

## EDITORIAL

Legislating  
what can  
(or should)  
be flushed

That the Oregon Legislature is devoting not only time, but actual legislation, to the issue of disposable wipes might seem an especially noxious example of lawmakers meddling in matters beyond their bailiwick.

The situation can also inspire the sort of scatological humor that appeals to pre-teen boys.

But in this case lawmakers had a good reason for delving into the topic.

It seems likely, at any rate, that most people would consider keeping sewer pipes flowing freely a good reason.

Certainly anybody who has been on the wrong end of a plugged pipe would agree.

On June 8, Gov. Kate Brown signed into law House Bill 2344. Her signature made Oregon the second state — following Washington, in 2020 — to require packages of disposable wipes to include a “do not flush” label.

The problem, as Baker City officials have discovered over the past several years, is that baby wipes and other similar products marketed as “flushable” don’t really qualify as such.

Although these products generally will swirl down the toilet without clogging it, they can, in volume, block sewer pipes. Those products don’t deteriorate as rapidly as toilet paper so they can accumulate in pipes.

Several times the Baker City Public Works Department, in responding to reports of sewer problems, has found masses of flushable wipes (and other debris that also got stuck) in a pipe.

The National Association of Clean Water Agencies (which is preferable, surely, to associations of dirty water agencies) estimated in a 2020 report that clogs caused by these products boost operational costs by \$440 million per year nationally.

The Oregon bill was a priority for the League of Oregon Cities, the Oregon Association of Clean Water Agencies and the Special Districts Association of Oregon.

The potential benefit from Oregon’s new labeling law is hardly limited, however, to cities and other government agencies responsible for sewer pipes.

Michelle Owen, Baker City’s public works director, said in an interview last year that flushable wipes actually are more likely to block the smaller-diameter lateral lines that connect homes to the city’s larger pipes.

And homeowners, not the city, are responsible for unclogging those lateral lines.

In other words, if you flush a lot of those wipes, you’re more apt to cause trouble for yourself than for the city.

And although the new law doesn’t prohibit people from continuing to flush those products — monetary fines and other potential punishments are limited to those that make, or sell, such products without labels — at least you’ll be warned in advance of the possible messy consequences.

— Jayson Jacoby, Baker City Herald editor



## Biden and the Mexico border

By Jay Ambrose

Joe Biden was elected president and soon enough reversed Donald Trump’s reduction of illegal southern border crossings to the point that we now have the highest influx in 20 years. The human suffering has been excruciating and the publicity has been poisonous, and so Biden walked away from the problem, handing it to Vice President Kamala Harris, who almost disappeared and has since demonstrated why that was a good idea.

She finally ended up in Guatemala, a primary source of young people risking their lives in tortuous, thug-infested, sometimes deadly desert treks to the United States. Sounding like the audacious Trump himself, Harris said, “Cut it out. Don’t come north anymore. We are not going to let you in.” Here are thoughts repulsive to some and a delight to others, even if insufficiently backed up with action to keep many out.

Along with smugglers abetting thousands of American drug deaths, illegal immigrants are rushing the border in record numbers even as TV reporters almost seem more on hand to greet them than border agents. One person less in sight than winter snow has been Harris, who didn’t seem to understand when an interviewer asked why she had not gone to the border. She replied with an incomprehensible joke about not going to Europe either. Biden practically invited the immigrants when, among other moves,

he freed refugees to wander in America without hearings.

One of Trump’s surge solutions was to immediately move asylum seekers back to Mexico until, in a number of years, judges could apply the law to their eligibility. They seem to have endured grave hurt, but after Biden began undoing the Trump strategy, Harris is saying to refugees “you will be turned back” with Mexico as the only landing place.

Harris is looking at changing the refugee law so it would make things easier for them to sign up in the places they came from. In my view, that’s good if it happens. Also needed are far more border guards, letting ICE agents be more proactive and even building some technologically alert walls of a kind that have worked in Israel. Listen to a besieged Texas sheriff and you will get a much longer list, and, yes, costs are involved.

But Harris said over and over again that what she really wanted was to get to the “root cause” of the desert treks: living conditions horrible enough for parents to further enrich gangsters guiding their children to northern opportunity.

To make things better, Harris said, the United States would hand out \$4 billion over the coming years to countries in Central America. We will thereby risk the foreign aid curse of enhancing the luxuries of the powerful elite. Even if the moolah reaches the

poor, that’s not enough. It is the honest rule of law that enables a productive economy, and, yes, Harris is demanding reform in a nation that needs it, starting with a corrupt judicial system that will unlikely bend to the lost cause of nation-building that the United States tried for to little noticeable avail.

