

GUEST EDITORIAL

Dump restrictions on hemp

Editorial from The (Bend) Bulletin:

It appears likely that by the end of September it could become legal to grow industrial hemp in Oregon. It will happen, that is, if the U.S. Senate votes this week to take part in a conference committee with the House of Representatives to work out differences between the two bodies’ omnibus farm bill legislation.

Hemp is not marijuana. It has many industrial uses. Don’t treat it like an illegal drug.

The Senate wrapped the Hemp Farming Act, sponsored by Kentucky Republicans Mitch McConnell and Rand Paul, and Oregon Democrats Ron Wyden and Jeff Merkley, into its version of the larger farm bill before approving the latter in late June. The House bill squeaked through on June 21.

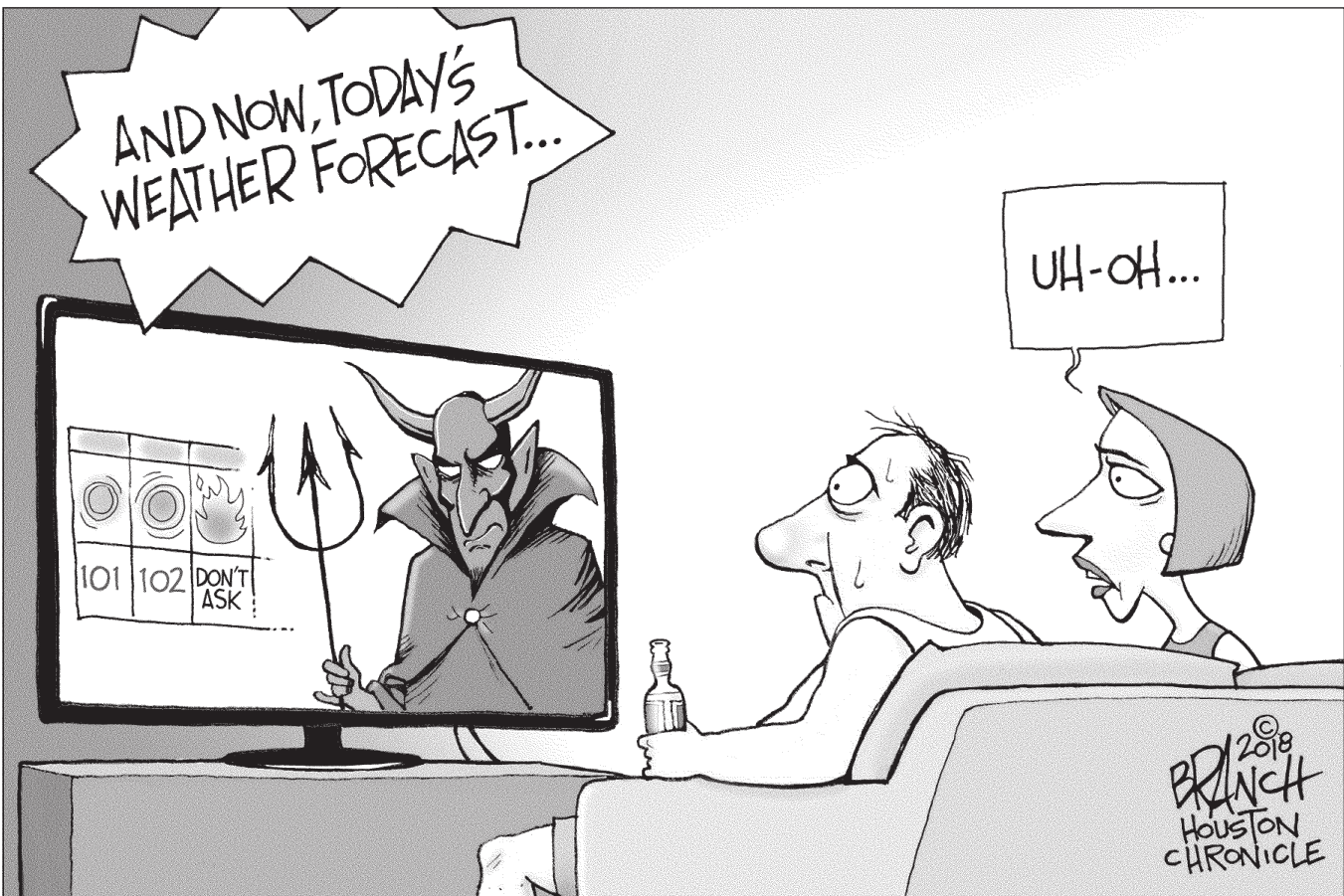
The House did not deal with hemp, and that’s one of the differences between the two that must be worked out. Hemp fiber, a non-intoxicating cousin of marijuana, has a variety of uses, from rope to clothing to providing cannabidiol for medicines.

If the House agrees, a couple of things will happen. Hemp will lose its listing on the federal Schedule-1 list of drugs, which includes heroin, LSD and ecstasy, as well as marijuana and hemp, both of which are already legal in Oregon.

