

OTHER VIEWS

Carl Kiss



On today's Republican Party

Hi there. Today's Republican Party here to thank you all for your continuing loyalty and support.

It's been a rough past 7 months. We lost the presidential election by over 7 million votes. Then lost the Senate. Then witnessed an insurrection intended to block Congress from accepting the Electoral College vote that same day. So the loser could remain president. During which some loyal Republicans damaged national treasures, smeared human feces throughout our Capitol, and yelled "Hang Mike Pence, Hang Mike Pence" after constructing gallows on Capitol grounds.

But all these insurrectionists wanted was for Congress to reject valid election results and violate our highest law, the U.S. Constitution. To keep Donald in power. As he asked them to. Nothing worth investigating there, right? No reason to try to prevent such atrocities in the future, right? (If Obama had done exactly what Donald did, and Democrats had therefore attacked our Capitol, we know you would have been good with that, too. We know you aren't hypocrites.)

Besides, we all know that the insurrectionists were really liberals just dressed as Donald supporters. We know this despite the posted angry denials by those we saw participate in the insurrection, and despite zero proof. (Thank you, Oregon Republican Party, for jumping in to help spread this lie.)

Thank you, Newsmax, OAN, and Fox, for endlessly inflaming you with the lies and deception you need to remain outraged, angry, and motivated Republican voters. After all, you (like most people) make your best decisions when angry, outraged and poorly informed.

Thank you for managing to ignore that we lost over 60 court cases seeking to reverse the election's result (even losing with Donald-appointed judges), given our zero proof of significant voter fraud. But that's the problem with courts. Judges actually demand proof of something before believing it. How outrageously stupid and limiting!

And don't think we're ignoring your completely baseless, but angry and heartfelt, belief in rampant voter fraud. We're passing state laws making it much more difficult to vote in disproportionately Black, Brown and young communities. We're making voting lines there even longer, by further cutting staff, reducing or eliminating drop boxes, banning or severely cutting back mail-in voting, and closing the polls when many Black and Brown church-members have traditionally voted.

We're even outlawing giving food and water to those in need while in a voting line. Every Black or Brown citizen who has to leave these longer voting lines for water or food is potentially one less vote for Democrats. Because democracy, contrary to common perception, does not really mean that every citizen of age gets to freely vote. Not when White Republicans control the state government.

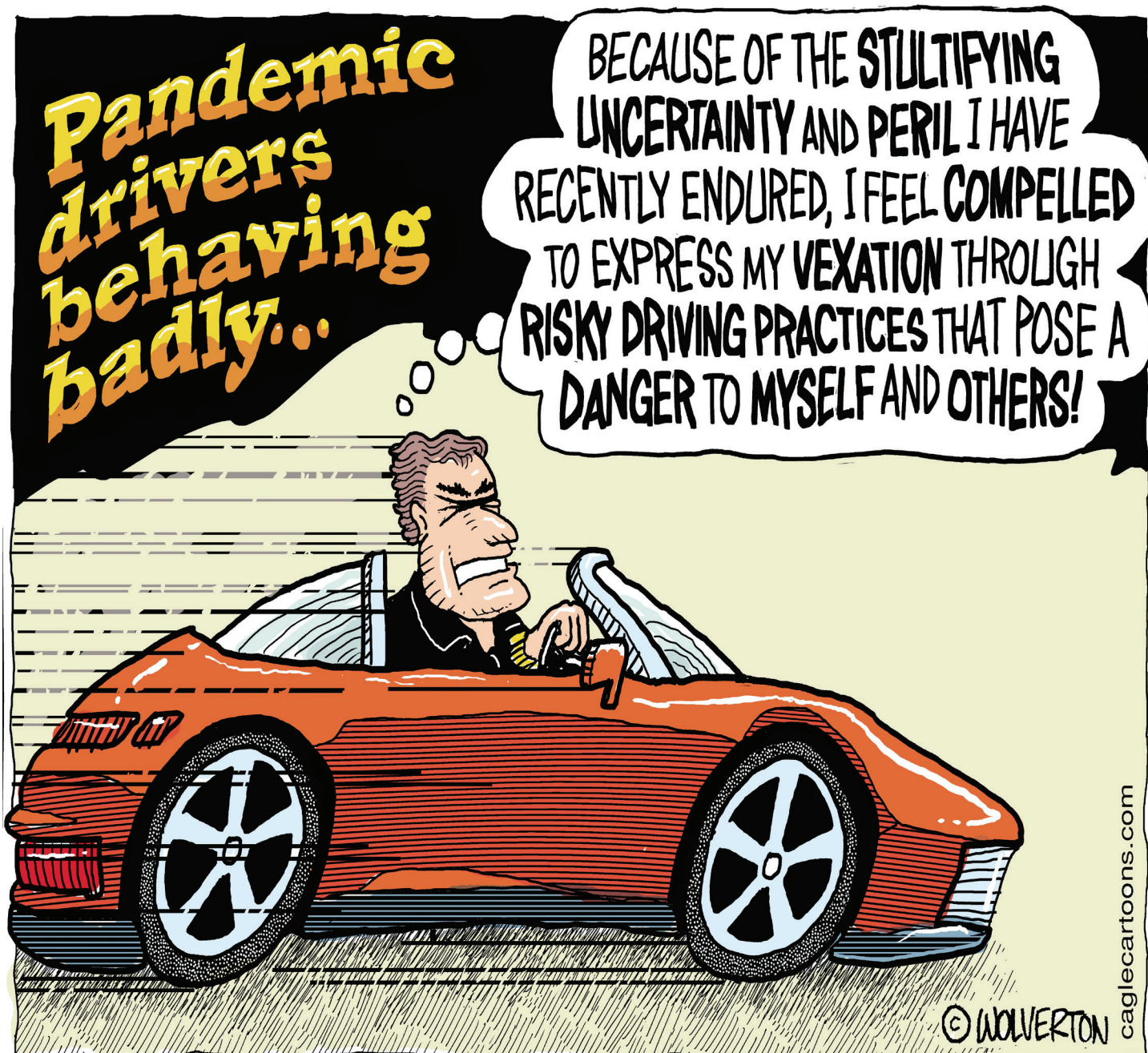
We know many Republicans aren't racist, of course. But since a fair number of our party's supporters are racist, and our margins for victory are so slim, we understandably fear saying anything that might offend racist Republicans. So, many thanks to those of you who aren't racist but support our party's ongoing racist policies with your vote. We'd be forced to abandon our racist pursuits if enough of you demanded we stop them.

