

GUEST EDITORIAL

Don't set limits on campaign spending

Editorial from The (Bend) Bulletin:

This election season in Oregon has been an expensive one, with the race for governor setting new spending records. It's no wonder then, that the idea of limits on campaign spending looks attractive.

It looks especially attractive to Gov. Kate Brown, who promised during the campaign to send to voters a constitutional amendment to allow the state to set contribution limits. That's a mistake that chips away at free speech.

We don't know anyone who is overjoyed that campaign spending is doing nothing but increasing.

This year, for example, Brown and her main opponent, Knute Buehler, spent roughly \$36 million between them on the governor's race. That comes out to nearly \$20 for each of the 1.87 million votes cast Tuesday.

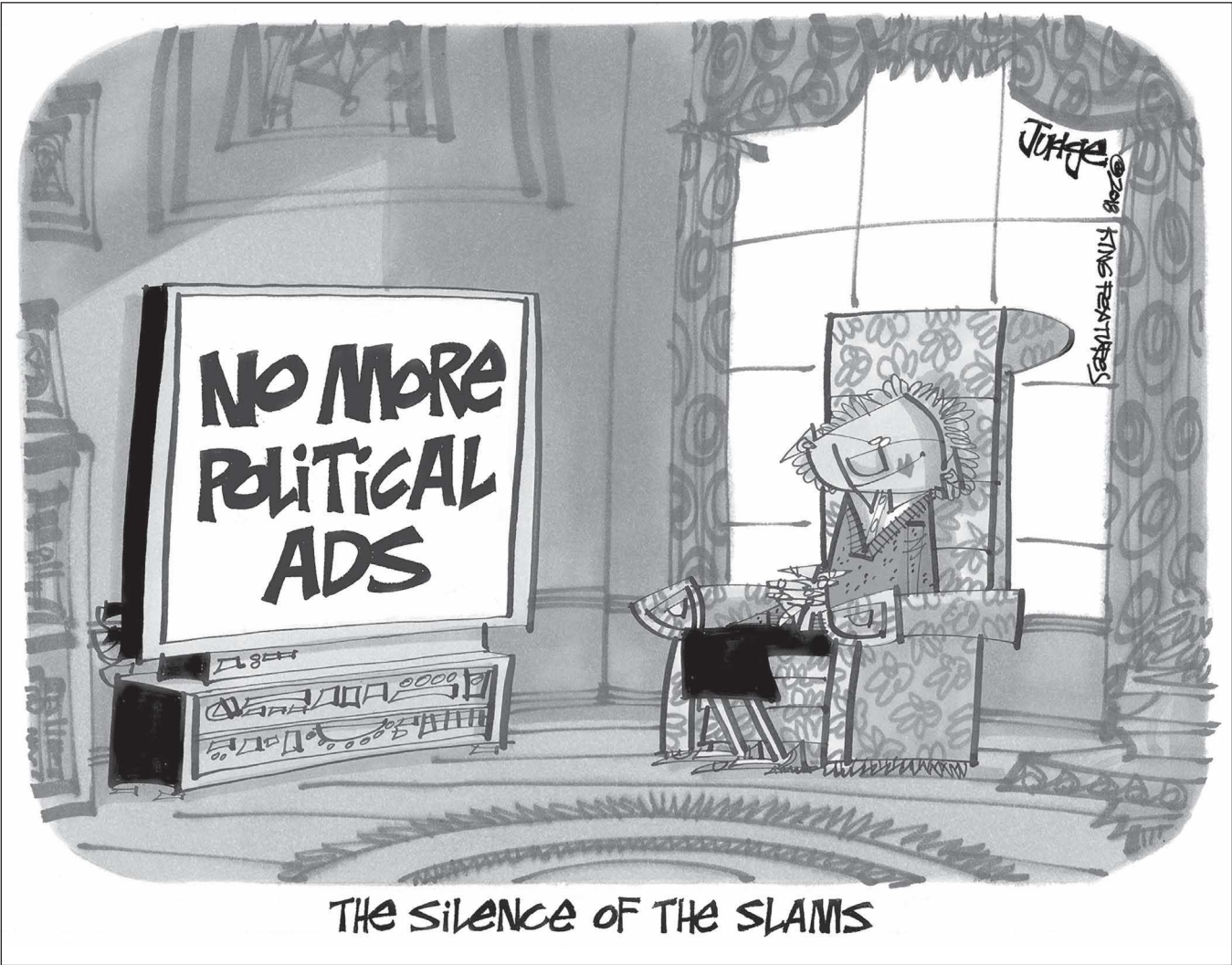
Yet setting limits without violating both federal and state Supreme Court rulings that political contributions are, in fact, speech, is difficult, as it should be. Moreover, determined contributors always find a way to make large gifts that do not violate election laws.

Brown pushed to get the law changed in 2015, and while voters agreed to limits, they correctly rejected the constitutional amendment that would have made the limits legal. They recognized, even if the governor did not, the link between contributions and political free speech.

The Democratic Party in Oregon, meanwhile, has platform language that calls for publicly funded elections, a scheme the city of Portland tried and rejected a few years ago and will try again in 2019. As for state-level financing, Oregon already has trouble paying for schools, Medicaid and a host of critical programs.

Rather than attempting to rewrite the state constitution or adopting a public financing scheme, lawmakers should look once again at tightening rules governing campaign donations.

