

OUR VIEW

Public has right to see lottery contract

Two things that don't go great together are: secrecy and the government losing money.

That bad combo is right where the Oregon Lottery is now. The lottery's new mobile sports betting may or may not be your thing. But if the state is going to have sports betting, why on earth should the contract with the state's sports betting operator be secret?

Parts of it are.

And those are the parts that detail how much the state lottery is paying contractor SBTech and other costs to the lottery. SBTech argues that disclosing the information would reveal "confidential and proprietary trade secrets and pricing systems that belong to SBTech." It even sued to stop release of that information.

Yes. OK. That's SBTech's right. This is public money we are talking about, though. Contractors don't get to write their own rules when it comes to spending public money. The public has a right to know how it is being spent and that means the details of the contract.

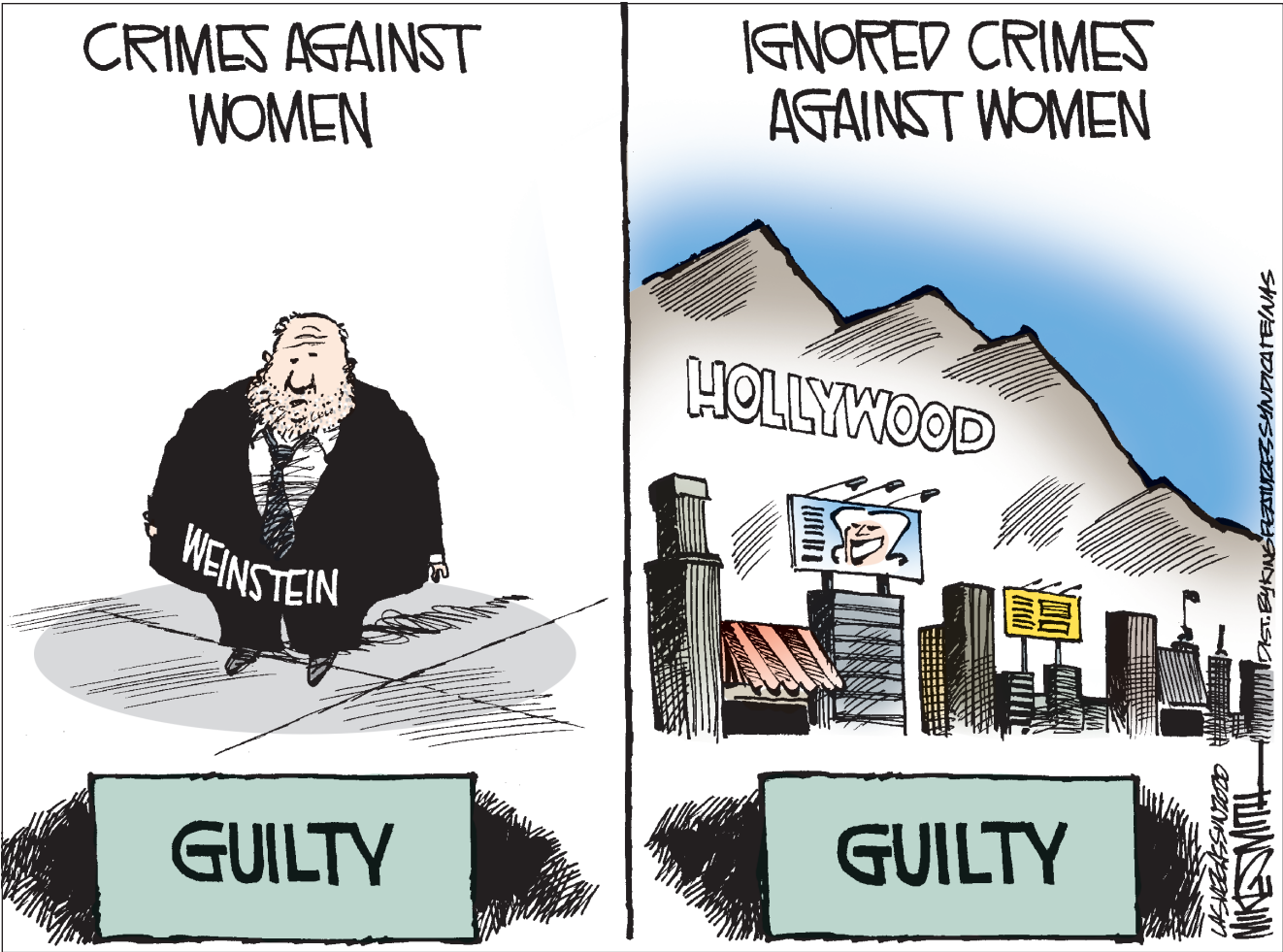
The Oregon Lottery predicted the new sports betting would be bringing in the revenue, as Willamette Week has reported. And in the future, it might. Lottery projections were for \$6.3 million in year one, almost \$14 million in year two and then more than \$23 million in year three.