Finally, a special thanks to those of you who treasure your religious beliefs enough to change God's commandments. As you know, the Bible tells us that God's two most important commandments include loving your neighbor. But some of you have personally revised that commandment, because you somehow know that God did not mean for us to love our Black neighbors, our Brown neighbors, our Asian neighbors, our immigrant neighbors, our gay or lesbian neighbors, our trans neighbors, and our Democratic neighbors. Instead, some of you believe God meant for us to love only our straight White Republican neighbors. Granted, this biblical revision is especially difficult to accept while knowing Jesus' skin was brown. But since He's pictured White almost everywhere He's portrayed, Jesus' brown skin is just another truth easily ignored or denied by these loyal Republicans.

Some may think it the epitome of arrogance for these individuals to believe they know what God wants from them better than what God told them He wants from them. But they do. Know this better. Better than God.

Right?

Carl Kiss is an Enterprise lawyer, and definitely does not speak for today's Republican Party.



We need to do better in our approach to fires

OTHER VIEWS

Rob Klavins



Fresh off the Labor Day fires, and in the midst of a drought, I imagine many of us shared a feeling of dread when we heard of early June wildfires. Thanks to breathless reporting, west siders were fearful of coming to a "disaster area." With very real impacts to our local economy, some began cancelling planned visits. After taking a few deep breaths of cool, clean, mountain air, I began to process things a little more calmly.

The Joseph and Dry Creek fires burned in a fire-dependent landscape miles from the nearest paved road. It's part of a landscape that we are spending millions of dollars to "restore." There is consensus that a primary cause of that restoration need is previous logging and a fire deficit. That is to say — most serious experts agree we need more fire and less fire suppression.

Fire addresses the root causes — rather than just the symptoms — of decades of mismanagement. With rain on the way, these fires could have done even more restoration work. For free.

They could have improved more wildlife habitat, created more snags, renewed more systems, and left more money for real emergencies. Where these fires were allowed to burn, they increased the het-

erogeneity of the landscape and will affect how future fires burn. This is the antidote to a century of fire suppressions and makes forests more resilient to future fire and drought.

Like most wildfires, much of the fire footprint was in fire-evolved grasslands. Not surprisingly though, it led to reflexive calls for more "management" (aka logging) of our forests. It may not be what some want to hear, but in an age of undeniable climate change, we need more fire, not more logging.

Scientists around the world, and here at Oregon State University, have demonstrated that logged forests emit ten times more carbon than wildfire, beetles, and other natural disturbances that we futilely try to suppress with chainsaw restoration. Only about 3% of a tree's carbon is burned in a fire. Meanwhile, logging is Oregon's number one emitter of carbon.

