

## EDITORIAL

## Measure 114 needs to be delayed

A federal judge needs to put a temporary halt on Measure 114, Oregon's history-making gun control law that voters narrowly passed Nov. 8.

Judge Karin J. Immergut has scheduled a hearing for Thursday, Dec. 2, to consider a motion filed by attorneys for plaintiffs in a lawsuit challenging the measure. That's just six days before the law is slated to take effect.

The plaintiffs — the Oregon Firearms Federation, Sheriff Brad Lohrey of Sherman County, and a Keizer gun store owner — are seeking a temporary restraining order and preliminary injunction to block the measure's provisions from taking effect.

Although there is legal precedent establishing that citizens' Second Amendment rights are not unlimited — background checks, for instance, have been required for decades, and restrictions on buying certain types of guns, in some places, have also passed legal muster — Measure 114, if it takes effect in full on Dec. 8, almost certainly would create a situation in which it's not possible for anyone to legally buy a gun from a licensed dealer in Oregon.

Such an outright ban on buying firearms, even if it's temporary, seems unequivocally unconstitutional.

The issue is the requirement that gun buyers first obtain a permit and pass a police-approved gun safety class. These are the most controversial aspects of Measure 114, which voters in 29 of Oregon's 36 counties, including Baker, rejected.

(The measure passed, by about 27,000 votes out of 1.9 million cast, due to strong support in Multnomah County, the state's most populous.)

The problem is that county sheriff's offices, which will issue the permits, won't have a system in place to do so by Dec. 8. Details about the classes that the measure requires aren't clear, nor will such classes be readily available in less than a week.

The end result, then, if the law takes effect Dec. 8, is that residents who want to legally buy a gun won't be able to meet Measure 114 requirements, meaning gun sellers won't have any customers.

Imagine if the section in the Bill of Rights at stake here wasn't the Second Amendment, but the First.

It would be patently unconstitutional to deprive citizens of their right to free speech, even temporarily, while the government figured out a system of classes and permits that people needed to comply with to exercise that right.

The comparison is imperfect, to be sure.

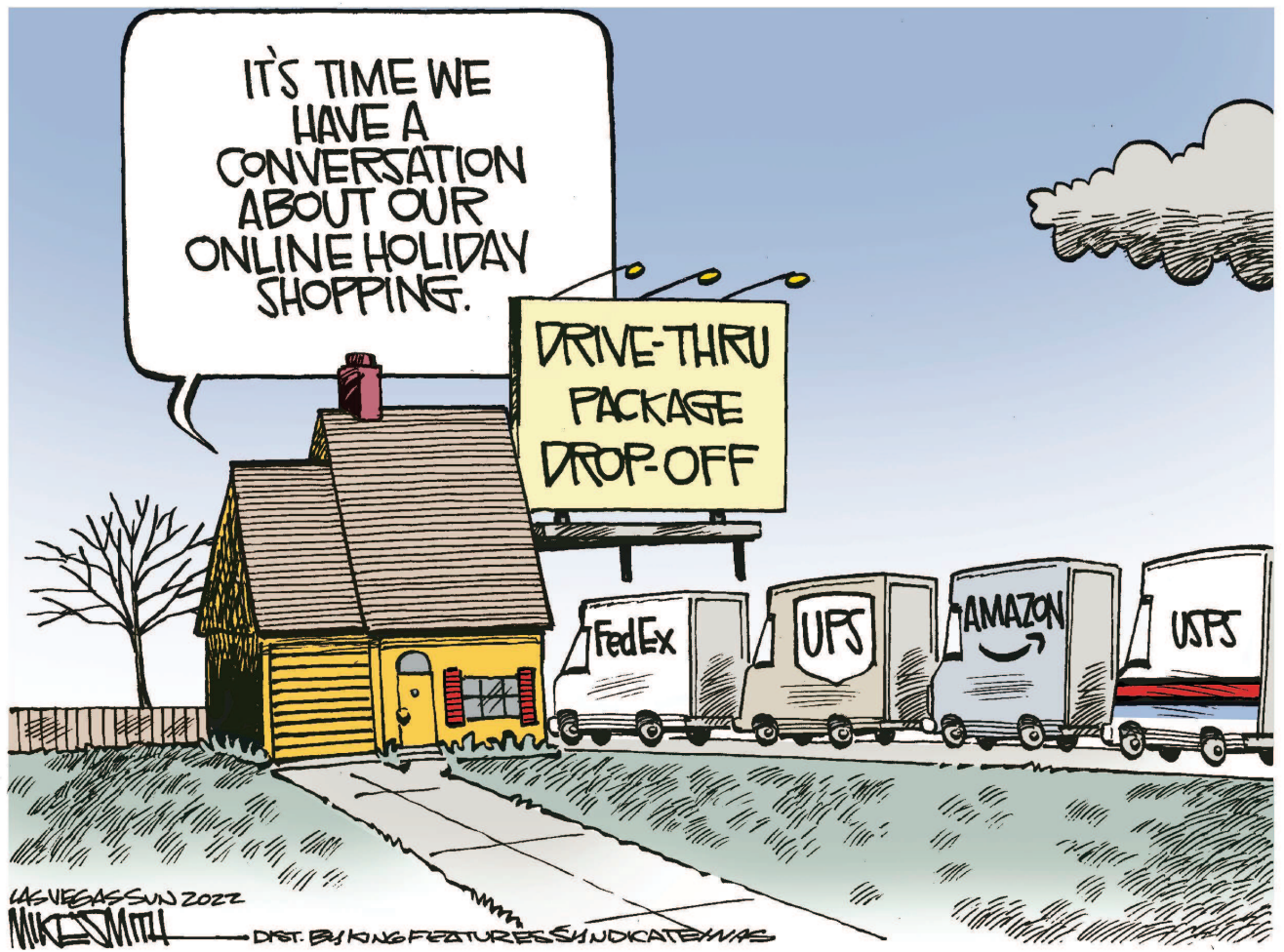
There is considerably more legal precedent for limits on the Second Amendment than on the First.

