

# Opinion

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## EDITORIAL

# Why the delay in paid leave?

We have written before about how unfortunate it was that late in the 2021 legislative session a bill popped up to delay Oregon's paid family medical leave program.

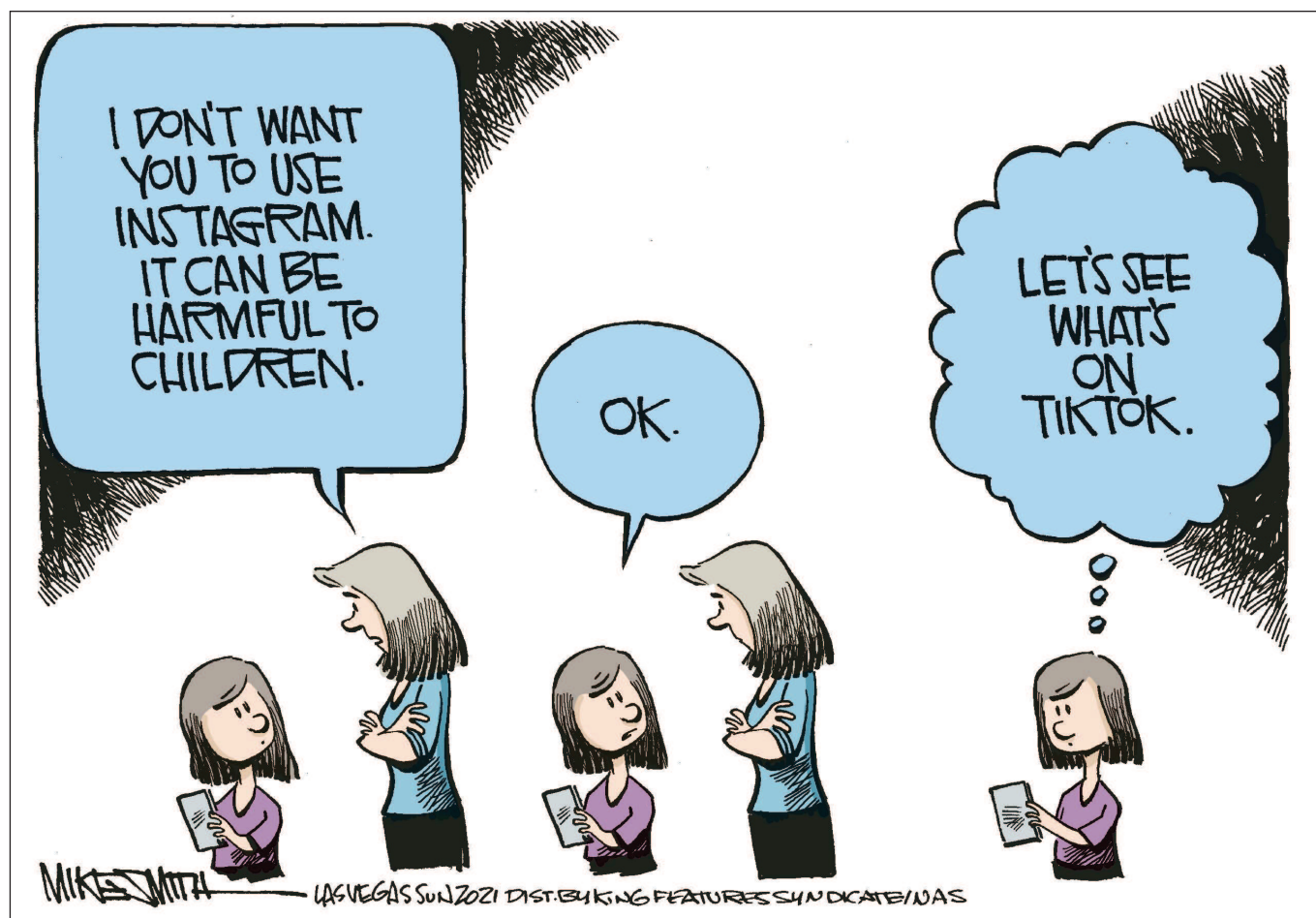
It was created by the Legislature in 2019. Families would be able to get paid time off — not only for births and deaths — but to care for others when they need it. Some employers already offer that. The bill was a way of guaranteeing it to more people by January 2023. Gov. Kate Brown thanked state Sen. Tim Knopp, R-Bend, for his leadership in helping to get the bill passed.

