

## EDITORIAL

# Governor needs a plan for education

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Let's repeat that.

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Plenty of goals, plans, programs and initiatives are out there. Almost every legislative session something new and different gets passed. State employees and school district officials then go off to add the latest churn on top of the churn.

Having a broad, statewide plan is no guarantee of success. But Oregon does need a long-term approach to education goals. It needs measurements. It needs reporting requirements. It needs specifics about how funding gets us to goals and how new initiatives fit in.

Much of that exists. What is missing is how it all fits together in a detailed road map for the future. Any state plan should be heavy on goals and providing performance data and easy on district flexibility to reach goals. There would also need to be a mechanism for accountability.

What are our candidates for governor going to do? They can reflect parental dissatisfaction easily enough. What are their plans for statewide improvement? Do they believe Oregon needs a statewide education road map?

Oregon's public education is far from a mess in every classroom in every school district. It succeeds for many students. And not every education problem is directly related to bad teachers, bad curriculum or poor education investments.

But Oregon's public education system does have problems. Here are some facts from a new state audit of public education:

Less than 25% of Oregon students meet proficiency standards in math in 11th grade.

Oregon's graduation rate may be improving. It has still been near the bottom in the nation.

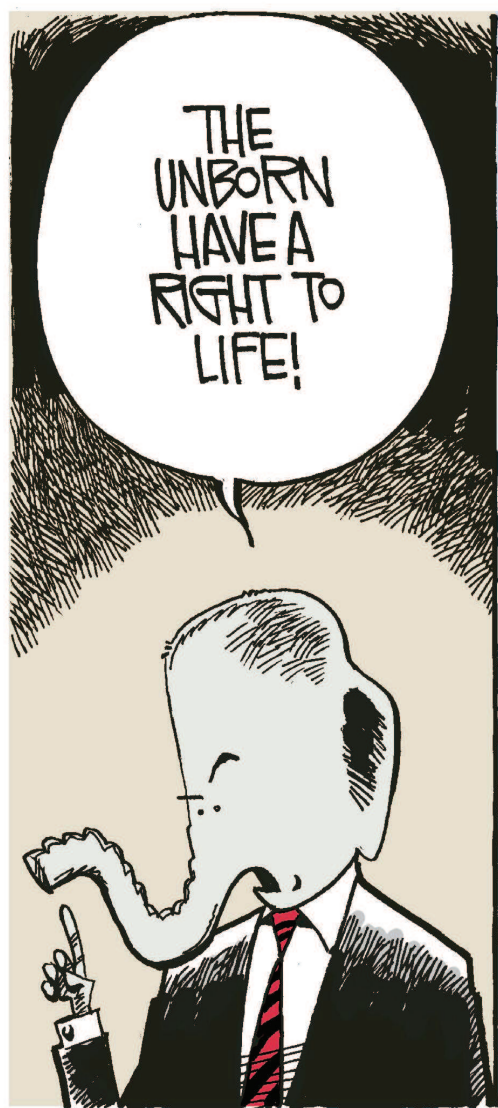
A statewide review in 2020 found only a third of Oregon children eligible for early intervention special education programs had access to them.

And many of the students who are performing poorly in the system are minorities or low income.

Oregon is getting its level of performance with more recent investment in education. Measure 98 was passed in 2016 to increase graduation rates and career readiness. It was essentially another \$800 per high school student per year. Oregon also established a corporate activity tax in 2019 to bring in what was hoped to be an extra \$1 billion a year to improve education in early childhood and K-12.

We are going to have that new governor in not so very many months. It looks like Oregonians will have three major candidates to choose from: Democrat Tina Kotek, independent Betsy Johnson and Republican Christine Drazan. Which one would be the most likely to deliver a plan for improving K-12 education and pull it off? We don't see anything like that on their campaign websites. Should it be?

