

# Opinion

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## GUEST EDITORIAL

# Release records

### Editorial from The (Bend) Bulletin:

For all the talk from Gov. Kate Brown of supporting government openness and transparency, she seems to hope to be addressed as Gov. Openness. Yet, there's another example of her failing to live up to her talk.

Brown is denying the public access to legislation state agencies plan for the 2019 session until after the November election is over. The records should be made public now.

State agencies send proposed legislation to the governor's office every year before the legislative session. The state has what are called legislative concept approval forms. The forms require agencies to identify a problem and explain how a change in the law would fix it. The governor's office reviews them and can turn them down.

Such forms were submitted in the past to change the age of compulsory education from age 7 to age 5. There was one to change health insurance for inmates. There was another to limit information to the public in some state databases.

That's important public business that the public has a right to know. And in the past, they have been provided to members of the public.

This year, with Brown up for election, the policy for releasing such records has changed. There are new instructions sent to agencies about the forms: "Although it is expected that agencies will have discussed legislative concept ideas with stakeholders, agencies are directed to treat this document as confidential and privileged and, accordingly, not to share the text of this form outside of state government before legislation is drafted and finalized."

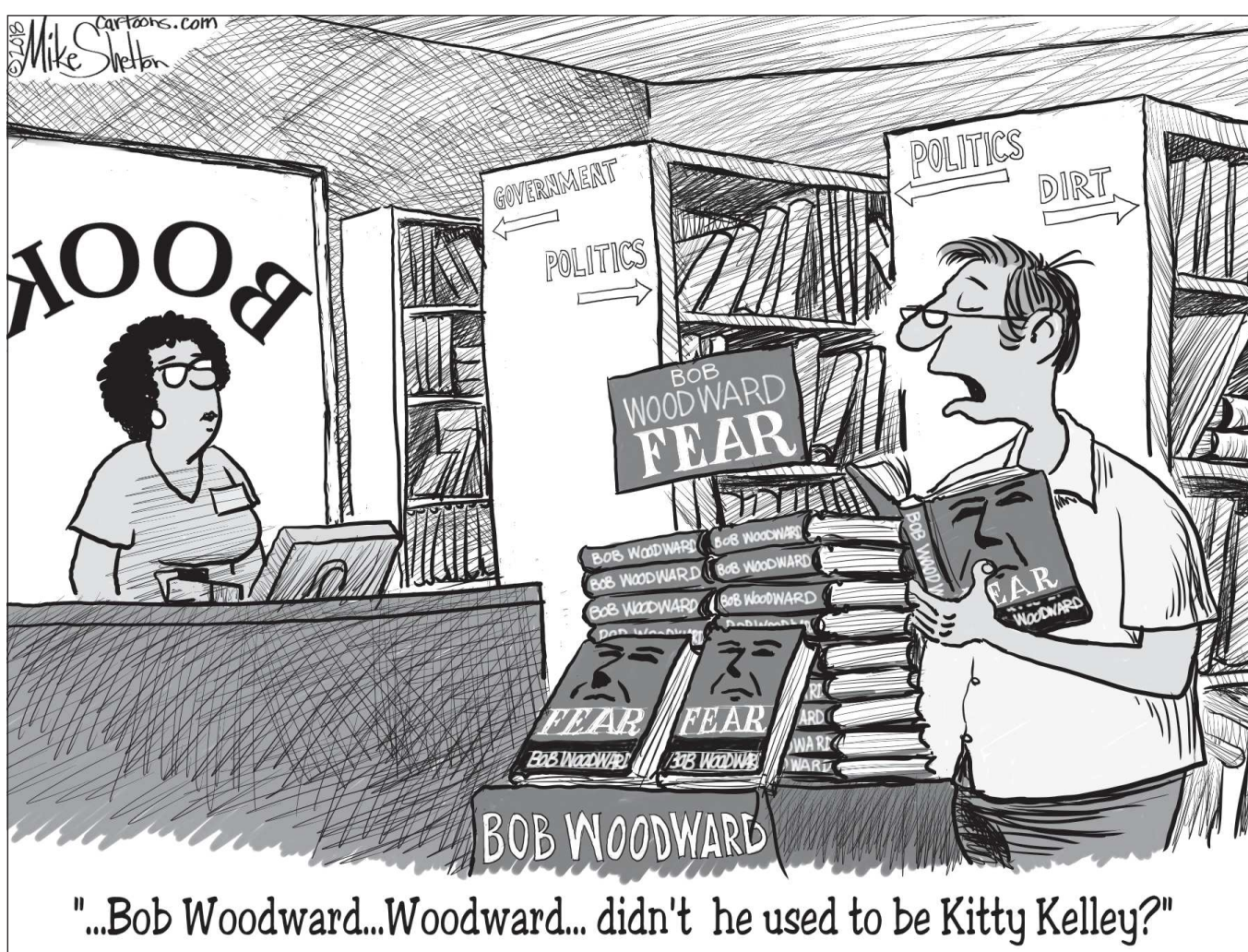
That will be after the election is over. Does that make any sense at all except to hide what the government is doing from the public?