But to reiterate, the scenario shaping up in Oregon, if Measure 114 takes effect Dec. 8, isn't a new limit on people using their Second Amendment rights, but rather the outright removal of an obviously integral aspect of those rights, which is to legally buy a gun.

It will take time for the judicial system to determine whether any part of Measure 114 is constitutional.

But until those decisions are made, the measure shouldn't be allowed to take effect.

— Jayson Jacoby, Baker City Herald editor



## YOUR VIEWS

### Measure 114 will widen urban-rural divide

I would like to address the so-called faith community that gave us the ill conceived Measure 114. You have no idea of the harm you have caused yourselves, the rural people and the nation.

When I was discharged from the Marine Corps, after serving as a rifleman in Vietnam, in October 1967 I wasn't old enough to vote. I turned 21 in August 1968 so I could in vote in the 1968 election. Before it was over about two and half million served in Vietnam. Those in the field were in a minority but the military did train everyone in which end of a firearm to point. At that time communism was the enemy and the communists had no love for churches. If they would have won and established themselves here there wouldn't be any churches and many, preachers, and priests, would have been subjected to reeducation camps. Sending arms down the Ho Chi Minh trail for years about bankrupted China and the Soviet Union and they were glad to see it end too. The Korean War was the first direct confrontation with communism.

After Vietnam the rise of radical Islam was the reason for our involvement in Iraq and Afghanistan. Again, the radicals like ISIS and Al Qaeda have no love for Christianity. Your churches are open and no one wears a burqa because some went into battle and opposed it.

Being in battles and firefights should, you would think, qualify as live fire training but Measure 114 doesn't recognize these experiences as qualifying. The medals handed out for valor and wounds, Purple Hearts, Bronze Stars, Silver Stars and even a Medal

of Honor doesn't seem to be enough for the lift every voice people. They need to take a gun safety course.

Over the years I decided to quit buying Chinese junk at Christmas and birthdays and bought seven lever action .22s for my grandchildren. I passed a background check every time and paid the fees. I got a concealed weapons permit when Bill Clinton started down the gun banning road. Fingerprints, background checks and do it all over again if you change an address.

If you want to pass an antigun petition you can do it easily. Just concentrate on the blue streak along I-5 and don't waste time gathering signatures in rural Oregon. The colleges are a good place to gather some signatures.

There are lots of history deprived 18-year-olds there. No chance of telling them why we have a Second Amendment. I keep hearing how we all have to communicate and get along but communicating with the urban left is just a myth like a unicorn. There seems to be some kind of mental block. I think we have passed that time anyway. We see things in mirror images. The danger with this law is that across the nation Democrats will be saying, "look what Oregon did, we can too." Not good. It will only make the divide worse. The urban-rural divide is not just Oregon. You can google up polls and find out that 43% of American thinks we are on the road to civil war. This law will increase those numbers. Things like two more counties expressing their desire to leave Oregon and join Idaho goes unnoticed, especially among the Gen Z crowd, the 18-years-olds. I guess that stands for phone Zombies. Text 300 words a minute and get your news from Tik Tok. Back in the Viet-

nam days it became fashionable to say if you are old enough to fight for your country you should be old enough to vote. Of course 99.9% would never get close to a hostile bullet but it became the law of the land. So, now the Phone Zombies vote to make me take their hairbrained gun safety course. My first gun safety course was years ago, maybe 60 years, when Oregon passed the hunter safety legislation. Take this course or you can't go hunting.

