

OUR VIEW

Abolish police? No thanks

At least at first glance, the idea that police departments should be abolished in favor of other methods of protection seems so counterintuitive, it's difficult to know where to begin.

Yet, a recent survey by the Oregon Values and Beliefs Center showed a total of 27% of respondents strongly, or somewhat, support the idea of abolishing their local police departments. Instead of police departments, advocates suggest a system of social workers, counselors and mental health experts to fill in the police role.

The survey, though, also showed 67% of the people polled are against eradicating police departments. The polled consisted of responses from 1,400 adult Oregonians.

The issue was front and center last year during the George Floyd riots and protests as cases of police brutality gained closer scrutiny.

And the survey showed a slight majority of Oregonians back some type of reduced police funding and instead favor using the savings to pay for more public health, education and social services.

The results are interesting and the notion to abolish police departments carries a certain degree of curiosity, but it is, in the end, a bad idea linked to emotion rather than common sense.

The 2020 protests did a lot of damage across the nation, but they did push the issue of police miscues into the national conversation. Ultimately, that was a good thing. In a democratic society, no public agency or employee is above the public's review.

The George Floyd incident was a terrible injustice and those who were responsible — mainly former Minneapolis Police Department Officer Derek Chauvin — were dealt with by the justice system. Chauvin earned a 22-year prison sentence for his role in Floyd's death.

The problem is one of perception. A single horrendous act by a police officer somehow filled in as a statement on the entire community of law enforcement officers during the summer of 2020 protests.

Typically, police follow the law. They are not brutal. They are dedicated to serving their community and respecting civil liberties.

The issue isn't more social workers or mental health specialists — though they are needed — but better training and an acknowledgment that we need police.

Human nature being what it is, we always will need a force of dedicated public servants to safeguard our homes and property. Should there be close oversight of our police? Of course. The public owes it to itself — and to the men and women who wear a badge — to be vigilant about police tactics.

But abolish police departments?

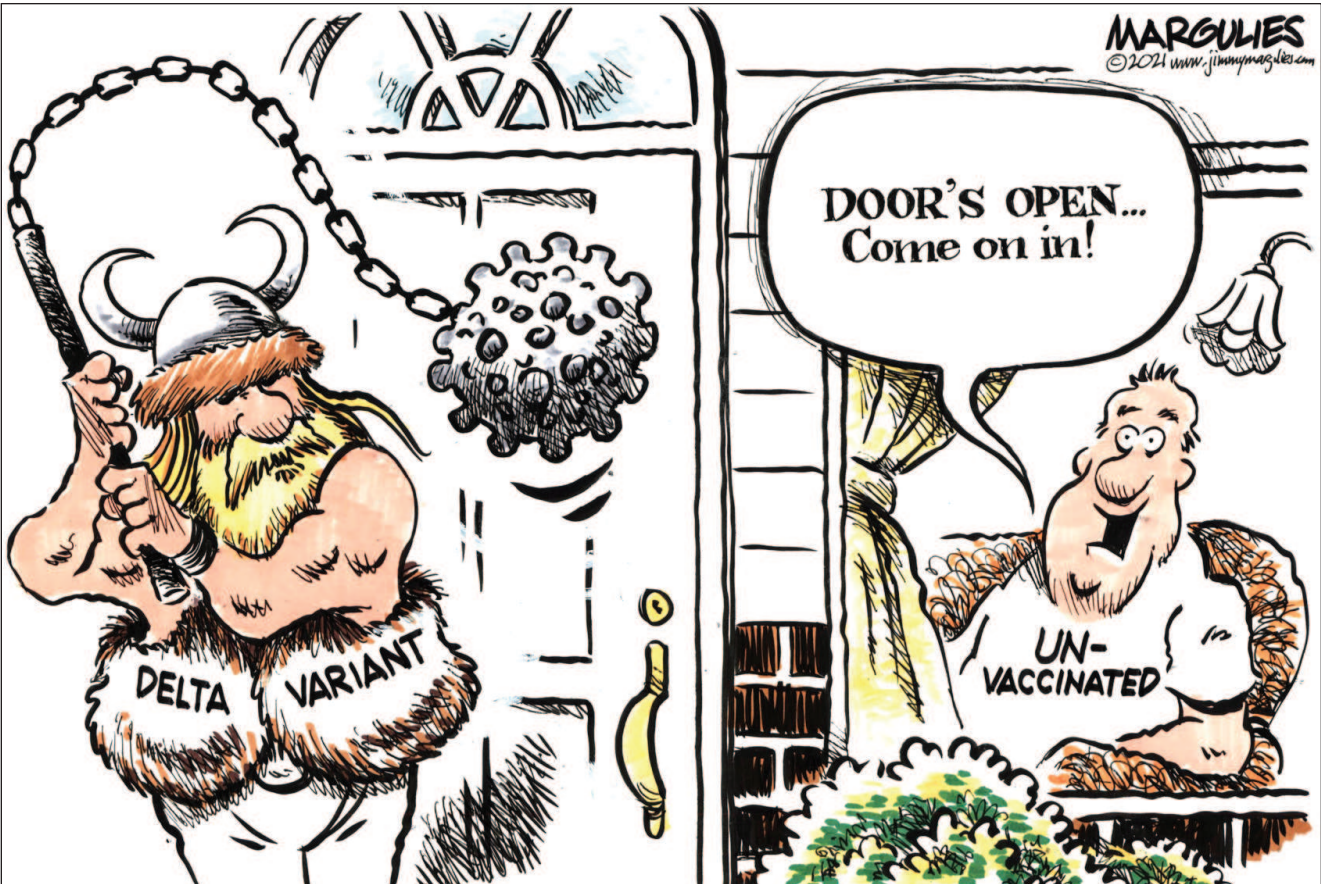
No thanks.