Past policies of giving money to Latin American countries did not work, whereas Trump’s threats of tariffs did, getting Mexico to use armed troops to stop immigrant caravans from heading to the United States.

A Gallup poll shows 158 million people around the world, including 40 million in Latin America, would like to come here. A fraction of that could destroy us, of course, and what we need is enforced immigration rules that serve both the immigrants and our society, such as putting emphasis on merit in skills and education in legal admissions. That does not rule out the poor; there are lots of accomplished people in desperate circumstances and unskilled people would not be eliminated. We should look at the whole world, be fair to all and recognize that especially at a point of Americans not replacing themselves anymore, we can absolutely benefit.

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## Your views

## Fly the America flag and show your pride

Why the American flag, what does it do and what does it stand for? It flies and waves with the wind as it has in all the battles we engaged in for over 250 years. Though unofficial, red is symbolic of the blood of those who have given their lives to defend and protect the great nation from all of her enemies, both foreign and domestic. White represents purity, innocence and hope. Blue is for vigilance, perseverance and justice.

But in our hearts (and our minds) our flag stands for many things, as evident in the Declaration of Independence where all men are created equal by God, with rights to life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness. We also have the right of the people to alter or abolish any form of government that

becomes destructive, and the right to bear arms. Bear arms for what? To protect family and country.

Did you hear that and did you understand that deep inside your soul and spirit? There are no other words that should be used to take away that right. I have no belief in either party. Although I have been a Republican all my life and I am 78 years old, I served and have seen a lot. These two parties get on nationwide TV and talk about what is wrong with the other party. The blame game, over and over and over again, and what is the result? Nothing but nothing. Nothing but gibberish and turkey gobble. Meanwhile, our borders are wide open and we are being lied to about it. Our country is being taken over by socialist laws. Back to high gas prices. High taxes. Food prices. Being told by government how to live. A total

mindset. Why is this happening? Voting without any perception of what is evil and what is good. Fraudulent elections. Read Romans 1:23 through 32.

Let’s show this country and world that people in Baker City, Oregon, stand by troops and Constitution and flag and our creator, our father, God almighty. Forever. Please buy a flag. Fly it and all its blessings on the front of your house and let this nation hear from the people in Baker City that we stand as one nation under God with liberty and justice for all. Enough is enough. Let our nation fly the flag on every house and show the world that the sleeping giant is awake and well. Fly the flag 24 hours a day and replace it as it gets worn.

God bless America and Baker City.  
**Gary W. Robinson**  
Baker City

## OTHER VIEWS

## Editorial from Pittsburgh Post-Gazette:

With each passing year, the events of the Sept. 11, 2001, attack fade a bit more from public memory.

That fateful day may be stamped forever in the minds of those who were alive to witness it, but more than 70 million Americans have been born in the intervening decades.

Education about 9/11 has been uneven at best, and one 2019 survey of teachers noted a distressing upward trend in the number of students repeating conspiracy theories about

9/11 or misunderstanding the relationship between Islamic extremism and terrorism.

This event shaped a generation of Americans. Those in schools should be taught in a clear and deliberate manner to understand its significance. To clarify misconceptions and dispel government theories in the bud, the federal government should set standards for teaching 9/11 in schools.

At present there is no national guidance for states to follow in terms of teaching the topic, and teaching strategies vary considerably by state,

school and individual educator. Some opt to teach the subject in U.S. history courses, while some place it in social studies or civics programs. Some textbooks give little mention to the event.

For those thinking a national standard would be an overreach or too much meddling by the federal government, education standards already are applied to other subjects. The importance of this particular topic demands care and attention in how it is broached with students from a young age, as the complexity of discussing terrorism requires discretion.

Kids need to know, but what they need to know at what age can be a tricky needle to thread.

There are some free resources available now to teachers and others who are interested in 9/11 including photos, video, and first person accounts of the events of the day.

Additionally, federal agencies including the U.S. Department of Education, the Library of Congress, the Smithsonian Institution and the National Park Service have compiled and created materials to assist teachers with lesson plans on the topic,

many of which were created around the 10th anniversary of 9/11.

The National Education Association offers free resources to teachers to provide suggestions on how to teach 9/11 to students who have no memory of that day.

As America approaches the 20th anniversary of the attacks, taking a further step and codifying guidelines and standards for teaching the material will help memorialize the facts of the attacks as well as the unity that resulted in the aftermath of that dark day.