

EDITORIAL

The mystery of the bills with no sponsor

We would like our Oregon legislators to join us in a whodunit. The mystery is: Help us find out who are the legislators behind certain bills.

Most bills this session or any session have a chief sponsor, maybe even a bunch of regular sponsors. They make it clear which legislators wanted their fellow legislators to consider a bill. Their names are right there on the bills.

But there is a subset of bills without any such clarity. The residents of Oregon can't know by looking at a bill who is behind it.

We went through the bills that were scheduled for some mention during the legislative session on Tuesday, Feb. 1, and found three, Senate Bills 1521 and 1522 and House Bill 4031.

SB 1521 would prohibit a school district from firing its superintendent for acting in compliance with state or federal law. This bill was introduced, at least in part, to prevent superintendents from being fired for complying with pandemic restrictions, such as masking and distance learning. It was apparently introduced at the request of the Senate Interim Committee on Education. All the members of the committee? One of them?

SB 1522 has so many disparate pieces it's hard to sum up. It's 20 pages long. It also has to do with education. It covers access to contact information for graduate students, requiring school districts to allow students to apply certain credits toward graduation, requirements for homeschooled students to participate in athletics and more. It was also at the request of the Senate Interim Committee on Education.

House Bill 4031 establishes a state goal that the percentage of diverse employees employed by the Department of Education reflects the percentage of diverse students in public schools. This one comes from the House Interim Committee in Education at the request of the Department of Education.

Now why would legislators allow bills to be introduced without putting a legislator's name on it? It's not because legislators are dissolute, lazy and work-shy or too busy.

It's, in part, because they can. The rules of the House and Senate allow it. It's Rule 12 in the House Rules. But legislators make those rules for introducing bills. So they must want it.

We aren't particularly worried about any of these three bills. The concern is the mystery that enables legislators to conceal what they are doing from their constituents. The power to act in hiding and set in motion new laws in secrecy is great power. And that has no place in a government that is supposed to be transparent. It has no place in the Oregon Legislature.

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YOUR VIEWS

Idaho Power should not bully private property owners

Idaho Power, an out-of-state regulated energy monopoly, is attempting to build a 300-mile 500-kilovolt transmission line, through five Eastern Oregon counties. It is called the Boardman to Hemingway (B2H) transmission line, an unneeded and destructive project that threatens our land and heritage.

Idaho Power has begun taking landowners to circuit court to gain access to their land for pre-construction surveys. This is for pre-condemnation proceedings (aka eminent domain) — for a transmission line that has not been approved!

The B2H application is still under consideration; more specifically, it is in a contested case that needs to be resolved before final consideration and decisions are made by the Oregon Department of Energy (ODOE) Energy Facility Siting Council (EFSC). This is not expected until summer or later this year. There could even be more court challenges before a final decision is made. Obviously, Idaho Power's pre-condemnation process is premature; it ignores the established state process for conducting pre-construction surveys.

The ODOE process allows for "over the fence" surveys should the landowner choose not to allow utilities' agents on their property. The Stop B2H Coalition has communicated with ODOE to learn the relevant regulations regarding access to private property. Idaho Power and its attorneys chose to bypass the established ODOE processes and are taking private landowners to court using methods that are inconsistent with ODOE's Proposed Order.

To date, at least 21 landowners have or will be served a petition for pre-condemnation entry on their property. Eventually, there will be more. How can we sit back and watch this invasion of private property and potential land taking happen to our neighbors and friends? Idaho Power has the financial resources to bully people, to publish slick materials to convince Oregonians that the B2H is a done deal, to make grandiose promises of tax revenues to counties, to employ attorneys and engineers to twist words and counter everything that people (including our local scientists) raise. They relentlessly "greenwash" the project which is NOT green at all.

The B2H application should be suspended until Idaho Power ceases its pre-condemnation court proceedings and follows the procedures in the proposed order. Condemnation or pre-condemnation should not occur until a site certificate is issued, which gives permission to build the line. At that point, if that happens, there is an established process for condemnation or eminent domain that Idaho Power will need to follow.

Please speak out. Contact your elected officials: demand that Idaho Power stop bullying and harassing landowners. We sent this letter to elected officials, citing the rules: <https://bit.ly/legis-ltr>. Idaho Power has a bad reputation. This has been clear since they built the Hells Canyon dam complex without the promised fish ladders, and it has resurfaced and intensified with the B2H transmission line.

