

# Higher standard needed for education

The Oregon Department of Education should do more to address the concerns of educators and parents about Smarter Balanced testing and Common Core state standards.

At least that's what the Oregon Secretary of State argued Sept. 14 in releasing the results of a mandated state audit.

Jeanne Atkins reported there were problems with the test rollout and results, and ODE has not done a good enough job communicating the need for the test. And, Atkins said, it needs to better administer Smarter Balanced and address legitimate concerns about standardized testing in general.

"It is apparent that there is not a clear understanding about the test's purpose and that administering the test is presenting challenges to some schools," wrote Atkins.

**EDITORIAL**  
The East Oregonian

Much of the audit's results are lost in education-speak gobbledegook, and Atkins expressed hand-wringing worries that Smarter Balanced can cause students to "experience additional stress and that could negatively impact their self-esteem."

That's pretty high irony for a state that is among the lowest in the country for graduation rates. If anyone should have low self-esteem, it's Oregon Department of Education and state legislators, who run and fund our well-below-average education system.

We're not strongly for or against Common Core, and we understand the need for testing while also understanding that hundreds of other skills need to be taught each school year. And we know Oregon has among the fewest hours of classroom time in the country, so we can't be setting aside too many of those hours to meet arbitrary federal requirements.

But the deeper problem is an inability to stick with any specific standard. That means we have not allowed students and teachers to understand what is expected of them, and allow them to learn from mistakes and improve. We've bounced students between too many state and federal guidelines, from No Child Left Behind to Oregon Assessment of Knowledge and Skills (OAKS) to Common Core. No wonder scores are low — children are being taught differently every few years, with different end goals in mind each time. Teachers face the same churn, spending time learning what new tests will require instead of how to better educate their students.

Another real problem is creating patently unrealistic standards, whether from NCLB or Oregon's once-touted, now-derided 40-40-20 plan.

There are problems with standardized testing and there are problems with coddling our students, not allowing them to be pushed and even to fail.

We must find a middle ground. Children need to be both supported and challenged in the classroom. And we cannot hide them or us from the hard truths — that America is falling behind its global competitors in education, and that Oregon is among the bottom of the barrel in this country.

## GEORGE WASHINGTON MEETS WITH HIS CAMPAIGN CONSULTANT IN 2016.



# Without clean water, nothing else matters

I've been following the protest in North Dakota over the pipeline, watching it swell with tribal people from across the country. The New York Times says that members from over 280 tribes are now involved. Some are coming in caravans, some by plane and foot. Some Northwesterners made their final miles in large, brilliant canoes.

The Times profiled a few of the protesters. Thayliah Henry-Suppah, Paiute, of Oregon, wearing a traditional wing dress with ribbons and otter furs, said she kept this Indian proverb in mind: "Treat the earth well. It was not given to you by your parents. It was loaned to you by your children." In her own words: "We've lived without money. We can live without oil, but no human being can live without water."

Most of the Indians profiled by the Times spoke of water: "We say 'mni wiconi': Water is life," said David Archambault II, the chairman of the Standing Rock Sioux, the site and center of the protest over a pipeline designed to ship oil out of North Dakota, under the Missouri River. "We can't put it at risk, not for just us, but everybody downstream."



**MAIN STREET**  
Rich Wandschneider

It's easy in this lush Wallowa Valley to take water for granted, although murmurs from California exiles and smoke from miles-away forest fires are troubling. This gathering of Indian peoples should be just as troubling.

It has to do with an attitude that natural resources are basically inexhaustible, and that, even as we run out of one, another resource or another technology will rise to take its place. Indians are telling us that water is the fundamental resource, and that the beaver and salmon that were taken almost to extinction by the fur trade and Columbia River canneries in the 1800s were indicators of a fundamentally flawed economy.

Beaver had been exhausted in Europe when that business marched across the middle of North America from the 1600s into the 19th century. In a dispute over the "jointly occupied" Oregon Territory, the

British set out to trap out all of the beaver in the Columbia watersheds, thinking that this would dissuade American trappers and immigrants from occupying it. Eventually, silk or some other commodity replaced beaver felt for hats, the crisis was averted and Americans found other reasons to settle the Northwest.

In the first Alaskan oil rush, American whalers, who had depleted sperm whales in the Pacific Ocean, killed over 13,000 bowhead whales north of the Bearing Strait in just two decades in the mid 1800s. Needless to say, Inupiat culture, which had revolved around whaling for millennia, was severely damaged. Survivors are now rearranging lives around the 21st-century oil business, adapting while trying to hold onto vestiges of sea culture threatened by oil spills and warming and rising oceans. It's the water.