Quick reporting of contributions, and making that reporting public equally quick, is the sort of reform that honors free speech as well as the public's right to know who's financing elections.



Cheap shoes and other lessons

Unrealistic expectations and cheap shoes are responsible for a lot of misery. I know. I've dealt with both.

I bought my first pair of high heels at a thrift shop when I was 15. My first set of unrealistic dreams arrived at precisely the same time.

It was 1972, and platform shoes, patch-work suede boots and patent leather loafers were all the rage. But the 1940s fashions were also having a comeback. Since my only income was a regular baby-sitting job that paid 50 cents an hour, I became an early and adept Salvation Army shopper.

Not to brag, but I was all about retro before "retro" was cool.

The navy blue heels I bought could have been worn by the Andrews Sisters when they sang "Boogie Woogie Bugle Boy" in 1941. But they also could have been worn by Bette Midler singing the same song when it became a hit on the B-side of her single "Delta Dawn."

I was ready to boogie. I was ready to prance. I was ready to dance.

Only, because the \$1.50 shoes were at least one size too small, I could barely move in them. Forced to walk like one of those awkward animals with tiny hooves — a mouse deer, for example, or a fainting goat — I did not exactly move with a groove. I leaned against the walls for support and used both hands on the banister.

All of a sudden, I became quiet and dainty in my movements. It wasn't a personality transformation, like where the tomboy shakes out her ponytail and becomes all feminine. I was silent and



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self-contained because I was in misery and in pain, but too proud to confess it. And that's when a cute boy asked me out.

The poor soul thought he was asking out a demure little creature. I, equally poor soul, tried to become one. The romance didn't last long; personality, like murder, will out. I wanted to be shy, sweet and unassuming, but I couldn't contain my real self any more than those shoes could contain my real feet.

Small scars from both experiences have lasted until today.

But at least I learned that those who refuse to acknowledge the deleterious effects of inappropriate footwear and impracticable hopes remain in a condition of chronic, yet avoidable, distress.

Some of my brighter friends learned these lessons earlier. Former colleague Patricia Juliana Smith learned from her mother, "Who had lived through periods of terrible poverty and thus was inclined to pinch pennies (and who) told me to allow myself to pay full price for two things: shoes and perfume. Cheap shoes and cheap perfume do a woman no good."

J. Barrett Wolf, a friend from high school who accompanied me on those thrift shop outings, draws his footwear wisdom from author Terry Pratchett. Pratchett's character, Samuel Vines, has a "Boots theory of socioeconomic unfairness" that goes as follows: "A man who

could afford fifty dollars had a pair of boots that'd still be keeping his feet dry in ten years' time, while the poor man who could only afford cheap boots would have spent a hundred dollars on boots in the same time and would still have wet feet."

Vines concludes that the rich stay rich because, in the long run, they spend less money.

Cheap shoes, even if they're pretty, and dreams that confine you, even if they're fashionable, will wear you out, wear you down and make you miserable if they aren't a good fit.

In other words, if the shoe doesn't fit, don't wear it.

It's hard, when we're given images of life on easy street, to imagine walking a mile in the shoes of those who live in an apparently glittering, easy-gliding world where stepping comfortably and gracefully is the norm. But much of the world is roughshod, and it's better to toughen up than to kid yourself into believing you're protected, supported and on solid ground even when you're not.

I wear flat shoes with sturdy insoles these days. They're expensive, but they aren't glamorous and they don't dazzle. My ambitions are much the same: realistic, sensible and grounded. They might not make me seem alluring but they keep a smile on my face and, with care, they'll last for years.

Gina Barreca is a board of trustees distinguished professor of English literature at University of Connecticut and the author of 10 books. She can be reached at www.ginabarreca.com.

Sessions' resignation puts nation on cusp of emergency

Editorial from The New York Daily News:

A day after voters left no doubt they want a check on his authority, President Donald Trump rid himself of a good soldier whose only sin was understanding the U.S. Department of Justice must enforce the law without fear or favor, rather than doing the bidding of the man sitting in the Oval Office.

The replacement of Jeff Sessions with Trump loyalist Matthew Whitaker, who has parroted the president in calling Robert Mueller's special counsel investigation a "witch

hunt" and speculated about how an AG might effectively kill the probe by starving it of funds, brings the country to the cusp of an emergency.

Should Mueller's investigation now be suffocated in order to protect the president, the former FBI director must be prepared to hand all his files to uncompromised prosecutors, or to House and Senate investigators and the press.

Installed without Senate advise-and-consent, Whitaker, who inherits oversight of Mueller's investigation from Deputy Attorney General Rod Rosenstein, has stated that "The

Trump Organization's business dealings are plainly not within the scope of the investigation, nor should they be." With Trump's wink and nod, if not explicit directions, he seems ready to use this as a rationale to end the probe.

There is absolutely no evidence that Mueller has strayed beyond his brief. He has thus far run an efficient, productive investigation, winning plea deals of or filing indictments against 35 individuals.

The letter authorizing the special counsel

investigation charges him to pursue "any links and/or coordination between the Russian government and individuals associated with the (Trump) campaign," "any matters that arose or may arise directly from the investigation" and "any other matters within the scope of" federal law pertaining to obstruction of justice and related crimes.

Trump, obviously petrified of an independent law enforcer going where the evidence leads, is on the verge of obstructing justice in broad daylight. Dare he take the plunge?

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Abell, Arvid Andersen and Adam Nilsson.
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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 Durflinger, 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.