But why was implementation delayed? The state's Employment Department said it couldn't get it ready by the beginning of 2023. It was pushed back to September. That means, as The Oregonian pointed out, "tens of thousands of Oregonians stand to go without approximately \$453 million in paid leave benefits they could have accessed in the first eight months of 2023."

Gov. Brown declined an interview with The Oregonian to explain her staff's oversight of launching the program. Despite indicators the launch was off track, her office didn't ensure the launch stayed on track and neither did legislators. A local legislator did try. Former state Rep. Cheri Helt, R-Bend, did attempt in 2020 to shift the program's oversight to the Oregon Bureau of Labor and Industries, in the hope it had the capacity to keep it on track. She also proposed setting up a legislative committee to monitor the program. Those good ideas went nowhere.

Maybe with the pandemic and the disruptions it caused there was little hope the program would launch on time. But legislators and Gov. Brown don't appear to have done enough to try. The Oregonian's article on this topic is worth reading if you have access: [tinyurl.com/noORleave](https://tinyurl.com/noORleave).

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# Biden's diplomacy is dangerous

By ELI LAKE

President Joe Biden's administration has gone out of its way to signal toughness toward Russia's military buildup on Ukraine's border. Biden himself said on Wednesday that he told Russian President Vladimir Putin that if he ordered an invasion, the U.S. was prepared to unleash economic consequences on Russia "like none he's ever seen or ever have been seen."

Those economic consequences would probably include excluding Russia from the Swift system for international electronic payments, and possibly a reimposition of U.S. sanctions on companies working on the construction of the Nordstream 2 pipeline between Russia and Germany. Biden has also threatened to increase weapons shipments to Ukraine and bolster the defenses of vulnerable NATO allies on Ukraine's border.

It remains to be seen whether any of this will dissuade Putin from invading Ukraine. But even if it does, Putin's troop buildup has already earned him some initial concessions: Along with his warnings, Biden has offered Putin what the White House is calling "diplomatic off-ramps." Jake Sullivan, Biden's national security adviser, on Tuesday described these off-ramps as support for the largely moribund peace process based on the Minsk agreements in 2014 and 2015, and an invitation for Putin to engage in consultations with NATO over his concerns about the alliance.

These off-ramps risk letting Putin believe that he can erase Ukrainian

sovereignty through diplomacy. The Russian president has already pressed Biden, according to the Kremlin's readout of their Tuesday conference call, to give him assurances that the U.S. would oppose allowing Ukraine into NATO. Putin's diplomats have also favored an interpretation of the Minsk agreements that would grant Russian-backed separatists in Luhansk and Donetsk nearly full autonomy from the central government in Kiev, while denying that any of its forces are in those regions.

Kurt Volker, who served as former President Donald Trump's envoy to the Ukraine peace negotiations, told me that he made it clear that the U.S. interpreted the Minsk agreements to mean that Russia would have to withdraw its forces and dismantle the illegal militias it supported before Ukraine would give Luhansk and Donetsk any special political status. Russia's view of its obligations under the agreement "would actually undercut Ukraine's sovereignty and reward Putin for the attack on Ukraine that he started in 2014," Volker said.

The Biden administration has not publicly offered a detailed view of how it interprets the Minsk agreements, other than to say it supports the negotiations and, more generally, Ukrainian territorial integrity. The administration has also said it hopes to use those negotiations to de-escalate tensions within Ukraine and pursue a possible cease-fire or other confidence-building measures.

Nonetheless, offering NATO consultations and renewed U.S. attention on the

Minsk process is itself a concession to Putin. To start, it pretends that Russia has been a good-faith actor in peace talks for the last seven years. But Ben Hodges, the former commander of the U.S. Army in Europe and the Pershing fellow at the Center for European Policy Analysis, said Russia has undermined the agreement in recent years by thwarting European attempts to monitor flashpoints in the Ukrainian war. To this day, Russia denies its forces are in Luhansk and Donetsk and says it cannot withdraw troops that are not there.

As for NATO consultations, Russia's position is well known: It wants assurance that Ukraine and other former Soviet republics will never be allowed to join the alliance. Hosting a high-level meeting with Russia about Ukraine's possible future in NATO will only sow further doubts about how much the West is willing to risk to protect what is left of Ukrainian sovereignty. It would also give legitimacy to the demands of Putin, whose goal is to break up the alliance, not accommodate it.

Biden should be careful: The U.S. and Europe have to deter Putin from starting another war against his neighbor. But the price of that deterrence cannot be Ukrainian independence.