This law needs to die a quick death. One avenue of approach to killing this insane law is for a special session of the legislature. It's time to send a message to the Republicans. You gained enough seats to stop Kate and Tina's supermajority and I want you to stand firm. Not one damned dime spent until this law is repealed and throw in the one from last session that says if somebody steals my gun I am liable for what they do with it. If not, extend the law to say if a carjacker steals your car you are liable if he kills somebody while eluding the police. The lawsuits being prepared for the Supreme Court need to include veterans as a class. Live fire training for them just shows the complete ignorance of our city cousins.

The urban/rural divide is more than just geography. The left thinks if you ban guns there will be peace love and harmony. Out here we think if there is a danger you should kill the killer. You can watch almost any news channel and eventually you will hear about the drift toward civil war. Civil wars aren't civil. Might be time to consider another approach rather than just pissing people off to make you think you are getting more secure.

Steve Culley  
La Grande

## LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

• We welcome letters on any issue of public interest. Customer complaints about specific businesses will not be printed.

• The Baker City Herald will not knowingly print false or misleading claims. However, we cannot

verify the accuracy of all statements in letters.

• Writers are limited to one letter every 15 days.

• The writer must include an address and phone number (for verification only). Letters that do not include this information cannot be published.

• Letters will be edited for brevity, grammar, taste and legal reasons.

**Mail:** To the Editor, Baker City Herald, P.O. Box 807, Baker City, OR 97814

**Email:** news@bakercityherald.com

## OTHER VIEWS

## Grocery monopolies bad for shoppers

BY REBECCA WOLF

American families are heading into the end-of-year holidays facing sticker shock in the grocery aisles. Prices have jumped 13% over the past year, with even larger increases for staples like eggs, chicken and pork. Although inflation decreased slightly in October, it remains a top concern in public opinion polls for a reason: High prices are hurting people, and they need help.

Meanwhile, second- and fourth-largest grocers in the country have hatched a plan that would actually make things worse for consumers. Kroger and Albertsons — which together already own chains like Ralphs, Food 4 Less, Fred Meyer, Safeway, Acme, Pick 'N Save and Vons — announced plans to merge, potentially creating an industry behemoth second only to Walmart.

We know the pattern well: Big companies keep getting bigger, their competitors disappear and prices keep going up. Recent research from Food & Water Watch found that in 2019, just four companies took in nearly 70% of all grocery sales in the country. And while the

power and profit of the grocery giants has grown, the number of stores has shrunk by roughly 30% between 1994 and 2019. This has hit some communities very hard; according to the Department of Agriculture, 17% of Americans now live in low-income areas with reduced food access.

To hear the grocery goliaths tell it, bigger is better: They save money by controlling more of the market, and those savings are passed on to you and me. But evidence shows that when they have the power to jack up prices, they do.

In 2011, an Agriculture Department economist found that prices tend to rise as concentration increases; the following year, a Federal Trade Commission paper noted that "those mergers generating the largest price increases [for consumers] take place in the most concentrated markets." As inflation hammers family budgets, grocery chain CEOs — including Kroger boss Rodney McMullen — occasionally admit that this is the perfect environment to raise prices and rake in record profits. After all, everyone needs to eat.

A new mega-merger would negatively impact everything

from food safety and farming practices to wages for grocery workers. Farmers face pressures from both processors and retailers; the highly-consolidated processing industry sets the prices for products like meat, poultry, milk and eggs. In the end, farmers earn only about 14 cents for every dollar spent at the grocery store.

Similarly, workers often struggle to make ends meet. More Perfect Union reports that an internal company presentation acknowledged that at least one in five Kroger employees received government assistance — which is sadly typical across the industry.

Merger mania in this industry is nothing new. Kroger and Albertsons have been buying up competition and bullying consumers for decades. These deals have been given the thumbs-up by federal regulators that no longer use antitrust laws to challenge corporate consolidation. Instead of focusing on consumer choice and competition, agencies now favor "efficiency." This suits the profit-margin needs of mega-corporations and Wall Street, at the expense of the rest of us.

