

# Opinion

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## EDITORIAL

# When Salem's right not to listen

Oregon legislators, when they're considering a bill, have an obligation to listen to supporters and opponents.

But there are limits to this obligation.

And one of those limits was reached Wednesday when the House Education Committee had a hearing on Senate Bill 664, which would require Oregon schools to teach students about the Holocaust.

The hearing was basically a formality for the bill, which easily passed the Senate in March and is all but certain to become law. The House Education Committee voted 9-0 to forward the bill for a vote in the full House.

After hearing from supporters, including a couple who both survived the Holocaust as children, the Committee opened testimony to a few people who opposed the bill.

Their opposition wasn't the problem.

It was their specious attempt to deny the fundamental truth of one of history's most infamous, and thoroughly documented, genocides.

The Oregonian reported that Rep. Margaret Doherty, a Democrat from Tigard who chairs the Education Committee, refused to allow Thomas Madison of Salem to read the written comments he submitted. Doherty told Madison to "very, very briefly summarize what your testimony is."

Madison complained that he should be allowed to counter "the exaggerations" of the bill's supporters.

"This is public testimony, a place where people come to discuss issues left and right," Madison said. "And you have stopped me from doing so."

Doherty responded: "Yes, I have."

And she was right to do so.

In his written comments Madison claims that a relatively small number of Jews died in Nazi concentration camps, and mostly from disease and starvation.

This, of course, is patently false.

Another opponent, Mark DeCoursey of Salem, accused legislators of "cherry-picking the lessons from the past to satisfy one political group or one small religious group."

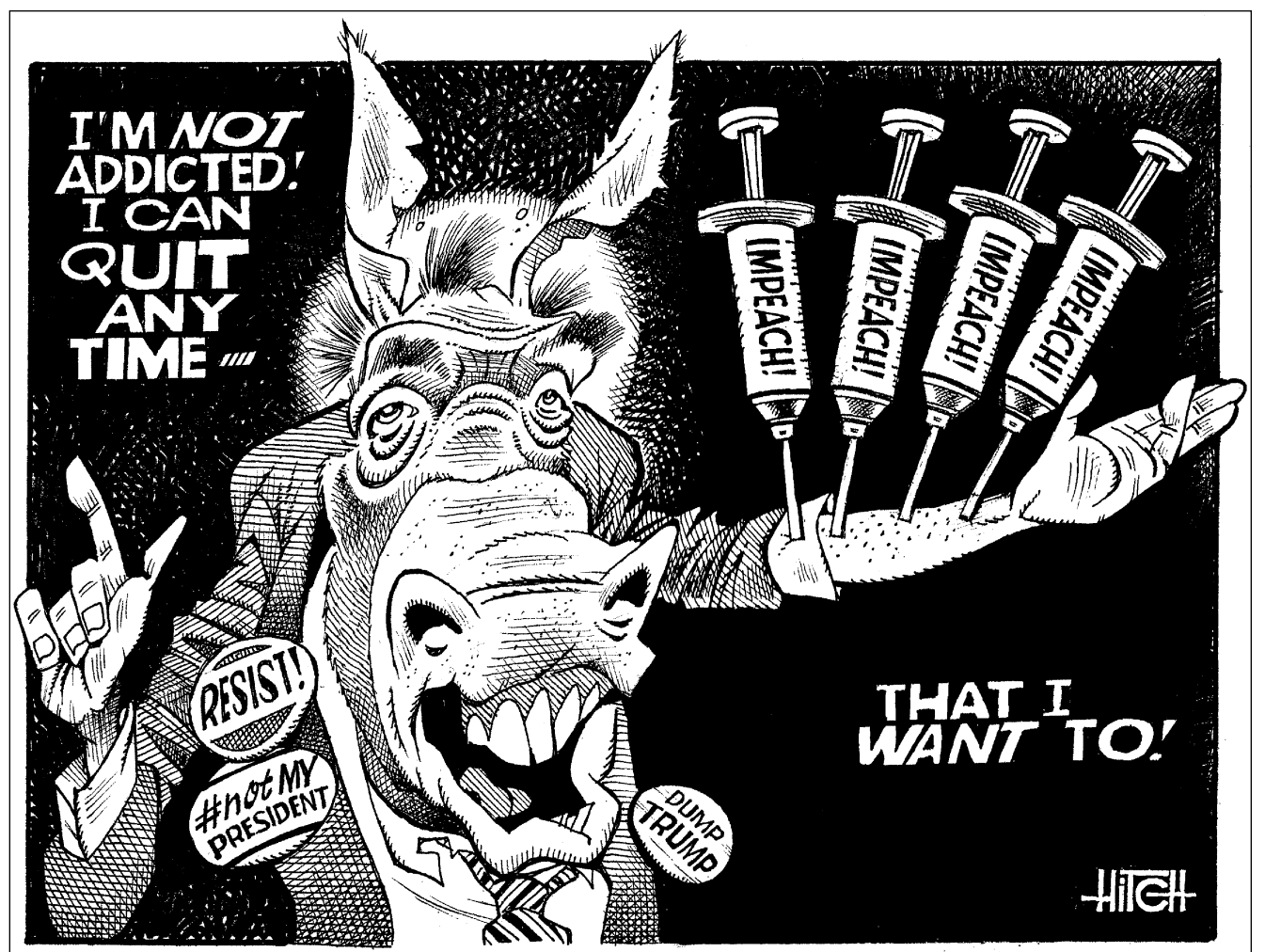
This sort of worthless drivel does nothing but degrade the legislative process.

DeCoursey, with his "cherry-picking" nonsense, seems to be implying that there are multiple episodes comparable to the Holocaust in modern history, and that Oregon lawmakers, for political reasons, chose it alone. This claim is as demonstrably wrong as Madison's contention that the scale of the Nazis' murderous deeds is "exaggerated."