Those were just projections and projections in uncharted territory are difficult. In any case, the reality is the lottery is predicting a loss of \$5.3 million for the first nine months of fiscal year 2020. Upfront investments were required and it could also be related to "black market capture rate, lack of NCAA wagering, tax withholding, intrastate competition, margin and product technical issues," according to the Willamette Week article.

Lottery officials have been seeking a change from the Legislature to allow people to bet on college sports, as well.

When the details of how the public's money is being spent is clear, then there can be a discussion of adding college sports. Not before.

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Your views

Government must act boldly on global warming, wealth inequality

There are two, overarching, structural problems facing the United States (and the rest of the world as well), neither of which receive enough attention: global warming and widespread poverty/inequality of wealth.

It's time for our government to do its job.

We must intensely question and firmly reject arguments that global warming is a "hoax" or that our economy is "booming." The costs of human suffering and the environmental damage are too great to stand for that.

Instead, we need bold action.

An adequate response to the immediate threat of global warming would include a refundable carbon tax. Such a tax was advocated last year by 45 top economists from across the political

spectrum, including numerous Nobel laureates in economics, plus Alan Greenspan, Ben Bernanke and Janet Yellen, who are former chairs of the Federal Reserve.

Their proposal includes a substantial yearly rebate of about \$2,000 per family, so many of us could come out ahead financially, depending on our carbon footprint, while we make energy choices that more closely reflect the total cost of burning fossil fuels.

Additionally, we must counter widespread and growing poverty among over half of our people with substantial federal income subsidies. These subsidies would actualize Andrew Yang's proposed Universal Basic Income of \$1,000 per month for every person over 18.

This simple, but powerful, answer would contravene 45 years of stagnant wages, as computers/automation and globalization have hamstrung the

wage-bargaining power of U.S. workers, while giving record profits and soaring stock values to the wealthy.

Many working families cannot make ends meet, and they find saving for the future very difficult. For example, in Baker City recently, 52 homes were scheduled to have their water cut off for over 60 days past due, and 10 were turned off until their past-due balances are paid.

The U.S. Constitution directs our government to "promote the general Welfare, and secure the Blessings of Liberty to ourselves and our Posterity."

Today more than ever, we must join together, debate the issues with opened minds, and demand that our government take broad, sweeping action against these major challenges that confront us.

Marshall McComb
Baker City

OUR VIEWS

Coronavirus deserves robust response

Editorial from The New York Daily News:

Speaking Tuesday about the exploding COVID-19 virus, the head of the Centers for Disease Control's National Center for Immunization and Respiratory Diseases said, "As more and more countries experience community spread, successful containment at our borders becomes harder and harder," adding that Americans should prepare for "significant disruption."

Speaking Tuesday about the same virus, President Trump told journalists in India that the bug is "very well under control in our country" and "is going to go away."

Forgive us for believing the sober warning of Dr. Nancy Messonnier, whose public health career began in 1995, over the dismissive insouciance of a man who peddled irresponsible fears and bad advice about Ebola in 2014 and who now seems focused on calming shaken stock markets.

The Trump administration owes America a tight, coordinated response, which is not what they're delivering at this stage.

Before a congressional committee Tuesday, Acting DHS Secretary Chad Wolf didn't have up-to-date information on how many cases of the virus there were inside the United States.