But when it comes to chal-

lenging corporate power, there may be hope: The Department of Justice and Federal Trade Commission have pushed to block several big mergers this year, a sign that regulators may be ready to upend the corporate-friendly status quo. Several lawmakers wrote a letter to Federal Trade Commission chair Lina Khan saying that this deal "could exacerbate existing antitrust, labor, and price-gouging issues in the grocery sector." And Sens. Cory Booker, D-N.J., and Jon Tester, D-Mont., and Rep. Mark Pocan, D-Wisc., have introduced legislation to stop these kinds of mega mergers.

A Kroger-Albertsons merger would only deepen the power of grocery retailers to control our food system and profit off the basic needs of everyday Americans. Prices are already too high and choices too few for consumers; workers are stuck with stagnant wages; and the farmers that produce our food are losing out at every turn. By stopping this deal, regulators would send a powerful message that puts the needs of everyday people over corporate profits.

■ Rebecca Wolf is the Food Policy Analyst at the national advocacy group Food & Water Watch.

## CONTACT YOUR PUBLIC OFFICIALS

**President Joe Biden:** The White House, 1600 Pennsylvania Ave., Washington, D.C. 20500; 202-456-1111; to send comments, go to [www.whitehouse.gov](http://www.whitehouse.gov).

**U.S. Sen. Jeff Merkley:** D.C. office: 313 Hart Senate Office Building, U.S. Senate, Washington, D.C., 20510; 202-224-3753; fax 202-228-3997. Portland office: One World Trade Center, 121 S.W. Salmon St. Suite 1250, Portland, OR 97204; 503-326-3386; fax 503-326-2900. Baker City office, 1705 Main St., Suite 504, 541-278-1129; merkley.senate.gov.

**U.S. Sen. Ron Wyden:** D.C. office: 221 Dirksen Senate Office Building, Washington, D.C., 20510; 202-224-5244; fax 202-228-2717. La Grande office: 105 Fir St., No. 210, La Grande, OR 97850; 541-962-7691; fax, 541-963-0885; wyden.senate.gov.

**U.S. Rep. Cliff Bentz (2nd District):** D.C. office: 1239 Longworth House Office Building, Washington, D.C., 20515; 202-225-6730; fax 202-225-5774. Medford office: 14 N. Central Avenue Suite 112, Medford, OR 97550; Phone: 541-776-4646; fax: 541-779-0204; Ontario office: 2430 S.W. Fourth Ave., No. 2, Ontario, OR 97914; Phone: 541-709-2040. bentz.house.gov.

**Oregon Gov. Kate Brown:** 254 State Capitol, Salem, OR 97310; 503-378-3111; [www.governor.oregon.gov](http://www.governor.oregon.gov).

**Oregon State Treasurer Tobias Read:** [oregon.treasurer@ost.state.or.us](mailto:oregon.treasurer@ost.state.or.us); 350 Winter St. NE, Suite 100, Salem OR 97301-3896; 503-378-4000.

**Oregon Attorney General Ellen F. Rosenblum:** Justice Building, Salem, OR 97301-4096; 503-378-4400.

**Oregon Legislature:** Legislative documents and information are available online at [www.leg.state.or.us](http://www.leg.state.or.us).

**State Sen. Lynn Findley (R-Ontario):** Salem office: 900 Court St. N.E., S-403, Salem, OR 97301; 503-986-1730. Email: [Sen.LynnFindley@oregonlegislature.gov](mailto:Sen.LynnFindley@oregonlegislature.gov)

**State Rep. Mark Owens (R-Crane):** Salem office: 900 Court St. N.E., H-475, Salem, OR 97301; 503-986-1460. Email: [Rep.MarkOwens@oregonlegislature.gov](mailto:Rep.MarkOwens@oregonlegislature.gov)

**Baker City Hall:** 1655 First Street, P.O. Box 650, Baker City, OR 97814; 541-523-6541; fax 541-524-2049. City Council meets the second and fourth Tuesdays at 7 p.m. in Council Chambers. Councilors Jason Spriet, Shane Alderson, Joanna Dixon, Kenyon Damschen, Johnny Waggoner Sr. and Dean Guyer.

**Baker City administration:** 541-523-6541. Jonathan Cannon, city manager; Ty Duby, police chief; David Blair, fire chief; Michelle Owen, public works director.

**Baker County Commission:** Baker County Courthouse 1995 3rd St., Baker City, OR 97814; 541-523-8200. Meets the first and third Wednesdays at 9 a.m.; Bill Harvey (chair), Mark Bennett, Bruce Nichols.

**Baker County departments:** 541-523-8200. Travis Ash, sheriff; Noodle Perkins, roadmaster; Greg Baxter, district attorney; Alice Durlinger, county treasurer; Stefanie Kirby, county clerk; Kerry Savage, county assessor.