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Biden exaggerating the effects of states' voting security laws

By Jay Ambrose

Several Republican states around the country are trying to tidy up their election laws after the 2020 pandemic mess. President Joe Biden called this a "21st century Jim Crow assault," then said it was "the most significant test of our democracy since the Civil War." But please don't call him unfit for office, because the 25th Amendment might then be used to remove him with Vice President Kamala Harris taking his place.

After her likely failure to even visit the Oval Office, she might also be ejected with the next in line being House Speaker Nancy Pelosi in the most significant test of our independence as a people since the Revolutionary War. After all, she wants an unyieldingly Democratic, welfare-addicted, debt-imperiled, micromanaging, oversized federal government of the kind where she herself twice mismanaged the impeachment of a president. In one unbelievable case, the victim wasn't a president but a private citizen. No one is safe.

Therefore, let's hang on to Biden. That doesn't mean we have to take him seriously in what he says even if we do have to take him very, very seriously in what he wants to do, such as treating Republican, mostly common-sense state voting law changes as excluding Black Americans from the polls. Right now, we have 50 or so members of the

Texas House hanging out in Washington, D.C., to prevent a vote in their home state on a Republican bill that would do such horrible things as telling businesses they must, under law, give employees time off to vote.

The bill also says there will still be two weeks of early voting and, in counties with a population of over 55,000, 12 hours each day for the opportunity. Is that a burden on people who would rather just enjoy TV shows, or what? Going one better, there was also an around-the-clock county that would let you vote all night long, and the bill says no more. Texans are maybe crying, considering how much fun it must be to skip to the polls at 4 a.m.

The bill does do away with drive-through voting used as an expeditious pandemic emergency measure, and that's considered something like a high-crime and misdemeanor because Black American voters liked it. While the business of parking and waiting in line may not be great fun for any race, it's not equivalent to literacy tests used in the Jim Crow South to keep Black Americans from voting.