He didn't know exactly how the bug is transmitted. Asked how the estimated mortality rate for this coronavirus, estimated at 2%, compares to that of influenza, Wolf said the two rates were about the same. In fact, COVID-19 appears to be about 20 times more lethal.

None of this inspires confidence. Nor does a paltry \$1.25 billion request in emergency funds to ramp up the federal response, or the fact that Trump nixed the National Security Council position dedicated to global health security.

If the U.S. dodges this viral bullet, as we pray it will, it won't be the result of Team Trump's foresight and agility.

Bugged by the sight of the winter mosquito

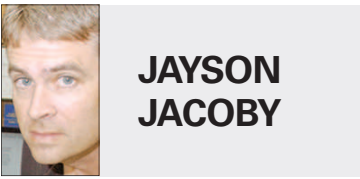
My wife said she saw a mosquito on her windshield the second week of February.

I reacted to this revelation much as I might if a doctor told me during a routine exam that he had spied in one of my kidneys an object that looked an awful lot like a golf ball, lacking only the Titleist logo and the dimples.

Lisa knows mosquitoes, so I could hardly toss aside her story as misidentification, much as I would have liked to.

When you've spent as much time as we have swatting wildly at the bloodsuckers, in our own backyard and in wilderness camps among other places, you tend to fix in your memory their characteristics from those rare, but savagely satisfying, occasions when you bring one down more or less intact.

(The bug's carcass, often as not, plastered in a smear of your own blood. But when it comes to mosquitoes even the Pyrrhic victories are worth savoring.)



JAYSON JACOBY

Lisa said the mosquito didn't seem especially lively, but that's slight consolation at best.

I don't want mosquitoes in mid-winter to be anything except dead.

The notion that skeeters might lie in a state of dormancy through the long winter troubles me greatly.

We used to call Mount St. Helens dormant, too, and look how that turned out.

Among the reasons I cherish Baker County's climate, with its four distinct seasons and its broiling and frigid extremes, is the certainty that, come autumn, temperatures will plunge to levels generally fatal to insectile pests.

Few pleasures can compete with the ability to sit before a campfire, entranced by the flickering flames,

and not be driven to the brink of insanity by the keening wail of mosquitoes running constant sorties around my ears.

Or to mow the grass and not have to stop half a dozen times to whack at the back of my leg or neck.

(These blows falling, of course, only after I've felt the nip, which means the bug has already slobbered its coagulating spit into my system and the itching will soon commence regardless of whether I smash it or, more likely, it evades. Mosquitoes, I'm convinced, can deal with G-forces that would leave a Top Gun pilot reeling.)

It's not as though I'm utterly naive regarding the life cycles of mosquitoes.

I have in the course of my work talked occasionally with professional mosquito-killers, and they have confirmed the terrible truth that certain species can survive even our harsh winters by sheltering in garages or other comparatively

balmy places.

Now it happens that I don't own a garage. Or lease one, come to that.

Most generally this is something I lament, since the absence of a garage requires that I scrape snow from windshields in one season and risk third-degree burns in another when I touch the steering wheel and gearshift lever.

But I derive a certain satisfaction from knowing that at least I'm not giving succor to snowbound mosquitoes even as I'm keeping my rigs out of the weather.

(Although I'm certain that if I did build a garage it would in short order attract, as a magnet does iron filings, so many items that I would end up parking outside, leaving my fingers just as likely to need skin grafts as they were before.)

The mosquito that Lisa saw might well have been an intruder, of course. There are many garages nearby, and mosquitoes, as my informed sources have also told me, can cover considerable ground,

especially with the aid of a tailwind.

(Lest you needed another reason to despise the face-numbing gusts of winter.)

Yet as much as I abhor the thought of mosquitoes hunkering in manmade structures, waiting for the turn of the season, Lisa's sighting is worse still.

I wasn't even there but I still take the appearance of that single insect as a personal affront — a blatant show of buggy bravado.

It's one thing for mosquitoes to hide out all winter.

It's quite another when one has the cheek to land on a windshield, basking in the reflected warmth and showing off.

Mosquitoes lack fingers, of course.

But I imagine that proboscis could mimic a certain human gesture involving the extension of one appendage.

Jayson Jacoby is editor of the Baker City Herald