

EDITORIAL

Should Congress tighten stock trading rules for members?

“Buying and selling stocks while making decisions that affect the stock’s value is inherently a conflict of interest.”

That’s a 2020 quote from U.S. Sen. Jeff Merkley, the Oregon Democrat. He’s been a supporter of a bill in Congress to prevent lawmakers and their staff from making money off of investment decisions. Congress has recently renewed discussion about taking action.

There’s already a prohibition in place called the STOCK Act that makes insider trading illegal for lawmakers and their senior staffers. Other federal laws also make insider trading illegal. So does Congress need a law that tightens the prohibition further on itself?

The problem with the existing laws is that insider trading is hard to prove.

The New York Times recently looked at trades for every member of Congress from 2019 to 2021. The reporting discovered “97 lawmakers or their family members bought or sold financial assets over a three-year span in industries that could be affected by their legislative committee work.”

Do you know who was on that list? Merkley’s Democratic colleague and Oregon’s other U.S. Sen. Ron Wyden.

“Mr. Wyden’s wife bought and sold shares of oil companies, including Exxon Mobil and Shell, while he sat on energy-related committees,” the newspaper reported. “Mr. Wyden also reported trades in companies that testified before the Finance Committee about the tax code and trade policy while he was the ranking Democrat on that committee. A spokesperson for the senator said Mr. Wyden and his wife keep separate finances.”

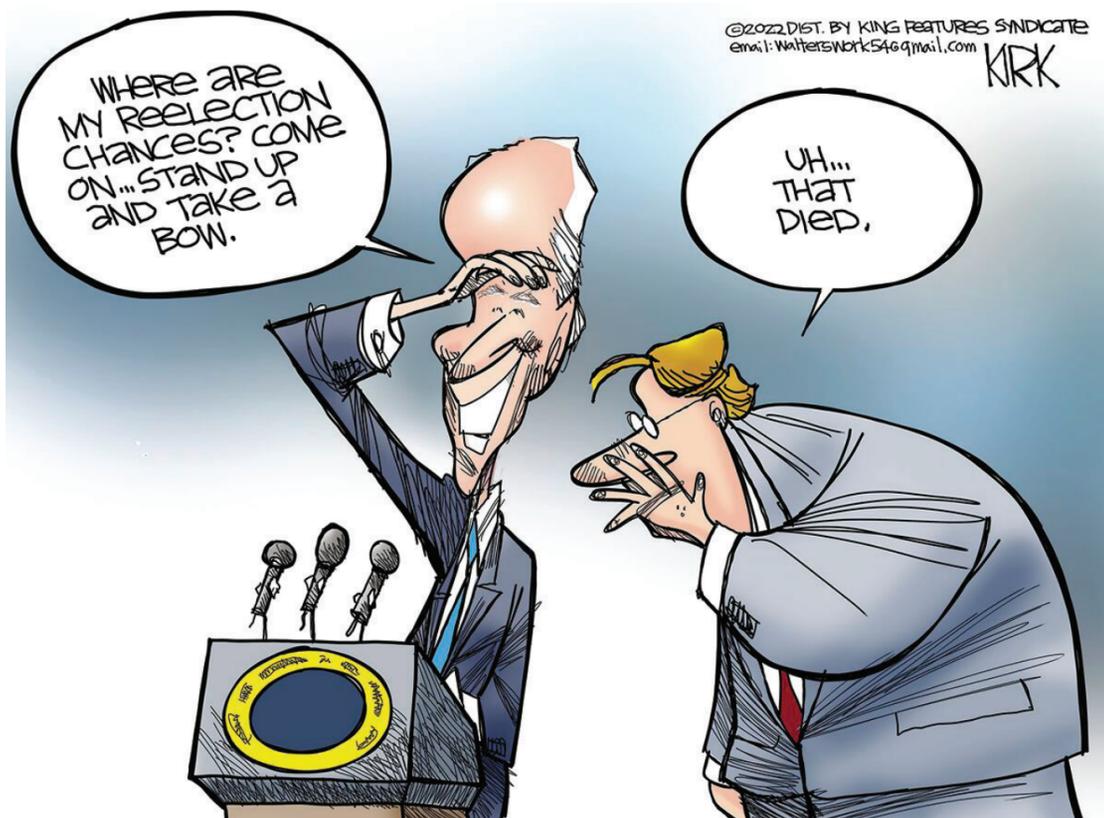
What is the evidence that Wyden or his wife did anything illegal? None that we are aware of. People may still argue that those trades represent a conflict of interest.

