

# Opinion

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## EDITORIAL

# Hunter doesn't get a fair shot

Turns out that legally killing “exotic” animals in Africa — exotic only from an America-centric perspective, of course — can disqualify a person from serving on Oregon’s Fish and Wildlife Commission.

You might not even get a chance to lay out your credentials for the Oregon Senate Rules Committee.

Oregon’s seven-member Fish and Wildlife Commission, you will not be surprised to learn, has no authority over managing wildlife in Africa. Indeed the Commission’s responsibility doesn’t extend beyond Oregon’s borders.

But none of this seems to have mattered in the case of James Nash, a 32-year-old former Marine tank commander from Enterprise who was twice wounded in Afghanistan.

Oregon Gov. Kate Brown nominated Nash to serve on the Fish and Wildlife Commission. Nash, who is a cattle rancher, has worked to restore salmon and steelhead habitat in the Wallowa River, and to maintain his rangeland in a healthy condition.

But he also once killed a hippopotamus.

And a crocodile.

When photos from Nash’s Instagram account were publicized recently, showing him posing with those two animals during a trip to Africa several years ago that was a reward for his military service, the outrage, predictably in what seems to be an era defined by emotion rather than sober consideration, was immediate.

Environmental groups, incensed not only by Nash’s hunting exploits but also by his connections to the Oregon Cattlemen’s Association, a group that advocates for killing wolves that attack livestock in the state, lambasted Brown for nominating Nash.

When the Senate Rules Committee on Monday posted its agenda for confirming nominees for the Fish and Wildlife Commission today, Nash’s name was absent.

The message here is that if you legally hunt and kill animals, even halfway around the globe, you had better not take any photos.

Because your actual beliefs about managing wildlife, however reasonable and thoughtful they might be, won’t matter. It’s so much simpler, and satisfying, to judge a person based on a few photos rather than actually listen to him. With a photo you simply react. No thinking required.

It’s one thing that the public takes this superficial approach on social media.

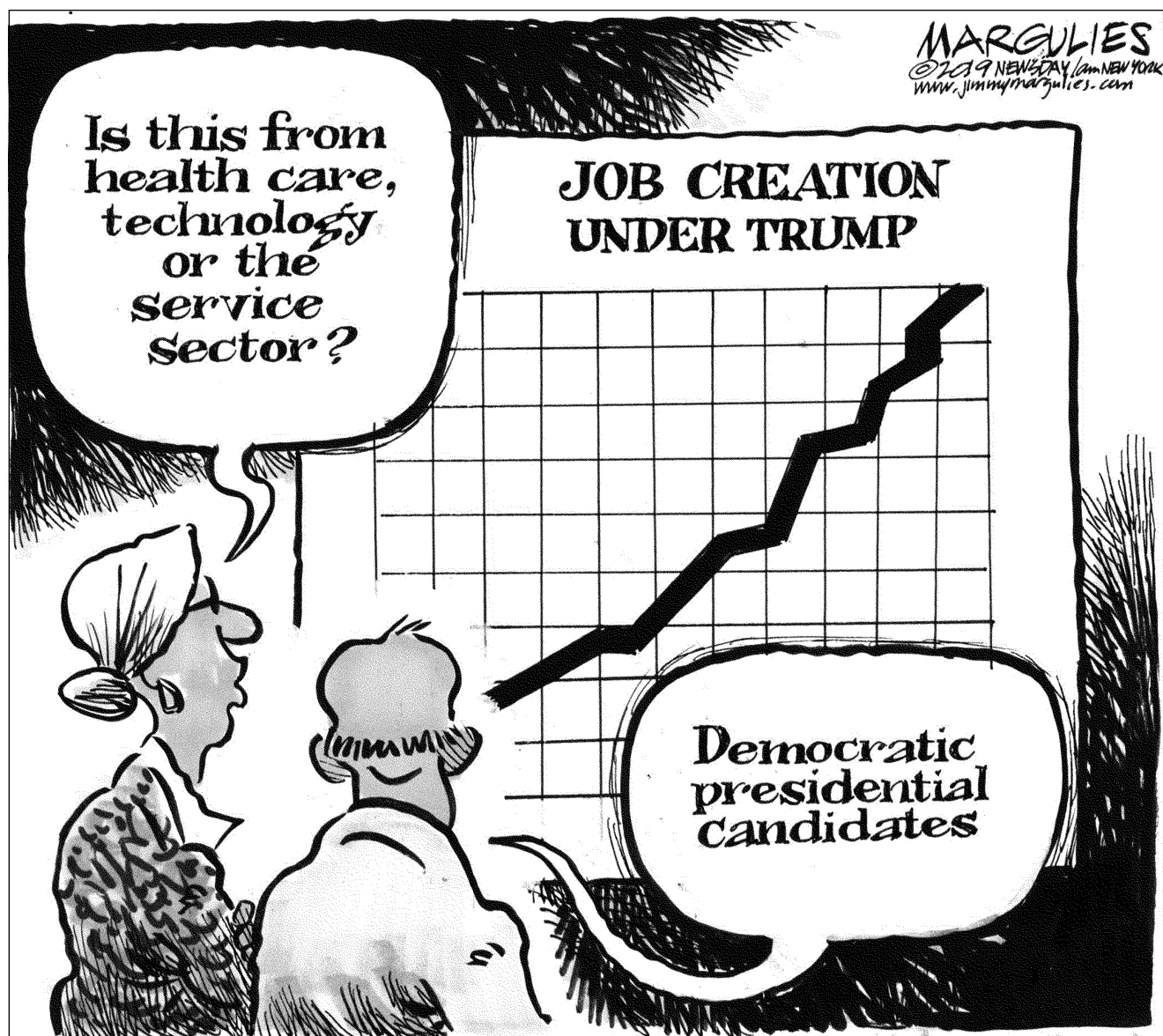
But the Senate Rules Committee should have shown at least a modicum of respect for Brown’s nomination of Nash, and afforded him a chance to defend his credentials.

