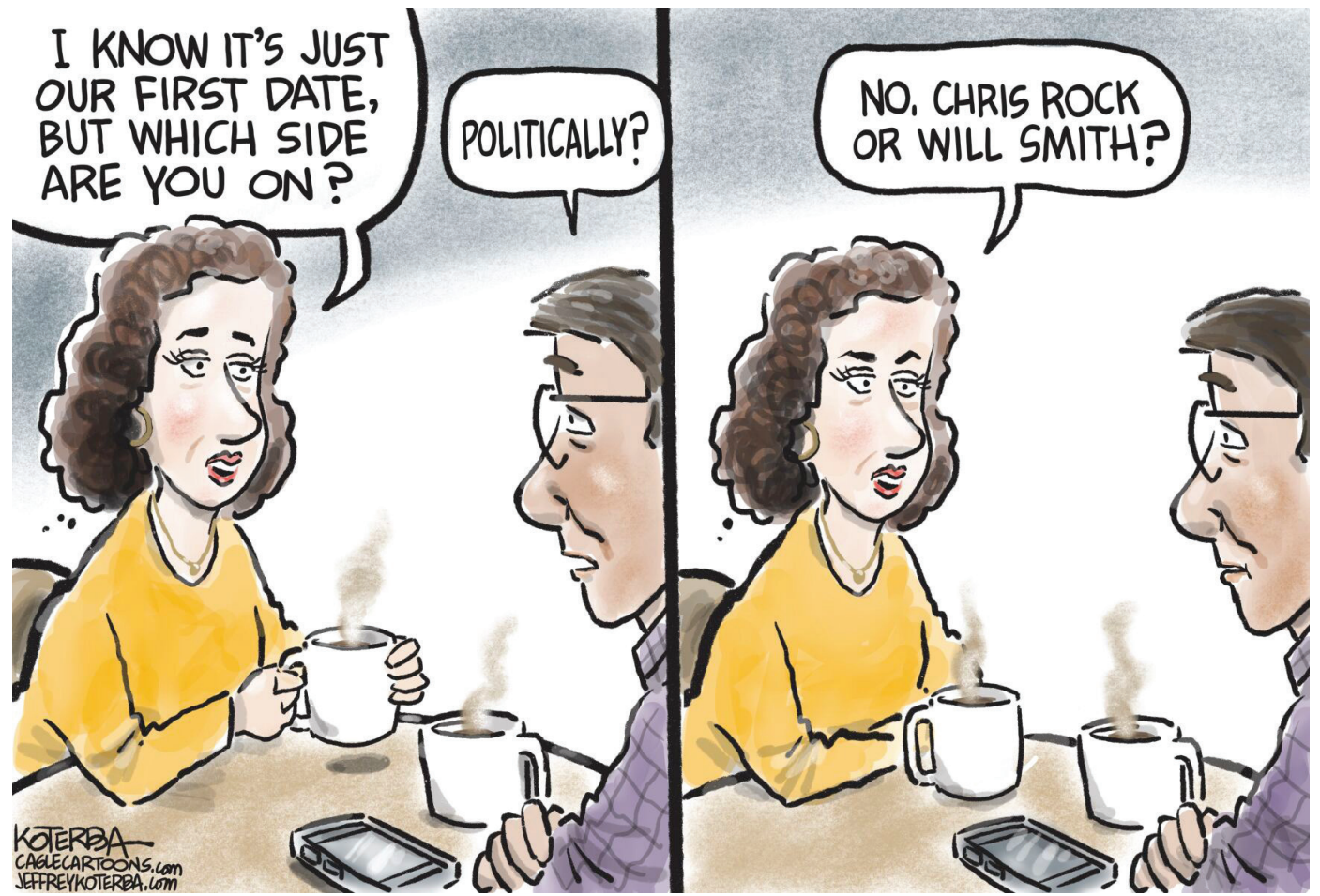
We appreciate the Oregon Business Council’s work in making this happen. It needs to get done.

But here’s something else that stings. These meetings are being held behind closed doors. Critical decisions that will form the basis for policy in Oregon are being discussed behind those closed doors. What trade-offs or promises are being considered? Which ones are passed over and why? Are they considering exceptions to state land use law?

There are reasons to believe these meetings are under no legal obligation to be open to the public. The task force wasn’t created by a government entity. It doesn’t have the authority to create laws or regulations.