Portland business lawyer Greg Chaimov is suing the state to compel the state to release the records. We should disclose that Chaimov is an attorney with Davis Wright Tremaine, which has represented The Bulletin. The issue, though, is not about who is suing. It is about when the government should make records public.

The state is claiming that release of the records now violates attorney-client privilege. That decision was upheld by Attorney General Ellen Rosenblum. Is that so? State agencies are forming critical policies to change state law. In many cases, as the state admits, it has publicly discussed its legislative concepts. And now, when an agency proposes an idea to the governor, it suddenly becomes top secret?

Knowing what proposed legislation a governor rejects and what he or she allows to proceed tells Oregonians important information about the governor.

Gov. Openness should not be trying to delay disclosure. She should be expediting it. Release the records. Now.



"...Bob Woodward...Woodward... didn't he used to be Kitty Kelley?"

## Your views

### City manager fails to consider citizen concerns

Taken from a letter to our City Council regarding the council meeting of Aug. 28, 2018:

I hope the exchanges you witnessed revealed one of the major problems the city faces. The city manager and other staff are operating under the illusion that they are in charge, the citizens are irrelevant and you, the city council, are merely a tool to help them attain their ends.

The Council, representing the entire community, employs Mr. Warner as city manager. He receives a salary \$100,000 plus substantial benefits. He manages day-to-day operations, serving as the council's interface with all the other city employees and advising council as needed. On Aug. 27, Penny and I met with Mr. Warner to discuss the lack of the reading of the previous meeting's minutes. Mr. Warner agreed this was a problem.

The next evening, the Aug. 28 meeting, Julie Smith, HR manager/city recorder, was mentioned by us as failing to make the council meeting minutes available in a timely fashion for several months running. At the meetings she is busy typing away. It would seem she is taking the minutes at that moment. Therefore the information should be available the next day. Her recent \$10,000 raise in pay gives her an estimated additional \$417.00 per council meeting (based on 24 meetings per year). Unfortunately, the work product is not available weeks or longer after the meetings. This issue should be addressed expeditiously.

Mr. Warner told you all we had to say was "garbage." The rest of his invective was lost to us and we departed. Many feel there is a pattern of your failing to take seriously the concerns of citizens. An individual came to you regarding a large scale marijuana grow in his

neighborhood. None of you seemed to think his issue was a priority.

I hope to see greater attendance at the meetings from the community at large. When they do arrive, it would be advantageous if you listened to them.

Raymond G. Rienks  
Baker City

### Approving school bond will benefit entire community

I no longer have any children or grandchildren in the Baker 5J School District, but I still plan to vote yes on Measure 1-88. While new buildings may not directly impact my day-to-day activities, the benefits of updating our facilities will have indirect impacts on everyone in our community. With the aging population in Baker County, the ability to attract and retain young professionals is of great importance. If we want to continue accessing high quality healthcare in town rather than having to drive hours to seek care, we need to have school facilities that we can proudly show to potential new citizens. We need lab techs, nurses, radiology technicians, physicians, dentists, physical and occupational therapists, surgical assistants and all the other young medical staff finishing their own educations who want to move to a place like Baker City to raise their families. Please consider the importance of this bond and the impact its outcome will have on our future as a healthy community. I urge you to join me this fall in voting yes for kids.