*Unsigned editorials are the opinion of the Baker City Herald. Columns, letters and cartoons on this page express the opinions of the authors and not necessarily that of the Baker City Herald.*



## COLUMN

# Feds set up economy for disaster

BY E.J. ANTONI AND CHARLES BEAUCHAMP

For over a year, the Federal Reserve ignored myriad warning signs and continued injecting money into the economy. The result was the appearance of robust economic growth and a surge in demand, especially in the labor market, which ushered in decades-high inflation. But as the Fed belatedly raises rates, the veil is falling, and financial markets with it.

Oscar Wilde's "The Picture of Dorian Gray" offers a striking parallel to our situation. The novel's eponymous protagonist has a portrait that ages and decays while he remains youthful and vibrant. But his health is an illusion, while his portrait — hidden from view — contains the truth.

The massive liquidity infusions by the Fed have created a mirage of economic health. Large nominal gains in corporate earnings, asset values and even wages made the economy appear healthy. But after adjusting for the inflation caused by creating too much money, these economic figures are at best disappointing and at worst negative.

That adjustment for inflation is the real picture of the economy, much like the portrait of Dorian Gray. It lays bare all the sins of the past. As evidence, in the first quarter of this year, the economy nominally grew at a robust 6.5 percent annual rate, but after adjusting for inflation, it really fell by 1.4 percent.

As reality sets in across financial markets, investors continue their selloff. Equities con-

tinue to fall, with stocks experiencing the most consecutive weeks in the red since the Great Depression and seeing their worst losses since the panic-induced selloff at the beginning of the pandemic.

Inflation has robbed consumers of their purchasing power, causing savings to be depleted, consumer debt to increase, and future spending projections to precipitously drop. It turns out corporate earnings will not continue rising ad infinitum as the Fed's sins have now at last caught up with everyone.

Creating trillions of dollars out of thin air certainly provides a temporary boost to the economy. But that easy money and cheap credit creates an addiction with painful withdrawal symptoms, which the nation is experiencing right now as markets are brought face-to-face with the real portrait of the economy. This merely exacerbates the boom-bust cycle instead of smoothing it out.

Since the Fed cannot actually create growth, let alone wealth, the best it can do is play the man behind the curtain, creating the chimeric of money-fueled growth in place of the real McCoy. That is precisely what we have seen for the last year and a half — what might be dubbed the economy of Dorian Gray. In its errant quest to support the appearance of growth, the Fed set the real economy up for disaster.

The Fed's excuse for fueling this inflation over the last 18 months has been its "dual

mandate," under which it aims to simultaneously maintain stable prices and the amorphous target of full employment. Flooding the financial markets with liquidity for more than a year made for a seemingly robust labor market, creating so much labor demand that unfilled jobs are at a record-high 11.5 million and nominal wages are rising fast.

However, just like other sectors of the economy, the real labor market is not as healthy as it appears. Prices are rising faster than wages, making workers demonstrably worse off today than they were 18 months ago.

And as it created extraordinary quantities of money to support full employment, the Fed effectively served as the implicit financing arm of a Congress that recklessly shirked its fiscal duties and relied on the hidden tax of inflation to pay for trillions of dollars in unfunded spending.

For those who previously sounded the alarm on this inflationary incubus, it is a hollow victory. There is no joy in seeing the fruition of impolitic policies impoverishing one's fellow citizens. But the reality is that these effects have been hidden for years in a portrait out of public view.

*E. J. Antoni is a Research Fellow for Regional Economics in the Center for Data Analysis at The Heritage Foundation and a senior fellow at Committee to Unleash Prosperity. Charles Beauchamp is a Professor of Finance at Mississippi College.*