A solution that Merkley has backed would be a bill to compel members of Congress and staffers to sell all their stocks, non-Treasury bonds, options contracts and derivatives shortly after the bill passes or after taking office. They could also transfer their holdings into a blind trust and invest in retirement accounts. Other similar bills have been introduced. They all have the goal of further reducing the opportunity for members of Congress and their staff to take unfair advantage of their positions.

What do you think? Should Congress be looking to further restrict what they and their staff can do? Or are the current laws requiring disclosure enough?

You can email Wyden here, tinyurl.com/emailWyden and Merkley here, tinyurl.com/emailMerkley.

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YOUR VIEWS

Bentz, Trump and the election conundrum

Now that it has been proven that Cliff Bentz is an election denier plan on every piece of legislation being about the past. In fact, don't plan on anything but obsession with Trump not winning.

The irony is that if Trump won he cannot be elected again. However do his supporters resolve this conundrum?

Tom Nash
Halfway

Alderson is my choice for county commission

I am voting for Shane Alderson for County Commissioner Position 3. I ask you to look at his policies on his website and service to the community and do the same.

Shane is a leader in a new generation of public servants. He is mindful in developing his positions on public policy and straightforward in speaking to the pros and cons of any course of action. We need such open-minded and nonpartisan leadership to succeed.

Shane looks at the issues of the day and the possibilities for our community and the resources in our community, in order to tackle them head on. I served four years on City Council a decade ago and know how important it is to listen to everyone, without prejudice, because decisions matter. Go to Shane's website to understand his profound commitment to working with fellow commissioners, the public, the state, our city government, agriculture, mining and local businesses to make good decisions that provide solutions.

Shane and his brother Mark have a viable Northwest-oriented downtown business, serving residents and tourists who love to spend time in the beautiful natural wonders of Baker County and neighboring counties. Owning a business and having served on City Council, Shane is well informed and concerned about issues of housing, law enforcement, mental health services, support for business development and the natural resource industries Baker County is known for.

I, for one, want a county leader who listens to the people, informs himself of options and solutions for problems and speaks openly and with knowledge about his positions. ... one who is invested in

the community. ... an upcoming leader who honors both the past and the future to protect our values as we grow and respond to change. I want a leader who will work with all agencies and the public to responsibly address the needs of the community. That is Shane Alderson.

Please vote for Shane Alderson, a new leader for Baker County.

Aletha Bonebrake
Baker City

Gun control law might have opposite effect that's intended

I just joined OFF, Oregon Firearms Federation. I don't like parting with money but it is critical in light of the woke initiative that will be on the ballot and most likely will pass given the lack of historical education that the younger generation was subjected to.

This ballot initiative is standard Democratic talking points, the standard background checks, outlawing high-capacity clips, reducing gun violence, better described as gang violence, and suicides, which are mostly old white men, mostly vets, mostly combat vets but the VA will download you a nice app if you call. As most gun owners who have purchased a firearm during the last 20 plus years know you don't buy one without a background check issued by the state police. And naturally you pay a fee to exercise your 2nd amendment rights.

What makes this initiative especially egregious is that you have to have live fire training conducted by either the state police or the sheriff's office. They say they don't have the time or the money to conduct such training. And guess what? As a slap in the face of all those who actually had live fire training in combat there are no exemptions for that. No exemption for those with military training.

This bill will probably pass and although scary it might be a good thing. It will be appealed to the state Supreme Court where the judges have been appointed by John Kitzaber and seven by Kate Brown. One will retire Dec. 31 and Kate picks his replacement. I suspect that it will be ruled constitutional. After that it should be on its way to the U.S. Supreme Court, a Trump court. It should greatly expand gun rights, given recent decisions. But lawsuits are expensive, so I made my contribution.

There is a possibility that the Repub-

licans will start talking about the actual effects of this bill and it will be defeated. Let's hope so. In the meantime, thanks wokies for helping to unite the country.

Steve Cully
La Grande

Selfish attitude about economic realities

In an Oct. 4 letter to the Herald, Darin VanDyken tells readers that he is a self-made businessman. Then he admonishes people who aren't as successful as he is to quit relying on the government to help out.

In other words: “Get off your butt and make something of yourself.” Typical Republican thinking: “I’ve got mine. You get yours.” Not a word of sympathy for those who try and just can’t make it. No consideration for the handicap the average worker must overcome.