There’s also, though, the intent of the requirement for public meetings in Oregon. It’s not only for Oregonians to be able to witness final decisions. It’s also to be able to witness the making of policy, the things leading up to decisions. That can tell you important things about elected officials, too. Oregon government bodies even find ways to hold executive sessions to discuss proprietary business matters and pivot to open sessions to have policy discussions. Gov. Brown’s office pointed out any policy that originated from the discussions would go through a public process. And Wyden’s office said he would ensure there would be a public report from the task force. They both mentioned proprietary information. Behind closed doors, there could be frank discussions about what Intel needed without putting Oregon at a disadvantage competing with other states.

We understand that point. It’s not completely true, though. Intel can go from state to state, having proprietary discussions with state leaders behind closed doors, and know what states might do to lure its billions. It’s Intel that is the one not at a disadvantage. It’s the Oregon public that certainly is.



YOUR VIEWS

The burden of Alzheimer’s

The number of Americans living with Alzheimer’s is growing — and growing fast.

According to the Alzheimer’s Association 2022 Alzheimer’s Disease Facts and Figures report, more than 6 million Americans of all ages have Alzheimer’s. In Oregon, there are more than 69,000 people living with Alzheimer’s disease and more than 130,000 family members and friends providing care.

As a daughter who watched her father suffer, battle and die from Alzheimer’s, I have seen firsthand how cruel and devastating Alzheimer’s is on an individual, the family and the community. My mother served as my father’s caregiver. The emotional, physical and financial stress of this disease on caregivers also is a crucial issue. My family and I have experienced the Alzheimer’s Association’s resources as a lifeline of hope and a reminder that we are not alone.

Through this we’ve also grasped the depth and reality of how Alzheimer’s affects so many people like us, too many people. The association brings hope and support to all of us.

In recent years Congress has made funding Alzheimer’s research a priority and it must continue. It is my hope that Sens. Ron Wyden and Jeff Merkley, and Rep. Cliff Bentz will support increasing funding for Alzheimer’s research at the NIH by \$226 million for the 2023 fiscal year.

To learn more about the Alzheimer’s

Association, available resources and how you can get involved in the fight to end Alzheimer’s, visit alz.org/advocate.

**Jennifer Chance
Redmond**

No candidate should quell free speech

Isn’t it ironic that a Republican candidate running on a freedom platform participated in a forum sponsored by Baker County Republicans with “rules” that violated basic rights?

I attended a local Republican Party event hosted for candidates for governor where “rules” were enforced: No recording audio/video, no livestreaming, and no voicing of support or clapping until the end. Penalty: eviction; no second chances. Rules were imposed with no consideration to out-of-towners, citizen journalists nor those with disabilities who might want to watch/listen to the event. Candidate McQuisten’s folks were allowed to record and video as “officials” of the event. This twist was not articulated in their “rules.”

To enforce their mandates against “nonofficial” attendees, Suzan Ellis Jones (Republican Party chair/candidate McQuisten’s campaign manager/candidate McQuisten’s mother) had a McQuisten campaign worker actively monitor the room for “violators.” When one was spotted, Mrs. Jones ordered the police called and hometown citizens were threatened with forceable ejection in handcuffs.

There was no heckling or boisterous

behavior before the police were called; the “violators” were seated on the side wall in the back of the room politely listening to the opening statements. The event became disruptive only after Mrs. Jones summoned the police on peaceful citizens exercising their constitutional rights at an advertised gathering open to the public.

In an effort to spin this debacle, candidate McQuisten posted on Facebook about the event, further disparaging her hometown citizens and misrepresenting what really occurred that evening. She also claimed that the mandates were common practice, justifying the actions since a few other counties followed the same protocol at their own events.

I am an American. It’s not OK to impose mandates limiting lawful behavior because other counties think it’s OK to violate our legal rights. It’s not OK for a candidate to hide from constituents by imposing such mandates. It’s not OK to impose mandates because a candidate is afraid of differing opinions or her performance on stage with her peers.

No candidate should stoop to these measures to quell free speech. We should elect a real conservative Republican for governor, not an imposter.

**Susan Bland
Baker City**

Editor’s Note: The rules against applauding, outbursts and recording/livestreaming at the candidates forum in Baker City are typical of rules for most candidate forums.

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, H-482
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