## YOUR VIEWS

### Preserving city's ambulance service is most important

Cannon described the situation as a "pivot point." He said the city can't afford to continue to operate ambulances because the gap between what the city spends (and bills) and what it collects. This appeared in the 5/28 edition of the Herald's Opinion page. I agree we are at a pivot point, but I say Baker City "can not" afford to break up the fire department and the ambulance service. What price does the City Council place on your home, what price on your ailing mother? The fire/ambulance department function as a team protecting lives in Baker County. When you all ran for and accepted your positions on the city council, it was intended you would take the responsibilities of running our city, not forming voting blocks and infighting. How many decisions have been made, changed, forgotten, I don't know if it is the leadership, or the indecisiveness that leads to an undecided or incorrect decision, but none of this helps the city residents feel secure in their leaders. Right now the most important thing on the minds of folks is to keep dependable ambulance and fire protection intact for the next year, then get information to the residents about paying for this service. It is my guess that most of them will be more than willing to help pay for this service. I do agree with one thing, it is easier to "pass the buck" instead of biting the bullet and doing what is needed to accomplish what is best for the community. Just my opinion.

**Don Worley**  
Baker City

### Hypocritical Christianity has been a stain on U.S. history

I was unfortunately subjected to someone's revisionist religious historical rant in a recent issue of the Herald. A strange letter indeed. ...

It starts with a grandiose statement "For over 200 years the historical record is clear

— America was built on Christian principles." Hmmm? The author waxed poetic, blaming our country's unrest on the lack of widespread belief in his beliefs? He cherry-picked historical quotes to fit his fanatical rhetoric, his fear and concern with our country's and its government's lack of Godly Christianity. The Thomas Jefferson quote was especially ironic, the gist being that "all of our liberties are a gift from his God," a quote from a Christian "slaveholder" denying freedom and liberty to a people violently ripped from their country, separated from family and children? Oh yes. ... those fabulous Christians.

With God in their hearts they marched across this country, killing, raping and stealing from the natives, perpetrated the torture, imprisonment and killings in the Salem witch trials. These same Christians started a civil war over the right to own another human, treated women, blacks, and any non white in this country as a secondary life form. The Christians that consistently prioritize land grabs and money ahead of their God. The Christians that persecuted others for their "different" religious beliefs? Listing all historical atrocities carried out by these so called Christians would be an endless, sad and tiring exercise.

Pilgrims came because of religious persecution and soon became masters of it. From the beginning of Christianity in America it has been used as a weapon to discriminate, suppress and kill the "unbelievers." It continues nonstop. So yes, using Christianity in our government as a tool to explain the unrest in America is apropos, but most certainly not the lack of it?

Without hypocritical, pretend Christianity ("my god is better than your god") America and the world would be so much more peaceful. The entire world is mired in perpetual unrest as a result of this skewed ideology claiming to be Christianity. There is no mention of God in our Constitution for a good reason.

**Mike Meyer**  
Baker City

### It's time for all of us to stand firm to preserve our rights

Good morning and memories of a solemn Memorial Day weekend to us all.

It seems as though the very skies were crying in sympathy for all who died in all the battles for our right to enjoy God's gifts to mankind. Those gifts are, perhaps likened to a beautiful shiny watch, presented to us for its utility and the joy its amazing precision gives life.

Those who are now posturing as the rulers of mankind are the deranged children who would smash that gift to pieces to examine and pervert its inner workings.

We think of all who stepped into the battles and fell, knowing full well that battle must be joined lest all the good in mankind be lost. Young men, perhaps 17 to 21 years old, joined the older more experienced to fight that we might gain and retain simple human dignity and freedom. Rather than thank a veteran survivor of those battles, show your gratitude by restoring our freedoms, by standing for the principles for which so many served and so many died.

The battle is ongoing and as close as your community. Speak out against the insanity that issues from the State Capitol, from County and City offices, from the School Board, anywhere you find it. Our state and federal constitutions acknowledge our right to be heard. We are not subjects, we are the financiers of those who seek to rule and impoverish us all.

Time has come for all decent, knowledgeable people to stand firm against the gibbering masses who work for our downfall and the enslavement of God's children — we are all God's children. We can speak out firmly without hate against all the insanity they can muster, but we must do it in unification. Now is the time. Too many children have been damaged, too many service people have served and died. Their spirits will haunt us if we fail them now!

**Rick Rienks**  
Baker City