

# Don't gut Oregon's 'Right to Farm' law

A bill in the Oregon Legislature is sure to draw the attention of the state's farmers, ranchers and forest managers.

It would gut the state's "Right to Farm and Forest" law.

All 50 states have similar laws that protect farmers, ranchers and forest managers from nuisance or trespass lawsuits filed by neighbors or others who do not approve of how a farm is operated.

These laws are based on common sense. They protect farmers and forest managers from people who don't understand or don't approve of certain practices. Among them are making noise, kicking up dust or applying weed killers or other pesticides.

**EDITORIAL**

*Voice of the Chieftain*

"Right to Farm"

laws were written with the recognition that farms and forests need to be managed to be financial sustainable. The Oregon law even states that "farming and forest practices are critical to the economic welfare of this state."

The law also protects activities as long as they are done in a reasonable and prudent manner.

That means pesticide labels must be followed and neighboring crops can't be damaged.

It doesn't say anything about whether a complaint can be based on philosophical disagreements about how a farm or forest is managed.

Senate Bill 499 would remove the protections for pesticide use in the current law. A key change would allow anyone who sues a farmer over pesticide use and loses to avoid paying attorney fees to the farmer.

This in essence voids a major purpose of the law, which was written to protect farmers and forest managers, not put them at risk for using pesticides.

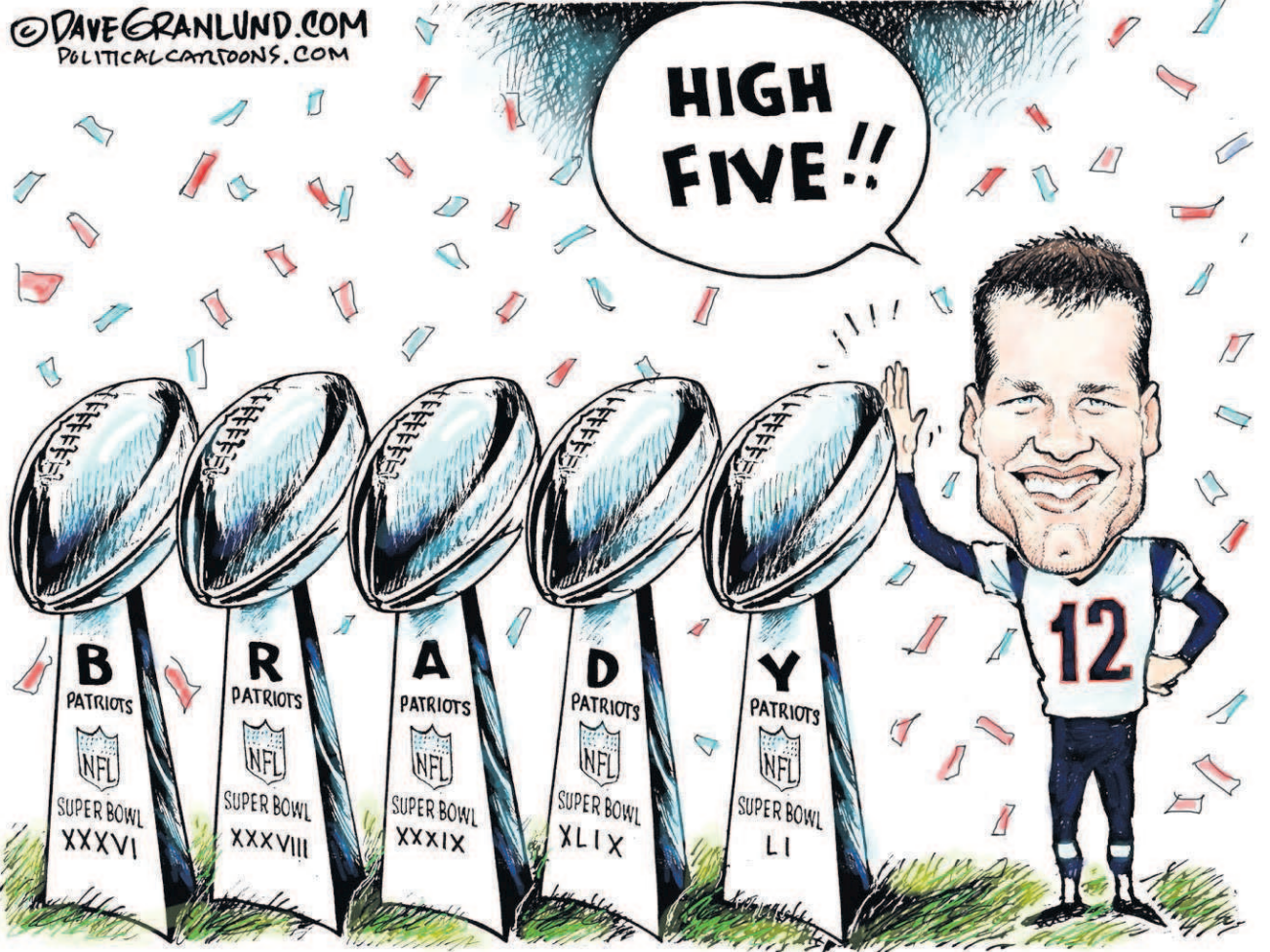
In other words, farmers and forest managers who face even a frivolous legal attack for using pesticides could never get their attorney fees from the losers.