Today's Democratic senators in Washington are not just huffing and puffing about Texas, but about Georgia and Florida and any other state improving things. One solution? Have as many unwatched, vulnerable mail-in ballot drop boxes as possible even though the pandemic has shrunk and

scads of mailboxes are available.

To be fair, the senators may be unaware of mailboxes. In their own outlandish, constitutionally negligent bill they want less supervision, fewer poll watchers, something like total federal control of every inch of federal elections and less concern about checking out registrations even though PEW research has found something like 2 million of them are for dead people, on the one hand, and 2.8 million people are registered in more than one state, on the other.

A main Democratic worry is voter ID laws that increase voting by both white and Black Americans and back up honesty. A chief Democratic enthusiasm is widespread use of mail-in ballots that might fail that last test. There can be lots of confusion in many directions and the Democrats even favor harvesting, that is, allowing a stranger to take your ballot to deliver it with no way of you knowing what he or she actually does with it, such as burning it up.

In other words, Biden is ready for action and maybe even wants to fire 50 Republican U.S. senators and replace them with the 50 visiting Democratic House members from Texas, a theory, I must confess, that is as plausible as his Civil War musings.

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OTHER VIEWS

Is the United States finally taking cybersecurity attacks seriously?

Editorial from The Dallas Morning News:

We're barely a month out from the Colonial Pipeline hacking, perpetrated by the Russian-speaking hacking group DarkSide, which left thousands of Americans without gas, preventing many from accessing food or medicine. Not long after that was the attack on JBS, the world's largest meat supplier, which shut down multiple processing plants, perpetrated by Russian cyber-criminal group REvil.

Two weeks ago, REvil hacked Kaseya, a U.S.-based software company, which affected 800 to 1,500 businesses. One of these businesses, Coop, a Swedish grocer, will take weeks to recover after the hacking shut down 800 of its physical storefronts. Coop paid \$70 million to appease the criminals. The ripples also affected Leonardtown, Md., as city administrators lost all access to their systems.

How has President Joe Biden addressed the problem? After the Colonial Pipeline attack, he declared an executive order, calling for collaboration between the public and private sectors to iron out digital defense issues — and we learned the hard way that it will take more than that to deal with this crisis. Then, Biden

addressed the issue at a summit with Putin. The attacks have continued.

Most recently, Biden called Putin and "reiterated that the United States will take any necessary action to defend its people and its critical infrastructure in the face of this continuing challenge." When asked at a press conference if there would be consequences, Biden responded, "Yes."

We needed to set some clear boundaries — some definite consequences that would get Vladimir Putin's attention — and, from what little we know, it looks like we might have succeeded in that. Once Biden called out Putin on the issue one-on-one, hacking giant REvil disappeared. Hacking collectives have an agenda. The cybersecurity company Cyberreason reports that the ransomware these hackers are installing first scans a computer's installed languages for Russian, Ukrainian, Syrian Arabic and others that are native to Russian-allied countries. If the computer has one installed, the ransomware stops dead in its tracks.

In mid-June, cybersecurity became a principal topic of the summit between Biden and Putin. In a press conference, Biden said that he gave a list to Putin

listing "16 specific entities; 16 defined as critical infrastructure under U.S. policy" which are "off-limits to attack." He followed this comment saying, "Of course, the principle is one thing. It has to be backed up by practice. Responsible countries need to take action against criminals who conduct ransomware activities on their territory."

We would add that responsible countries also take firm action when their citizens are endangered. We remember Biden saying in February, "I made it clear to President Putin, in a manner very different from my predecessor, that the days of the United States rolling over in the face of Russia's aggressive actions — interfering with our elections, cyberattacks, poisoning its citizens — are over."

While the process of shutting down REvil is still in the dark, this looks like a good example of Biden backing up his words. We provided consequences: either Putin wrangles the hackers harbored in Russia's borders or the U.S. takes swift, decisive actions to protect American assets. We hope that this signals a future of cooperation with Russia on the issue of cyberrime, as well as standing firm against Russia when their inaction results in American losses.