That done, states and Indian tribes will be allowed to take over regulation of hemp, though they are required under the bill to turn a control plan over to the U.S. Department of Agriculture. Industrial hemp also would be excluded from the Controlled Substances Act, giving growers access to banks and other financial institutions they don’t have now.

The changes could give more hemp growers reason to move to Central Oregon. Our dry climate is good for a crop that has mildew and mold problems, and hemp is drought resistant, suitable for the desert. Too, under current Oregon law, licensed growers can farm hemp without prior approval from either cities or counties.

The changes make sense. Hemp is not marijuana, and in Oregon, it must be tested to ensure that’s true. Remove the unnecessary federal restrictions on hemp.



Examining Trump’s ‘treason’

Recently John Brennan, former director of the Central Intelligence Agency, tweeted as follows:

“Donald Trump’s press conference performance in Helsinki rises to & exceeds the threshold of “high crimes & misdemeanors.” It was nothing short of treasonous.”

Tweets should not be expected to capture the nuances of constitutional law. But a lot of people have been reacting along Brennan’s lines. It’s important to put his comment in context. As it turns out, it contains a major mistake — but it also raises a legitimate question.

The Constitution states, “Treason against the United States, shall consist only in levying war against them, or in adhering to their enemies, giving them aid and comfort.” That is an exceedingly narrow definition. “Enemies” are nations with whom we are at war (whether declared or open).

The United States is not at war with Russia. People who are alarmed by President Trump’s statements in Helsinki are of course entitled to use the word “treasonous” in the colloquial sense — but not in the constitutional sense.

The Constitution allows the president to be impeached and removed from office for “Treason, Bribery, or other high Crimes and Misdemeanors.” As the debates during the founding era make clear, egregious misconduct can count as a “high Crime and Misdemeanor” — even if it is not a violation of the criminal law.

CASS R. SUNSTEIN

During the constitutional convention, James Madison saw impeachment as a provision “for defending the Community against the incapacity, negligence or perfidy of the chief Magistrate.” He added that the president “might pervert his administration into a scheme of speculation or oppression. He might betray his trust to foreign powers.” It was clear that Madison believed these to be sufficient grounds for impeachment.

Gouverneur Morris, who originally opposed the idea of impeachment, added that the president should “be impeachable for treachery” (a broader concept than treason). He added, “Corrupting his electors, and incapacity were other causes of impeachment.” His crucial, soaring words: “The people are the King.”

Also at the convention, Edmund Randolph summarized the grounds for the impeachment clause: “The Executive will have great opportunitys of abusing his power.”

In The Federalist, Alexander Hamilton similarly referred to “the abuse or violation of some public trust.” He argued that high crimes and misdemeanors “are of a nature which may with peculiar propriety be denominated POLITICAL, as they relate chiefly to injuries done immediately to society itself”

Importantly, the founding genera-

tion did not want impeachment to be a partisan affair, or a means of undoing the outcome of an election. They recognized the gravity of any effort to remove a sitting president. Consistent with their goals, we do well to adopt a firm principle of neutrality.

For those who think, with Brennan, that impeachment is worth contemplating, it is necessary to ask: Would you think the same thing, if you agreed with the president on matters of policy, and thought that he was doing a wonderful job?

For those who think that the very idea of impeachment is ridiculous, it is necessary to ask: Would you think the same thing, if you did not vote for the president, and thought that he was driving the nation into a ditch?

It is not easy to argue that a performance at a press conference, standing by itself, can be counted as a high crime or misdemeanor in the constitutional sense. But Brennan was right to be alarmed by Trump’s shifting, ambivalent reactions to the findings of his own intelligence community; by his apparent deference to Vladimir Putin; by his obvious reluctance to condemn foreign interference in American elections by Russia.

It may not yet count as “perfidy” — but it’s gotten uncomfortably close to that neighborhood.

Cass R. Sunstein is a Bloomberg Opinion columnist.

Your views

Walden’s hypocrisy means I support McLeod-Skinner

I am 90 years old and happily retired in Baker City. I worked many years as a paid employee before opening and running my own bookstore for 25 years. During this time, I always contributed to Social Security and Medicare. I retired at 72 and now rely on these programs to meet my monthly expenses.

Without them, my quality of life would be destroyed.

In April, Greg Walden voted for the Balanced Budget Amendment, a constitutional amendment that would require the federal government to approve budgets that spend no more than incoming revenue.

This sounds like a prudent way to keep our national budget in line. But for

the Republicans in Congress to declare they support fiscal responsibility after approving \$1.5 trillion in tax cuts for the rich is hypocrisy at its worst. Had this amendment been approved, Congress would have considered substantial cuts to Americans’ earned Social Security and Medicare benefits.

Most of us try to be responsible citizens and live within our means. Automatic deductions for Social Security and Medicare are taken out of our paychecks and because of this, we qualify for benefits when we reach 65 and retire from the workforce. These are not “entitlements” as many Republicans like to call them. They are programs that we have contributed to for our entire working lives and are designed to help us maintain our independence in old age.

