

# Opinion

BAKER CITY  
**Herald**  
Serving Baker County since 1870

Write a letter  
news@bakercityherald.com

## EDITORIAL

# Sanctuary law repeal is sensible

We think Oregon voters should repeal the state's 31-year-old "sanctuary" statute by approving Ballot Measure 105 on the Nov. 6 ballot.

That said, we're not bothered by Baker County Sheriff Travis Ash's decision to not join 16 of his 35 counterparts who signed a letter that urges voters to pass Measure 105. The letter was written by Clatsop County Sheriff Thomas J. Bergin.

In a written statement, Ash said he declined to sign Bergin's letter because Bergin cited as an example the recent murder of Mollie Tibbetts in Iowa. The man charged with her murder apparently is a Mexican national living illegally in the U.S.

"I didn't agree with using the Mollie Tibbetts family's personal tragedy for political purposes," Ash wrote, "especially without knowing how they felt about it."

It seems that Tibbetts' father, Rob, would not think much of Bergin's letter. Rob Tibbetts, while giving his daughter's eulogy, said "the Hispanic community are Iowans. They have the same values as Iowans."

Ash didn't take a position on whether he supports or opposes Measure 105.

But he said that whether or not voters approve the measure, "it will not affect the way we do business at the Baker County Sheriff's Office."

Ash, who also oversees the Baker County Jail, said his policy, which he says is consistent with Oregon's current law, is to notify federal immigration officials if an inmate who is in jail on other charges is also suspected of being in the country illegally.

But Ash also wrote that such situations are "rare."

That's not necessarily the case, however, in some of Oregon's more populous counties.

We agree with Knute Buehler, the Republican candidate for governor, who said he will vote for Measure 105 because he believes repealing the sanctuary law will eliminate confusion and potential discrepancies in how individual counties deal with illegal immigration issues.

Opponents of the measure contend its passage would encourage police to engage in the noxious tactic of racial profiling. But the 1987 "sanctuary" law is not the only bulwark against profiling. In 2015 Gov. Kate Brown signed a law — one we support — that creates a database of profiling complaints against police, and an independent task force to review those complaints.

*From the Baker City Herald editorial board. The board consists of editor Jayson Jacoby and reporter Chris Collins.*



## GUEST EDITORIAL

# Officials in Salem need to fully participate in sex misconduct probe

### Editorial from The (Bend) Bulletin:

When Oregon Labor Commissioner Brad Avakian filed a complaint with his own office against legislative leadership and others this summer, the Legislature's lawyer, Dexter Johnson, promised full and transparent participation in the process. This week it became clear that "full" participation does not include turning over subpoenaed documents to the Bureau of Labor and Industries.

So much for transparency and participation.

Avakian filed the complaint Aug. 1 at the behest of two student interns and two employees of the Legislature. It contains several accusations of sexual misconduct on the part of three lawmakers and accuses two staffers, including Senate President Peter Courtney's communications director, of trying to hush the women up.

Named in the complaint were Courtney, D-Salem; House Speaker Tina Kotek, D-Portland; Johnson and Lore Christopher, the state's employee services manager. The complaint says the two lawmakers should have been aware of accusations about the behavior of then-Sen. Jeff Kruse, R-Roseburg and, more broadly, the sexually hostile work environment in the Capitol. It cites complaints going back as far as 2013 about Rep. David Gomberg, D-Central Coast. It says Johnson, Christopher and Courtney's communications director tried to silence the women who disclosed problems with Kruse.

After the BOLI complaint was filed lawmakers hired an outside employment lawyer to represent them. Kotek and Courtney have said, loudly enough, that sexual harassment at the Capitol is not

OK. Kotek even told reporters when the complaint was filed that if the investigation leads to a better atmosphere at the Capitol and better outcomes for victims, she's open to it.

Their recent actions belie those earlier words. BOLI wants information that would allow it to identify the women who complained about harassment, their lawyer argues, and those women were promised confidentiality. He has formally objected to the subpoenas.

Yet without information about the victims, Avakian's office cannot truly investigate the claims they've made and cannot really understand the Legislature's response. The women who complained deserve a full investigation, as do all Oregonians. It's time Courtney, Kotek and the others lived up to their promise to participate fully.