That is unfair. If that and other ill-considered changes are made, the Legislature might as well change the name of the law to the "Right to Hassle Farmers and Foresters."

Pesticides are an important part of agriculture. Without them, costs will spiral out of control, and weeds and bugs will overtake crops.

That's why the practices of farmers, ranchers and forest managers must continue to be protected by the Oregon Legislature. The best way to do that is to reject SB 499.

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# Oregon takes risk by defying Trump immigration decree

**GUEST EDITORIAL**

*From the Capital Press*

From agriculture to medicine to technology, Oregon thrives on the work of immigrants.

Caught between state law and Trump administration policy, Gov. Kate Brown has acted responsibly by upholding Oregon as a place that "embraces, celebrates and welcomes its immigrant and refugee residents."

On Thursday, Brown signed an executive order expanding a 1987 state law that prohibits law enforcement agencies from using taxpayer money to investigate or arrest Oregonians due only to their immigration status.

That prohibition will now apply to all state agencies. They still must follow state and federal laws; for example, only citizens can become voters or obtain certain welfare benefits. But state employees must not discriminate based on immigration status or — because Brown worries about a potential "Muslim ban" — on religion.

Her point: Oregon agencies and Oregon law enforcement should focus on Oregon, and leave federal immigration enforcement to the feds.

"I want to make it very clear that here in Oregon, where thousands have fought for and demanded equality, where millions have put down roots and become integral to our economy, to our culture, and to our way of life, we cannot retreat," Brown said. "As governor, it is my duty to uphold the civil and human rights of all who call Oregon home."

President Donald Trump issued executive orders that halted resettlement

of refugees from Syria and temporarily blocked citizens of seven predominantly Muslim countries from entering the U.S.

That is his political prerogative, although subsequent lawsuits are challenging the constitutionality of his orders. Brown wants Oregon to join the litigation.

The Trump orders, which canceled tens of thousands of visas until a federal judge intervened, directly affect Oregon. In one high-profile case that incensed politicians nationwide, an Iranian infant was blocked from traveling to Oregon Health & Science University for life-saving heart surgery. The federal government has now granted a waiver allowing Fatemah Reshad and her family to enter the U.S.

Oregon's largest private employer, Intel, has thousands of foreign-born employees who are here on work visas. So do many other employers, from doctors who practice at clinics and hospitals to IT contractors who serve state government. Oregon universities constantly have scholars and students traveling from abroad to collaborate on study and research. And certainly, Oregon's farm sector is dependent on the agricultural skills of thousands of immigrants.

Oregon's 1987 law had national influence but has not always been followed locally. Clackamas County ran afoul of

the U.S. Constitution for holding a woman on a federal immigration detainer after her arrest for allegedly violating a restraining order. That 2014 federal court ruling led many sheriff departments to require that the feds have a warrant or court order when they want a foreign-born individual held for immigration purposes.

That is reasonable, despite the inflammatory rhetoric about Oregon and other places being "sanctuaries" for undocumented immigrants.

Oregon pursues, prosecutes and punishes criminals regardless of their immigration status. Oregon law enforcement also honors federal warrants.