Lawmakers should listen to testimony from citizens who might object to the bill for any number of legitimate reasons based on priorities of Oregon's public schools.

But they needn't give time to people who spread blatant lies.

— Jayson Jacoby, Baker City Herald editor



# Separating sports and politics

I go to Newark a lot for work and often pass by the Prudential Center where there is a big statue of Martin Brodeur, legendary star of the Jersey Devils hockey team. Being a lifelong Flyers fan, I would never miss the opportunity to stick my tongue out, or do any of those juvenile things that make life enjoyable at 57.

Recently, though, I made a point of taking my picture in front of Brodeur's statue and then put it on Facebook with the caption: "My new team #BringBackKate." Other than delighting my dear friend Arlette who has sung the national anthem at their home game for years, I know this had little impact in the ongoing conversation around the Flyers removal of singer Kate Smith's statue after concerns about some of her lyrics. But it made me feel good, and was an indication of how I've evolved from a girl who loved her sports teams with unquestioning devotion. Because of the Kate Smith debacle, I no longer support the Flyers.

I've also stopped supporting the Sixers, whose co-owner Michael Rubin has befriended rapper Meek Mill. Rubin and Mill have set out to reform the criminal justice system in Philadelphia. I don't deny that it needs reforming.

But Mill isn't some random kid who was crushed by a cruel system. He was convicted of drug and weapons charges, and then proceeded to violate probation

## CHRISTINE M. FLOWERS

regularly, over a period of 10 years.

As recently as a few weeks ago, Rubin used social media to attack Judge Genece Brinkley — the judge who sentenced Mill to prison — because she wouldn't allow Mill to attend a Sixers playoff game in Toronto. He called her "obsessed" with Mill. The only obsession I saw was on the part of Rubin and Mill, who think that rules should be bent for artists with felony convictions.

And given the way that the Flyers played this year, it's no surprise I don't have to avoid their playoff run. Which means I'm essentially down to two teams, and if Malcolm Jenkins keeps loving on Meek Mill the way he has in the past and if Jeffrey Lurie doesn't get them to stop playing his "Dreams and Nightmares" in which every other word is bleepable, I might have to reconsider my love affair with the Eagles. (Even though it might kill me.)

But boy do I miss the days when I didn't know what political party my favorite players belonged to, or whether they liked the current occupant of the White House, or their sexual orientation, or their immigration status, or any of the other things that have nothing

whatsoever to do with the beauty of the respective games.

Jackie Robinson was heroic. So was Jesse Owens. And Althea Gibson. And Arthur Ashe. And Martina Navratilova. But the difference between those athletes and the current crop of social justice warriors/players is that the heroes from the past broke social barriers and worked toward a more perfect justice by being the best they could be in their fields. They did it with courage and dignity — not with outrage, accusation, and obscene lyrics.

A week or so ago, Gino Marchetti died. When I was born in Baltimore in 1961, he was a football god, leading the Colts to championships. He later became known as the guy who gave us the Gino Giant burger, a fond memory from my Logan childhood. It may seem trite, but I miss the days when the most controversial thing about a player was that he peddled cholesterol-filled meat products.

So hard as it is, I'm learning to love the Devils. I haven't settled on a basketball team yet, and my fingers are still crossed about the Birds.

And God bless the Phillies. Now can we get Pete Rose in the Hall of Fame?

*Christine M. Flowers is a lawyer and columnist for the Philadelphia Daily News. Readers may send her email at cflowers1961@gmail.com.*

## GUEST EDITORIAL

### Editorial from The (Bend) Bulletin:

When an Oregon governor issues a pardon, it doesn't mean a crime did not occur. It doesn't mean a victim did not suffer. It doesn't mean a criminal was never arrested, tried and convicted.

Senate Bill 388 would require that the official criminal records be hidden after a pardon, as if the crime did not occur. That's wrong. The state should not hide from the public official records of crimes.

Amendments have been introduced to the bill to give a crime victim more say in the pardon process. That's an improvement, though, at least according to testimony in the Legislature, that is already how the process works in practice.

Another proposed amendment declares that this bill is an emergency and for some reason needs to go into effect

immediately. A carjacking is an emergency. This bill is not.

Oregon governors do not issue many pardons. They also can't do it in secret. An attorney for Gov. Kate Brown said she has issued eight pardons in her time in office. Gov. John Kitzhaber issued four pardons in 12 years. Gov. Ted Kulongoski issued 21 pardons in eight years.

SB 388 grew from the experience of Dondrae "Choo" Fair. He became active in a gang and carried out a carjacking in 1992. He was 19. He pleaded guilty to robbery in the first degree, unauthorized use of a motor vehicle and theft in the first degree. He served a prison sentence and went back to gang life. After he was shot in 2000, he turned his life around. He became a well-respected counselor for people getting out of prison.

His conviction later caused him a problem when he had to undergo a

background check for work. He sought a pardon. Multnomah County District Attorney Rod Underhill, whose office prosecuted him, supported his pardon. Gov. Brown granted it in 2018. Fair's criminal record, though, did not automatically vanish. Fair wanted it gone and — to be clear — he was able to get it sealed. Try to look up his record today in the state database and the crimes are not there.

The concept of SB 388 goes further than what happened in his case. It says when a pardon is issued the records would be automatically sealed. The public should be denied normal access to accurate information about crimes in Oregon. But crime victims are not uncarjacked or unassaulted. It's never OK to conceal the public record of crimes. The bill should fail.

## 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).

**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](http://www.governor.oregon.gov).

**Oregon State Treasurer Tobias Read:** [oregon.treasurer@ost.state.or.us](mailto: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](http://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, 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 Durflinger, 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.