I can imagine VanDyken asking, “Gosh, what handicap are you talking about?”

How about the fact that between 1978 and 2021 pay of the average worker rose only 18% over those 43 years. But during that same period, pay of executives of the largest corporations in the U.S. rose by 1,500%. Even during the two years of the pandemic CEOs saw their compensation leap by 30%.

VanDyken writes that there is no need “to keep spending public money that we don’t have.” No mention of the fact that corporations are not paying their fair share of taxes, but at the same time are receiving “corporate welfare” from the government through subsidies as incentive to create jobs, so-called “top-down-economics” That theory was first touted beginning with the Reagan administration. It’s an economic theory proven false years ago.

In spite of that fact, the new Prime Minister of Great Britain, Liz Truss, last week presented a top-down economic plan to Parliament to deal with rising inflation. The plan was soundly ridiculed, and PM Truss quickly withdrew the plan.

A little research is warranted before comparing one’s own success with the lack thereof by many less fortunate workers in our society.

Gary Dielman
Baker City

COLUMN

Witnessing the end of some print icons

Print media is hard. That’s not news to anyone reading this column. Each week brings a new and sobering headline from the print media world — usually a headline that includes the word “shuttering” (which, coincidentally enough, makes me shudder). So, when we received an email from The Arena Group, owners of Parade magazine as well as Spry Living, with the subject line in all caps saying PLEASE READ, I prepared myself for the worst.

Dear Valued Partner,

Today, we are announcing changes in the way we deliver our brands to our readers. We have made the difficult decision to wind down the print distribution of Parade, Relish and Spry Living, and I wanted you to hear this news from me first. Our last print issue of Parade is November 6 and we will no longer publish Relish and Spry Living after their October issues.

Gulp.

The bad news: October will be the last month the Baker City Herald will carry Spry Living magazine as the publication will be entirely discontinued. Parade magazine will end 80-plus years of print publication in mid-November



Karrine Brogoitti

and will no longer be an insert in hundreds of newspapers across the U.S. — including the East Oregonian, our sister newspaper in Pendleton.

The good news: Parade will continue to publish an e-edition, a digital version of the magazine, that will be carried in the e-edition of the Baker City Herald and The Observer every Saturday. The Arena Group is also offering additional digital content that we may choose to use online if it aligns with our publication goals and is a good fit for our readers.

As the print industry continues to evolve, our focus remains solidly on providing quality content that serves our community with accurate and credible local news and information. Our newsroom delivers that content every day of the week through the website, app and newsletters. Three days a week that content is designed for delivery via our print product and in our e-edition, the digital version of our print pages.

The number of people subscribing to

the Baker City Herald is growing, and it should come as no surprise that those new readers are predominantly seeking digital subscriptions, rather than our printed edition — as our new audience recognizes that the value of the newspaper is in the news, not in the paper.

The Mail Tribune in Medford announced last month it would no longer be printing newspapers effective at the end of September. An email to commercial print customers read, “Due to the cost to print and deliver our own newspapers, supply-chain instability and continuous cost increases, and the inevitable subscriber migration to consuming more (if not all) digital news content, we have decided to shut down our printing press as of September 29, 2022.”

The Mail Tribune follows the Ashland Daily Tidings in discontinuing printing newspapers altogether and delivering news completely online. Metro newspaper the Atlanta Journal-Constitution in Georgia announced they are considering dropping from daily publication to weekly, much as the nonprofit Salt Lake Tribune is now only producing one print edition a week in favor of online delivery of their news content.

The Herald’s parent company, EO

Media Group, has made similar decisions in the last couple of years, shuttering its printing presses in Pendleton and Bend and outsourcing printing of its papers, including all of the company’s east-side publications, like the Herald.

EO Media Group plans to continue to print newspapers. There remains a clear demand for those tangible print editions in our rural communities.

As we look to our future, our focus and mission is to continually serve our readers with credible, professionally created local news and information. Delivery of that content will continue to evolve and improve as does the variety of ways to reach our audience.

If you haven’t already, take a moment to register your subscription for digital access of the Herald. Call 800-781-3214 to talk to one of our customer service staff who will be happy to walk you through the process. It’s easy, takes just a few moments to get set up and allows you to take advantage of our e-edition, app and website delivery along with your print subscription.

■ Karrine Brogoitti is the publisher of the Baker City Herald and The Observer.

CONTACT YOUR PUBLIC OFFICIALS

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