The senators might have learned something about Nash’s positions on fish and wildlife management that convinced them he would be a good addition to the Commission.

They also might have learned what Bill Monroe, outdoors writer for The Oregonian, did when he talked to Nash for a column — that the hippo Nash shot surprised his group when they were hunting for a different species, and that villagers asked him to kill the crocodile because it had killed people.

Sadly they seemed content to rely on photos, which in these case aren’t worth 10 words, much less a thousand.

— Jayson Jacoby, Baker City Herald editor



# Biden: Too pro-American?

Joe Biden’s entry into the race for the Democratic presidential nomination has opened up a division in the party, and it’s not just about the candidates’ demographic characteristics or policy records. It’s about their view of our country.

Biden’s left-wing critics think he’s soft on the banks and on accused sexual harassers. But they also think he’s soft on America itself.

In his announcement video, the former vice president presented Donald Trump as a threat to American principles. Biden acknowledged that “we haven’t always lived up to these ideals,” but warned that they would be lost forever if Trump is re-elected.

If Trump loses in 2020, on the other hand, history will regard his single term as “an aberrant moment in time.” Biden declares, “Everything that has made America America is at stake.”

The problem with this message, according to some progressives, isn’t its hysteria about Trump. It’s its complacency about America. “Biden’s announcement seems premised on the idea that we need to revert to the world we had before Trump, rather than dramatically rethink the world that produced him,” Dara Kass complained in Slate.

Josh Voorhees, also in Slate, wrote that “Biden is telling many Americans who oppose Trump, particularly white ones, what they want to hear,” namely that Trump is “a tumor that can be

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surgically excised from the body politic, and not a symptom of an underlying disease that’s been present since the nation’s birth.”

Peter Beinart concurred in the Atlantic, writing that Biden “offers a deeply unconvincing historical narrative in which Trump lands upon the American political scene from outer space.” He drew a contrast to Biden’s rival Pete Buttigieg, who in his own announcement speech referred to America’s past as “a bygone era that was never as great as advertised to begin with.”

Biden is getting a bad rap here. He did not deny that what he condemns in Trump’s presidency has antecedents in American history, even if he did not make that point.

No candidate should be expected to tease out these fraught and complicated questions in a three-and-a-half-minute video. If he was telling the voters whom he is courting what they want to hear, that is just another way of describing campaigning in a democratic election.

Previous generations of liberals have achieved great things in part by sounding more like Biden than like his critics. Martin Luther King Jr.’s “I Have a Dream” speech was, of course, incomparably better than Biden’s comments, but it too lauded American ideals and urged

us to live up to them. Would King have been as successful if he had done more scourging?

A few days after registering his disapproval of Biden’s remarks, Voorhees wrote that Biden was showing “surprising strength” in the polls. One reason his strength has been surprising is that many commentators spend so much time immersed in the online left that they overestimate its size.

Opposition to Trump is immensely widespread. The view that his election was an indictment of everyone who voted for him and of the country’s basic character is rather less so.

It is not even clear that Biden, by avoiding the rhetoric of national sinfulness, is making a play especially for white voters. As Tom Edsall has written, “white liberals are well to the left of the black electorate on some racial issues.” The former vice president is doing better among nonwhites than among whites.

There are plenty of reasons to oppose Biden, from his spotty record on due process to his bad judgment on foreign policy. But he’s not going to pay a price for being too rosy-eyed about America, and he shouldn’t.

*Ramesh Ponnuru is a Bloomberg Opinion columnist. He is a senior editor at National Review, visiting fellow at the American Enterprise Institute and contributor to CBS News.*

## GUEST EDITORIAL

**Editorial from The New York Daily News:**

In this 28th month governed by a man of low character who disrespects the rule of law while lying, hiding conflicts of interest, promoting his private business, dividing the country and insulting a long list of the nation’s best values, we must acknowledge: For 27 months, the American job creation engine has performed well.

This solid economy is Donald Trump’s economy.

Trump, who as a private citizen cast cheap doubt on Labor Department numbers that told the story of an economy healing under Barack Obama, can now proudly point to an official

unemployment rate of 3.6 percent, the lowest level since December 1969.

With joblessness so low, with trade policies so counterproductive, it is a real achievement that the economy continues to add new jobs: In April, businesses overall added 263,000 new positions.

Have we, under Trump’s tax and trade policies, suddenly entered a whole new economic world? Hardly. Wages for the average American are still growing too slowly. And looking at mid-April-to-mid-April job production totals, 2018-19’s healthy job-creation total is below those of 2014-15 and 2016-17, when Trump considered the economy in ruins.

Also notable is that Trump’s nostal-

gic promise to put people back to work building things has not borne fruit because, even as manufacturing thrives, automation means fewer domestic workers are required.

The economy’s biggest hole remains a lack of quality job opportunities for less educated would-be workers who have historically filled these roles, many of whom make up the 27 percent of employable people still on the sidelines of the labor market.

A major push to rebuild American infrastructure would help them, while fixing transit, energy, water and other systems in urgent need of repair.

Trump and Democrats must find a way forward.

## 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](http://www.whitehouse.gov/contact).

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**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, Lynette Perry, Arvid Andersen, Ken Gross and Doni Bruland.

**Baker City administration:** 541-523-6541. Fred Warner Jr., city manager; Dustin Newman, police chief; John Clark, fire 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; Stefanie Kirby, 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. Council Chambers, Baker City Hall, 1655 First St.; Andrew Bryan, Kevin Cassidy, Chris Hawkins, Katie Lamb and Julie Huntington.