*Eli Lake is a Bloomberg Opinion columnist covering national security and foreign policy. He was the senior national security correspondent for the Daily Beast and covered national security and intelligence for the Washington Times, the New York Sun and UPI.*

## OTHER VIEWS

# Why did CNN wait so long to dump Chris Cuomo?

**Editorial from The South Florida Sun-Sentinel:**

CNN is no longer the Cuomo News Network.

What took so long?

In the early months of the pandemic, the Cuomo brothers were riding high. As governor of New York, Andrew Cuomo captivated audiences during the day with daily COVID-19 updates and at night while sparring fraternally with Chris Cuomo, who hosted CNN's highest-rated evening program.

Chris Cuomo's own case of COVID-19 deepened the rapport. The brothers stopped arguing over who had been their mother's favorite child. Andrew became the caring older brother. Ratings doubled. The Associated Press wrote that the program "gives viewers sitting at home a glimpse at the dynamics of a family other than their own."

Now Andrew Cuomo is the former governor of New York. He resigned as the state legislature was prepared to remove him through impeachment because of sexual misconduct allegations.

In fact, Andrew Cuomo should have resigned earlier

after revelations that he covered up deaths in nursing homes.

He had ordered them to accept COVID-19 patients. Cuomo worried that the truth of that bad decision could have damaged his \$5.2 million book deal.

But at a time of record high distrust in news organizations, our attention focuses more on Chris Cuomo and his former employer. For months, CNN allowed him to violate basic journalism ethics in dealing with his brother even as the network's employees spoke up.

It's important that Sun Sentinel readers understand these policies. At credible news organizations, staff members can't donate to political campaigns and can't participate in campaign events. We don't advise candidates. Doing so would be grounds for firing.

Now let's review what Chris Cuomo did.

As noted, he essentially produced infomercials for Andrew Cuomo that could have brought the former governor a lot of money. After Chris Cuomo joined CNN in 2013, the network barred him from interviewing his

brother. That ban ended with the pandemic.

Then, last May came the first revelations that Chris Cuomo had worked to help his brother defend against allegations of sexual harassment. CNN at least should have suspended him. The network could have fired him.

Instead, CNN offered Chris Cuomo the chance to go on leave. It was not a demand. Cuomo refused. CNN President Jeff Zucker said something about "very unique circumstances."

Similarly, Andrew Cuomo tried to brass it out as the allegations piled up. His defenses collapsed when New York Attorney General Letitia James released her investigation into the former governor's conduct.

Fittingly, that report also implicated Chris Cuomo. It became clear that he had involved himself in his brother's defense far more than he had acknowledged.

Example: Andrew Cuomo's chief of staff asked Chris Cuomo to "check with his sources" at news organizations about other women who might be ready to go public with accusations against Andrew Cuomo. "On it," Chris

Cuomo responded.

Example: Chris Cuomo texted the chief of staff to critique a statement that Andrew Cuomo had released.

Example: Chris Cuomo offered to dig up information on one of his brother's accusers. He texted the chief of staff that he had "a lead on the wedding girl," referring to a woman who had accused Andrew Cuomo of groping her at a wedding.

Example: Chris Cuomo suggested that his brother dismiss the allegations by saying, "Sometimes I am playful and make jokes." Andrew Cuomo did so.

Chris Cuomo tried to defend himself by saying that brothers help brothers. Elisa Batista is campaign director at UltraViolet, a gender justice organization.

"This wasn't just brothers talking about their lives, or even about politics," Batista said in a statement. "This was a major network news anchor actively working to support the former governor of New York in pushing back against sexual harassment allegations and denigrating survivors of abuse."

CNN is not the only network

to excuse egregious ethics violations by favored personalities.

Fox News' Sean Hannity appeared onstage with former President Donald Trump at a rally in 2018. Fox called it "an unfortunate distraction and has been addressed." Hannity stayed on the air.

Standards, though, apply equally, regardless of political slant. CNN staffers anonymously called the coddling of Chris Cuomo "super-hypocritical" and "a disgrace to journalism." Right on both counts.

Zucker pronounced himself "wounded" after learning how much Chris Cuomo had deceived CNN. The network suspended Cuomo last week and fired him on Saturday. It surely didn't help that the man whose favorite expression was "Let's get after it" faced his own allegation of sexual misconduct, which he denied.

The brothers' fates remain entwined. Andrew Cuomo may have to return millions from his book deal. Chris Cuomo, his ratings at CNN having cratered, also left his SiriusXM radio show and lost his own book contract. The title? "Deep Denial." Perfect.