Ecological and economic concerns aside, we likely shared another immediate thought — "I hope everyone stays safe."

In a press release, our own Oregon Department of Forestry administrator Matt Howard told the media "this is probably one of the most difficult places to fight fire in Oregon." In addition to spending huge amounts of money, the decision to fight fire risks lives. The best way to keep those brave folks safe is to keep them out of harm's way. I know many wildland firefighters who resent being sent out to these sorts of fires.

In the end — and as is usually the case — weather ultimately stopped the fire.

Make no mistake, some fires are dangerous, destructive and should be fought. Drought, a fire deficit and manmade cli-

mate change are all realities. But fighting fire is a choice, and we need to start making better ones.

Uncommon bedfellows celebrated the Forest Service's decision to let the Granite Gulch Fire burn in 2019. That breakthrough won't mean much if it's just a one-off.

So, other than throwing out piles of money and risking lives to put out fires, what other choices do we have?

For starters, we can reduce the risk of inevitable wildfires by better managing new development and improving the fire resistance of existing homes and structures. We should thin small trees starting in the structure-ignition zone and work our way out from there. We should retain large and old trees across the landscape. And we must let some fires burn.

The last part of that requires fire-use planning — something that many are still reluctant to contemplate, even as they are eager to encourage spending millions of taxpayer dollars to create expensive, destructive, and counterproductive plans that only double down on past mistakes.

A fire deficit coupled with past logging of large trees, manmade climate change, overgrazing and increasing development means we do have a problem. But it's not one we can solve with more logging, grazing, climate denial and fire suppression.

We really do know better. Now we just need to start doing better.

Rob Klavins is the Northeast Oregon field coordinator for Oregon Wild. He lives near Enterprise and helps run the family farm and business.

Urge state Legislature to support Senate Bill 582A

REDUCE, REUSE, RECYCLE

Peter Ferré



The Friends of Wallowa County Recycling would like to thank all of you who have left donations at the Recycling Center. Those donations are being used for educational materials, tools and equipment to help volunteers sort the recyclables, remove unwanted materials and are being accumulated to use for larger investments to help expand our recycling capacity. Thank you for your support and continued generosity.

We each have the ability to make a change through our individual actions, (thank you for reducing, reusing and recycling everything you can), coupled with the influence we can have on our elected officials to support legislation that will have a positive impact on the world we live in and the communities we call home.

This week, the Oregon Senate is voting on Senate Bill 582A: Plastic Pollution and Recycling Modernization Act.

SB 582A offers a visionary restructuring

and modernization of the recycling industry in Oregon that will bring many benefits to Wallowa County residents and to the residents of Oregon.

SB 582A would result in shared responsibility for the recycling of materials between consumers and the producers of materials, while providing incentives to reduce waste and facilitate the recycling process. Importantly, the utterly confusing categories of various plastics labeled as "recyclable," but for which there are no practical markets, would be rationalized, thereby helping to prevent further plastics pollution that has become a crisis for our oceans. People in rural areas like ours would be able to more easily participate in recycling programs. Rural areas like Wallowa County could receive assistance to help defray the higher cost of transportation to processing facilities, which threatens the financial viability of rural recycling programs. Everyone would know what is and isn't recyclable, which would greatly increase the efficiency of recycling operations across the state. Producers of packaging materials would have real financial incentives to create better and more easily recycled materials. The state Department of Environmental Quality would help ensure accountability for all the participants in Oregon's recycling system and identify opportunities for further improvements.

With the passage of SB 582A, Oregon would become a national leader in modernizing the recycling industry by demonstrating how creative thinking and innovative structures and systems can effectively address our continuing waste challenges and fix our currently broken recycling system.

Limiting the amount of paper, cardboard, metal and aluminum cans, No. 1 and No. 2 plastics we use, and bringing the rest to the Enterprise Recycling Center is making a big difference. Thank you.

In addition, we each can have a meaningful impact on the waste management/recycling world we live in by sending an email to Sen. Bill Hansell strongly asking him to support SB 582A. The senate votes on the bill this week, so it is urgent that each of us sends an email to Sen. Bill-Hansell@oregonlegislature.gov before Friday, June 25. A short and sweet — or more detailed — email asking him to vote for SB 582A is all it takes.

We are all working hard to lessen the waste we each generate, and make sure we are recycling everything we currently can. Emailing Sen. Hansell in support of SB 582A is one more way of encouraging our elected officials to do the same.

Peter Ferré is a member of the Wallowa County Recycling Task Force.