Our economy seems based on the consumption of whatever resource is readily available in the moment, trusting that science and capitalist good sense will discover and exploit the next resource.

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# Rentals issue puts democracy in action along the coast

Regulations surrounding short-term rentals continue to be a divisive issue on the North Coast.

Two weeks ago, the Gearhart City Council unanimously adopted an ordinance that contains new rules to regulate short-term rentals. The ordinance was several years in the making with public hearings that filled meeting rooms and divided the community. Even after the new ordinance was adopted, a portion of the Gearhart community remains divided and plans to push for an initiative that will supersede the new rules.

Farther south, in Cannon Beach, the City Council hopes to make its short-term rental regulations more "clear and understandable" and is working on new code amendments to streamline the process. Part of that proposed streamlining would make short-term rental permits more similar to business license applications instead of planning or zoning decisions, a move that would shift review of permit applications from the city's Planning Commission to the City Council. It would also shift appeals from the Land

**GUEST EDITORIAL**  
From the Daily Astorian

Use Board of Appeals to Circuit Court.

The proposal has irked members of the Planning Commission who are now at odds with the council on the issue. At their August meeting, Planning Commissioner Robin Risley put it bluntly, saying, "I think the whole community should be more involved in that decision and you are eliminating one of the steps."

## Gearhart

In Gearhart, the new rules go into effect in 30 days, followed by a one-time 60-day period in which property owners may apply for short-term rental status. Applicants must pay a \$600 fee and show proof they have paid their taxes. No new permits will be issued after the 60-day period. The new rules include parking requirements and occupancy limits among other restrictions, and the permits may

only be transferred by inheritance rather than being passed on with the sale of a home.

The clear intent of the new rules is to reduce the number of short-term rentals over time through attrition.

But those new rules have led a group of homeowners to announce their intention to seek an election initiative that would put an alternative proposal before voters and supersede the council's ordinance. The initiative would allow the transfer of permits through home sales, would increase the number of permits allowed and calls for changes in the occupancy and parking limitations.

Although initiative backers say the city hasn't listened to them, Mayor Dianne Widdop said after the meeting that "everyone has had the opportunity to be heard."

According to City Attorney Peter Watts if the group does push for an initiative for the voters it is too late for November's election, but it could be on the ballot next year.

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# Trump should release tax returns

**LETTERS to the EDITOR**

There is a national discussion about whether Trump should release his tax returns. The mostly Republican opposition argues that the request is politically motivated to hurt Trump. But doesn't this beg the question whether Trump can be hurt?

We don't know whether the information is damaging. As a potential president, he should be free of financial shenanigans and we won't know that unless he discloses. We should know about financial shenanigans for the same reason we should consider affairs of married politicians as it reflects on character, especially if they have lied about it. However, if he is a knight, the genius of financial wisdom, then, wouldn't he have the last laugh when the tax returns are

no more out of the ordinary than, say, Clinton talking to a Saudi businessman after a donation was given to the Clinton Foundation, which proves sequence but not cause and effect? I would sign on for Trump's "innocence" if he could prove that much.

But wait, there's more. A national survey (May 2016) of 2,001 registered voters found that 67 percent — 60 percent of them Republicans — think presidential candidates should have to disclose their returns. Just one in five voters (21 percent) said they don't think the financial documents should have to be released. Then contrast that with more Republicans (85 percent) saying they thought presidential candidates should be required to provide an original copy of their birth certificate (but, hey, there was no political motivation behind that).

Patrick Dunroven  
Enterprise

## Vote Keniston/Taylor

Tired of the same politics in Washington, D.C.? Want a president and vice president who employ the U.S. Constitution instead of what corporations and lobbyists want? Chris Keniston and Deacon Taylor are those candidates. Both are veterans, having served this country. Both are Constitutional centrists. Both are not career politicians or billionaires — they work for a living.

So this fall vote for a real change, vote Veterans Party of America: Chris Keniston/Deacon Taylor. They're not on the ballot in Oregon so please write them in. The Veterans Party of America was set up by veteran but is open to everyone. For more information, visit [www.veteranspartyofamerica.org](http://www.veteranspartyofamerica.org) and <http://chriskeniston2016.com>.

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