Stop B2H Coalition are passionate people from all walks of life and politics. We have joined forces and commented on every step in the decision making and permitting processes (federal and state) since 2007 as individuals and 2016 as a coalition. We have been steadfast and professional in our well-researched filings against the B2H documenting countless errors and outdated studies in their application and analyses.

Jim Kreider, co-chair
Irene Gilbert, co-chair
Fuji Kreider, co-chair
Charlie Gillis
Matt Cooper
Lois Barry

Stop B2H Coalition board of directors



Improving government requires cooperation, not finger pointing

I believe some in Baker County United are disgruntled with the federal government, and at times I am too. Some in your organization although want to join the Constitutional Sheriffs and Peace Officers Association, which is a radical extremist group. It's a movement that doesn't just reject gun control — it encourages law enforcement officers to defy laws they decide are illegal. And it sometimes puts police on the same side as "sovereign citizens," a fringe group that the FBI considers one of the most serious domestic terrorism threats. I too am a firm believer in the Constitution and the Bill of Rights, and these rights come with a mechanism designed to give the people of the United States a say in who runs the government and how they run it. It is called the right to vote, that is the way we have our say.

We have a Supreme Court that represents the law of the land, and interprets the meaning of our constitution, to insure fair and equal treatment for us all. If those we elect do not follow the ideals of their constituents they can be recalled. If we don't like the outcome of a court decision we can appeal. What is happening now with all the decisiveness, name-calling and spreading of rumors solves nothing. We all need to air our differences and work out a solution that we can all live with.

I believe most Americans would like to believe we can do better and we can, but it takes all of us working together instead of finger pointing and feeling we must get even for something untrue. This is especially true of our elected congressmen, some have decided that their personal positions are more important than those they represent and have decided to have things their own way and stand in the way of progress for the people to make someone else look bad, and that is bad for all Americans. If you do not like the way the government is going, take it up with your elected officials, and let them know you will remember them at election time.

Don Worley
Baker City

Baker County United seeks to preserve liberty

Baker County United asked for one simple resolution to uphold specific amendments to the constitution. As usual, those who oppose it made it into something that it isn't. If they have to lie or deceive people then they know it's wrong. All it would take is looking at the county minutes and video recordings to see that they are stirring the pot in the newspaper. Go to www.bakercountyunited.com for the rest of the story.

The World Economic Forum recently stated that by 2030, "you will own nothing

and you will be happy" and a "Great Reset" will occur after COVID-19. Kate Brown vowed to assist in that mission.

We cannot stand one more second of this tyranny. Unconstitutional bill HB 3284 was signed by Brown on June 15, 2021. That paved the way for OHA to implement Brown's bidding with a \$2.9 billion budget!

Many believe that government starts from the federal level down to the local level when in fact, it is absolutely just the opposite. Local governments have the most power. They have been brainwashed into thinking that they have no authority. Stockholm Syndrome mentality has put us in the position we are facing today. Creating a welfare county further erodes our liberties.

Being a constitutional county doesn't need a special charter or specific definition. It's about upholding an oath of office. It needs county commissioners that won't walk off the job then go hide behind a computer during a work session after their constituents took time off work to be part of the process. Being a constitutional county needs commissioners who don't pull stunts by bringing people in during sessions sitting on the floor yelling super spreader events or making courthouse staff get security during a commission session because drama is more important than doing their jobs. These are just some of the things that Commissioner Bruce Nichols did Jan. 12, 2022, and Feb. 2, 2022.

A constitutional county wouldn't consider creating no shooting zones, violating the 2nd amendment ordinance, that was passed by ballot initiative, forbidding such violations of the constitution and was praised by Commissioners Bennett and Harvey.

A constitutional county wouldn't allow Kate Brown to usurp her power on local governments just as Kate wouldn't allow Trump to come in and fix the mess that she created in Portland. Did she lose her funding? No! Have we told her we will not comply? No!

I've read and heard statements from Nichols and other people stating that the courts are the ones to decide the fate of our life, liberty, and pursuit of happiness.

In my opinion that is absolutely ludicrous and another way of just kicking the can down the road to avoid responsibility. Ultimate power of the state, fellow readers, is communism and we're getting a dose of it (literally).

Let's say that Commissioner Nichols' loved one was the judge who was going to make a ruling of him being fired for walking off the job during our work session. The judge was employed by Nichols. Now if you were naive, you would think that the judge would be impartial. The court system rarely goes against their employer.