Gloria Schott  
Baker City

### Feeling taxed enough already, no on school bond

Are you fed up with striking teachers? Tax increases for schools when we were sold the lie "the lottery will solve all the school issues"? Where is that

money going?

Why are teachers using the guise, "For the kids" when it's all about more money in their pockets? We have one of the worst school systems in the U.S. and a high failure rate so why would we reward that? Cops and firefighters are barred from striking, I think teachers should be added to that category. They always pull this just before school starts to hold families hostage. And our governor has decided that homeless folks, most of which are homeless by choice, need new housing at the tune of \$370 million. Really? I promise you if you build it, they will come. In 25 years of dealing with the homeless, I've found most have addictions, or are wanted criminals or pedophiles. Very few homeless are families. We have way too many programs to assist people with free everything. Food, medical, dental and housing. While my medical insurance tripled under President Obama's botched medical reform, the homeless and illegals just got free care at my expense. Now I hear there are two measures that are meant to raise my taxes again, 103 and 1-88. Say No to these money-grabbing liberals. They spend our hard-earned money as if we had it growing in our yards on trees. It doesn't. I'm taxed enough already and I'm sick of taxpayer-funded medical, abortions, food and housing. It's time we vote these free-spending idiots out of office. I see way too many "Oregon Trail" cards purchasing crap on my dime. You want to raise taxes, tax junk food and liquor and double the tax on cigarettes. All those items merely increase our medical costs each year anyway and our nation is far too obese and diabetic.

My two cents.

Thomas Wilcoxson  
Baker City

## GUEST EDITORIAL

### Editorial from the Medford Mail Tribune:

When the Mail Tribune invited readers to submit photos of friends and loved ones on the fire lines as a thank you for their hard work and dedication, the tributes poured in from far and wide.

Many are young, in their 20s and 30s, but by no means all. Others are in their 40s and 50s, with decades of experience under their belts. The photos, many reproduced in today's newspaper, show soot-covered, smiling firefighters clad in the familiar yellow fire shirts, their heads protected by hard hats.

They are men and women from the Rogue Valley, from elsewhere in Oregon and from other states as well. They are assigned to fires called Klondike, Hugo, Taylor Creek, Ramsey Canyon, Mendocino, Delta. They are among 19,000 firefighters battling more than 40 wildfires.

There is plenty of work to go

around this summer. And there likely will be more before this long, hot fire season is finally over.

The family members, friends and fire public information officers who submitted the photos are justifiably proud of the work these firefighters are doing, as are we. We join in thanking them for the hard, back-breaking work they do — literally, in some cases. One Grayback Forestry employee suffered a broken neck nearly 30 years ago, and is still, in the words of a relative, "kicking ash."

Injuries are inevitable in an occupation that asks its workers to hike long distances, clear fire lines with hand tools and operate chainsaws and other dangerous equipment. So far this year, 14 firefighters in the U.S. have lost their lives.

State and federal forestry agencies and private contractors that employ firefighters do focus on safety, but when fires are raging, there is little time to examine the

toll firefighting takes on the bodies of those who do it. Enter Randy Brooks, a professor in the University of Idaho's College of Natural Resources.

Prompted by his son, a firefighter who narrowly escaped a wall of flames that killed three colleagues in eastern Washington in 2015, Brooks launched an online survey that turned up some troubling responses.

Some 400 firefighters reported mental and physical fatigue as the most common cause of injuries. Brooks then began a health study using wrist-worn motion monitors and body-composition measurements. The research turned up health declines and slowing reaction times as the fire season dragged on.

Firefighters often didn't get enough sleep, the research showed. They lost muscle mass and gained body fat for reasons that are still unclear.

## 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.

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