For Greg Walden to endorse tax cuts for the wealthy and then pretend to support fiscal responsibility is absurd. He is reneging on his duty to the citizens of our district and putting our lives at risk.

Fortunately, we have an opportunity to make a change. Jamie McLeod-Skinner is running to be our new representative. She realizes that the recent tax cut passed by Congress made our system of taxation less fair and she does not support it. She will advocate for our families and communities and not for special interests. She cares about the hard working and retired people in our district. Learn more about Jamie and join me in voting her into office in November.

Gloria Gordon
Baker City

Letters to the editor

- We welcome letters on any issue of public interest. Customer complaints about specific businesses will not be printed.
- The Baker City Herald will not knowingly print false or misleading claims. However, we cannot verify the accuracy of all statements in letters to the editor.
- Letters are limited to 350 words; longer letters will be edited for length. Writers are limited to one letter every 15 days.
- The writer must sign the letter and include an address and phone number (for verification only). Letters that do not include this information cannot be published.
- Letters will be edited for brevity, grammar, taste and legal reasons.

Mail: To the Editor, Baker City Herald,
P.O. Box 807, Baker City, OR 97814
Email: news@bakercityherald.com

CONTACT YOUR PUBLIC OFFICIALS

President Donald Trump: The White House, 1600 Pennsylvania Ave., Washington, D.C. 20500; 202-456-1414; fax 202-456-2461; to send comments, go to www.whitehouse.gov/contact.

U.S. Sen. Jeff Merkley: D.C. office: 313 Hart Senate Office Building, U.S. Senate, Washington, D.C., 20510; 202-224-3753; fax 202-228-3997. Portland office: One World Trade Center, 121 S.W. Salmon St. Suite 1250, Portland, OR 97204; 503-326-3386; fax 503-326-2900. Pendleton office: 310 S.E. Second St. Suite 105, Pendleton 97801; 541-278-1129; merkley.senate.gov.

U.S. Sen. Ron Wyden: D.C. office: 221 Dirksen Senate Office Building, Washington, D.C., 20510; 202-224-5244; fax 202-228-2717. La Grande office: 105 Fir St., No. 210, La Grande, OR 97850; 541-962-7691; fax, 541-963-0885; wyden.senate.gov.

U.S. Rep. Greg Walden (2nd District): D.C. office: 2182 Rayburn Office Building, Washington, D.C., 20515, 202-225-6730; fax 202-225-5774. La Grande office: 1211 Washington Ave., La Grande, OR 97850; 541-624-2400, fax, 541-624-2402; walden.house.gov.

Oregon Gov. Kate Brown: 254 State Capitol, Salem, OR 97310; 503-378-3111; www.governor.oregon.gov.

Oregon State Treasurer Tobias Read: oregon.treasurer@ost.state.or.us; 350 Winter St. NE, Suite 100, Salem OR 97301-3896; 503-378-4000.

Oregon Attorney General Ellen F. Rosenblum: Justice Building, Salem, OR 97301-4096; 503-378-4400.

Oregon Legislature: Legislative documents and information are available online at www.leg.state.or.us.

State Sen. Cliff Bentz (R-Ontario): Salem office: 900 Court St. N.E., S-301, Salem, OR 97301; 503-986-1730. District office: P.O. Box 1027, Ontario, OR 97914; 541-889-8866.

State Rep. Lynn Findley (R-Vale): Salem office: 900 Court St. N.E., H-475, Salem, OR 97301; 503-986-1460. Email: Rep.LynnFindley@oregonlegislature.gov

Baker City Hall: 1655 First Street, P.O. Box 650, Baker City, OR 97814; 541-523-6541; fax 541-524-2049. City Council meets the second and fourth Tuesdays at 7 p.m. in Council Chambers. Mike Downing, James Thomas, Loran Joseph, Randy Schiewe,

Rosemary Abell, Arvid Andersen and Adam Nilsson.

Baker City administration: 541-523-6541. Fred Warner Jr., city manager; Dustin Newman, police chief; Michelle Owen, public works director.

Baker County Commission: Baker County Courthouse 1995 3rd St., Baker City, OR 97814; 541-523-8200. Meets the first and third Wednesdays at 9 a.m.; Bill Harvey (chair), Mark Bennett, Bruce Nichols.

Baker County departments: 541-523-8200. Travis Ash, sheriff; Jeff Smith, roadmaster; Matt Shirtcliff, district attorney; Alice Durlinger, county treasurer; Cindy Carpenter, county clerk; Kerry Savage, county assessor.

Baker School District: 2090 4th Street, Baker City, OR 97814; 541-524-2260; fax 541-524-2564. Superintendent: Mark Witty. Board meets the third Tuesday of the month at 6 p.m., Baker School District 5J office boardroom; Andrew Bryan, Kevin Cassidy, Chris Hawkins, Katie Lamb and Julie Huntington.