Public safety is enhanced by the legitimate separation between state law enforcement and federal immigration enforcement. Oregon's law encourages undocumented immigrants to trust police instead of fearing deportation for being a victim or witness to a crime. The law encourages immigrants to use the court system to resolve child custody and other issues. However, Oregon judges say Trump's orders already have had a chilling effect in that regard.

Oregon's position carries risks. One of Trump's orders would withdraw federal money from "sanctuary" states and cities. A greater risk, noted Republican state Sen. Brian Boquist of Dallas, is that Oregon will simply be left off the future recipient list when federal money is doled out for road construction and other projects.

It is a risky stance.  
It is the right stance.

# Good Samaritans help visitors stranded in snow

The weekend of Jan. 21-22, my wife and I were in the Wallowa Valley to see and photograph some of the rare and unusual birds that often show up in winter there. We were traveling with a group of friends and other birders on a trip sponsored by the Oregon Birding Association, and were glad to even be there, as the highways coming over from western Oregon had been a challenge.

By Sunday afternoon most of our group had to leave to get back to jobs & family, so there was just my vehicle with four of us left. Trying to find a few more birds before it got too dark, I was driving north on Elk Mountain Road, just east of Enterprise, when I took my eyes off the plowed part of the road for just a second, and slid into the snow-covered ditch. My car was all-wheel drive, but I was in too deep and couldn't get out.

Almost immediately a young woman drove up in a pickup and asked if we needed help.

"Yeah, we sure do," I answered. She said she was in a rush to get to an appointment, but she would make a couple of calls to see if she could find someone to pull us out. We thanked her and got out of the car, but before she could even make her second call, a couple of young men in a flatbed pickup pulled up and started getting out their tow strap. Less than 15 minutes from when we had first got stuck, we were back in our car and back on the road.

I didn't get any of the young folks' names in the rush & excitement, but I wanted to thank them for helping out a

## LETTERS to the EDITOR

car full of visiting birders, and refusing to take a dime for their trouble. It restored my faith in my fellow man and woman!

France Davis  
Portland, Oregon

## Students forgo party to give to animal care

The pupils in Mark Keffer's fourth grade class in Enterprise decided to forgo their Christmas party and instead take up a collection for the Wallowa County Humane Society.

The Humane Society thanks the fourth grade class for a donation of \$100. It will be used for our programs of spay/neuter, fostering and adoptions.

Mary Pillar, board member  
Wallowa County Humane society

## A proud family name

My great grandfather, Joner Exary Trump, homesteaded with his family at Promise, Oregon, in 1898, after leaving Raleigh County, West Virginia. He was a leader of the Promise community and well respected.

My grandfather, Green Spencer Trump, was a kind and gentle man. He provided for his large family with hard work and diligence. I do not remember ever hearing a harsh or unkind word spo-

ken by him.

My father, Benjamin Leonard Trump, was well respected and a leader of the rural Tucannon River Valley community. He did anything for any relative or neighbor without hesitation. During the flood of 1964, he left home in the middle of the night on his cat to save a neighbor's home from the flood waters.

My name is Donna Lea Trump. I am a kind and generous person. I have/have had friends that are gay, lesbian, African American, Hawaiian, Japanese, Chinese, Native American, Hispanic, and many from south of the "Wall". I am proud of my name and my ancestors.

I am very sad that I cannot say any of these good things about Donald John Trump. I am sad for our country and the entire world.

Please, do not ever compare my name to Donald's.

Donna L. Trump  
Dayton and Clarkston, Washington

## Roof clearing brings back memory

The other day while watching neighbors shoveling off their roofs reminded me that when living in Selah, Washington, I once did the same thing.


With golf shoes on, I was up there for about half a day shoveling away, but it wasn't snow, it was volcanic ash from Mount St. Helens.

Denny Varney  
Enterprise

## About letters

Letters to the Editor are subject to editing and should be limited to 275 words. Writers should also include a phone number with their signature so we can call to verify identity. The Chieftain does not run anonymous letters.

You can submit a letter to the Wallowa County Chieftain in person; by mail to P.O. Box 338, Enterprise, OR 97828; by email to editor@wallowa.com; or via the submission form at the newspaper's website, located at wallowa.com.



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