## Letters to the editor

We welcome letters on any issue of public interest. Letters are limited to 350 words. Writers are limited to one letter every 15 days. Writers must sign their letter and include an address and phone number (for verification only). Email letters to news@bakercityherald.com

## CONTACT YOUR PUBLIC OFFICIALS

**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, 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 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.

# Clouds, rain interrupt record-setting summer

I wore a fleece jacket when I went for a walk Sunday afternoon, and rarely have I been more gratified to don a garment.

Although it took some doing just to find the thing.

So incessant has been the heat during this record-breaking summer in Baker City that I had lost track of pretty much any article of clothing that isn't a pair of shorts, a thin T-shirt or a flip-flop.

Normally I drape this particular fleece jacket on a post of the lodgepole pine bed frame that my brother, Michael, built for me.

But the jacket was neither there nor in any of the closets where my winter-weight apparel seems to end up when it has completed its latest journey.

(I presume I need not defend my claim that clothing travels without any assistance from its owner. Freshly laundered individual socks, of course, are notorious in this regard, but other items, it seems, sometimes tag along as well.)

Eventually I found the jacket stuffed into my daypack. I had forgotten that I crammed it in there a while back before a hike, think-



JAYSON JACOBY

ing it might be chilly enough in the mountains to put it on. In this summer of 109 degrees I was, of course, wrong.

Sunday, though, was the antithesis of those afternoons earlier in August when the heat made me think not of frying eggs on sizzling sidewalks but rather of firing a clay pot.

The clouds, low and heavy and gray, had slunk in Sunday morning and never retreated. By early afternoon the temperature was 60 and a northwest breeze made the unusually humid air feel chillier than that.

Even so, it was a near thing as to whether the jacket was warranted.

After 15 minutes or so of steady striding I felt pleasantly warm, but I could sense that if the wind calmed, or the sun briefly pierced the cloud deck, it would quickly become a trifle toasty.

Fortunately neither happened.

Before I went to bed Sunday night I closed every window, as it clearly wasn't going to be necessary to usher in any outside air to cool the house overnight. I hadn't done this since before Independence Day.

The next morning I awoke to a temperature of 50 and to the metallic clatter of raindrops pattering off the vents on my roof.

It was a soothing sound. It usually is, what with the scarcity of rainfall in our valley which lies in the double-strength rain shadow cast by the Cascades and the Elkhorns.

But perhaps never were the tinkling tones more soothing than at the dawn of an August day barely two weeks after the hottest stretch of weather on record around here.

The three-day period of Aug. 8-10, with daily temperatures of 103, 108 and 109 at the Baker City Airport, surpasses any previous heatwave for sheer numerical ferocity.

The 108-degree high on the 9th broke the all-time record of 106, set on Aug. 4, 1961.

The new record lasted all of one day.

Those scorching days seemed quite distant, thermally if not chronologically, on Monday afternoon when I again set out for a stroll around Baker City streets.

The wind had shifted round to the northwest and the gusts blew with an authority they haven't had for months. Occasionally the air would slip a figurative finger into a tiny gap in the fleece, and it was though someone had thrust a hand into a snowdrift and then touched my skin. The feeling hinted at an October morning when the scent of woodsmoke in the air comes from pine stovelengths rather than a smoldering forest in another state.

I pulled the zipper clear to the top so the soft, warm fabric snuggled against my chin. And yet for the briefest moment I felt a chill that had nothing to do with the temperature. It was rather a promise of the frigidity to come — the genuine killing cold of a mountain valley in mid-winter rather than the impostor that is a late August cold front.

This is the paradox, of course, of our climate, with its wild fluctuations from season to season. Winter is so distinct from summer that

by the end of one season we have become, if not accustomed to the extremities of temperature, then at least somewhat inured.

Which is why a blustery 60-degree afternoon that prompts me to hunt up a warm jacket the last week of August would, if it came around in late February, have me feeling feverish and shedding layers with alacrity.

Summer, of course, tends to give ground grudgingly and gradually, in the manner of a well-trained army making a fighting retreat, rather than surrendering suddenly.

Rare indeed is the autumn that arrives in these parts, unchallenged, so early as Labor Day. The sunny and warmer weather that returned this week reflects that climatological reality.

Yet that Sunday walk, which lasted a little less than an hour, still seemed to me a milestone — a dividing line that marked the true end to this historic summer, and no matter what the calendar, or even the temperature, insists.

*Jayson Jacoby is editor of the Baker City Herald.*