Those who have read the history on the king's courts know that absolute power corrupts absolutely. Baker County United preserves liberty not fascism.

Carrie Matthews
Baker City

COLUMN

The persistence of a person's worldly possessions

We bought a new mattress recently and the effects of this otherwise modest decision, which continued for some days after our first restful night of slumber, reminded me of the vast difference between acquiring items and disposing of them.

Items enter our homes by their dozens over the years, as stealthy as cats, but once ensconced they're as stubborn as soap scum on the walls of a bathtub.

(Or, worse still, the remnants of Frosted Flakes and milk left to congeal in a bowl overnight. You can't dislodge that stuff with a howitzer.)

My wife, Lisa, had no trouble obtaining the new mattress.

Generally speaking, if you have a credit card with a spending limit that hasn't been stretched until it's close to snapping, there are companies willing to send just about anything to your house and leave the package propped against the most accessible door.

So it was with the mattress.

It was the first one of my acquaintance, however, that arrived not fully fleshed but shrunken, rather like dehydrated, freeze-dried food that I stuff into my backpack for hiking trips.

Except to get the full utility of this mattress you add not water but air.

Lisa chose a foam mattress because it's supposed to be a bit firmer than the pillow top model it replaced. She explained, citing certain informants whose credibility I am in no position to question, that ill-tempered vertebrae, which hers sometimes are, prefer to recline on a less-compliant surface than the typical mattress offers.

This seemed to me contradictory. I always figured that you're more likely to foul up your back by slamming it into a brick wall rather than a pillow. But I know so little of our spinal area that when I hear the term "slipped disk" I can only think of dropping a Frisbee.

This foam mattress was rolled up and stuffed into a cardboard box. We coaxed it out, which was slightly easier than slipping a sausage out of its casing but much less greasy, unrolled it and laid it atop the box spring.

The mattress at this point was about as thick as what you'd expect to find slung over a metal cot in a prisoner of war camp.

But Lisa assured me that, like bread dough left in a warm oven, the mattress would plump up, and



Jayson Jacoby

within a day or two fatten up to its fully advertised one foot.

It didn't take that long. As air rushed in to fill the spaces in the foam — or at least that's the process I envisioned; I know as much about physics as I do about backbones — the mattress thickened at a rate that I fancied I could detect by craning over and squinting at it. By bedtime, several hours after it was first exposed, the mattress was about 10 inches tall and ready for its debut.

This was both gratifying and entertaining.

So all was well. At least in that room.

On the other side of the house, however, a goodly portion of the floor space in our living room was no longer floor space.

This is where the old queen-size mattress came to rest.

This wasn't exactly an optimal place to put the thing, but in a house that covers about 1,400 square feet, we didn't have a better option.

I wanted to lug the mattress out to the street and tape a "free" sign to it — at least I wouldn't have to look at it, or trip over it in the dark (at least the landing would be soft) — but Lisa wouldn't hear of it.

The mattress, of course, is only one example of how difficult it can be to rid ourselves of possessions once they have crossed the threshold.

A mattress just happens to be a particularly treacherous example of the general phenomenon, being both larger and heavier than most other things that we accumulate.

My back rarely gives even a slight twinge, but I feared for its future while we were grappling with the old mattress. Few items can combine heft, an ungainly shape and the tendency to twist, like a snake trying to escape your grasp, as effectively, which is to say infuriatingly, as a mattress.

If we had opted for a king-size when we bought the mattress 16 years ago I suspect I would know more intimately what a slipped disk is.

And what it feels like when it's slipped.

We had hoped to donate the mattress, but none of the potential des-

tinations we looked into was interesting.

So we ended up tossing it into the back of my father-in-law's pickup truck and hauling it to the dump.

And by tossing I mean fumbling with it and nearly dropping it three times and generally scrambling around in the driveway. This is what typically happens when a pickup is parked in the driveway, prepared to make a dump run.

We're back to our normal contingent of mattresses, which is a relief.

But in the process of swapping I unearthed a few items from under the bed frame that, based on their manes of dust, had been lurking there since the Clinton administration.

Now I have an old T-shirt and a tennis racket cover to deal with.

Neither is so physically taxing as a mattress, to be sure.

But it still annoys me that I let these inanimate objects, which are incapable of moving on their own, get past my defenses and take root, like a besieging army gradually amassing in nooks and crannies I rarely think about or see.

Jayson Jacoby is editor of the Baker City Herald.