

## Legislature rethinks police mug shots

**S**uspects usually don't look their best in a booking photo. Being arrested is not a good day in anybody's life.

And as you know, once a photo is on the internet it can stick around. A police mug shot can become a digital scarlet letter. Years later, even if a person was never convicted of any crime, it could be that photo that pops up when someone does a web search.

Some websites collect up the mug shots and post galleries of them. Those websites can exist ostensibly just to charge people to take photos down.

A proposal in the Oregon Legislature would prohibit law enforcement from releasing booking photos to the public. There would be exceptions such as when law enforcement is asking the public for help or if a person is convicted of crime. Otherwise, the mug shots would be secret. The House Subcommittee on Equitable Policing briefly went over the ideas in the bill on Monday.

The proposal also contains a second provision, which would require websites that charge a fee to take down a photo — to take it down within 30 days if requested and charge no more than \$50. The website also would have only seven days to take the photo down, if an individual can submit evidence that

he or she was acquitted or not prosecuted, or was set aside, vacated or pardoned. The proposal contains penalties of up to \$1,000.

People who are arrested do have a privacy concern about how their photo is used and how it can damage their reputation. Being arrested does not mean a person is guilty. A mug shot can give that impression.

There is also a competing interest in the public's ability to understand what law enforcement is doing. If a person's mug shot is not released, there can be confusion about who was actually arrested when people have similar names. A photo can clear it up pretty quickly. More secrecy would make it easier for law enforcement to conceal some arrests — a very dangerous path. The public needs to be able to know who is arrested and what for. That for the public's safety and to be able to hold law enforcement accountable.

We cannot say we are fans of websites that exist to make money off people by charging them to take a person's personal information down. Some states have already enacted legislation to prevent businesses from charging fees to remove such photos. That aspect of the proposal deserves serious deliberation.

## Are legislators going to debate vaccination policy?

**T**he decision Gov. Kate Brown made to prioritize vaccinations for educators before many seniors get vaccinated deserves a debate. It is a decision at odds with federal guidelines which say seniors living outside nursing homes should be next.

Where is the debate about it in the Legislature? We checked out both the Senate Committee on Education and the Senate Committee on Health Care on Monday. For such a major policy decision, legislators didn't seem to be asking a lot of questions.

The only real argument at the Senate Committee on Education on Monday was one-sided. Lindsay Capps, senior policy adviser for Gov. Brown, gave a justification for Brown's choice.

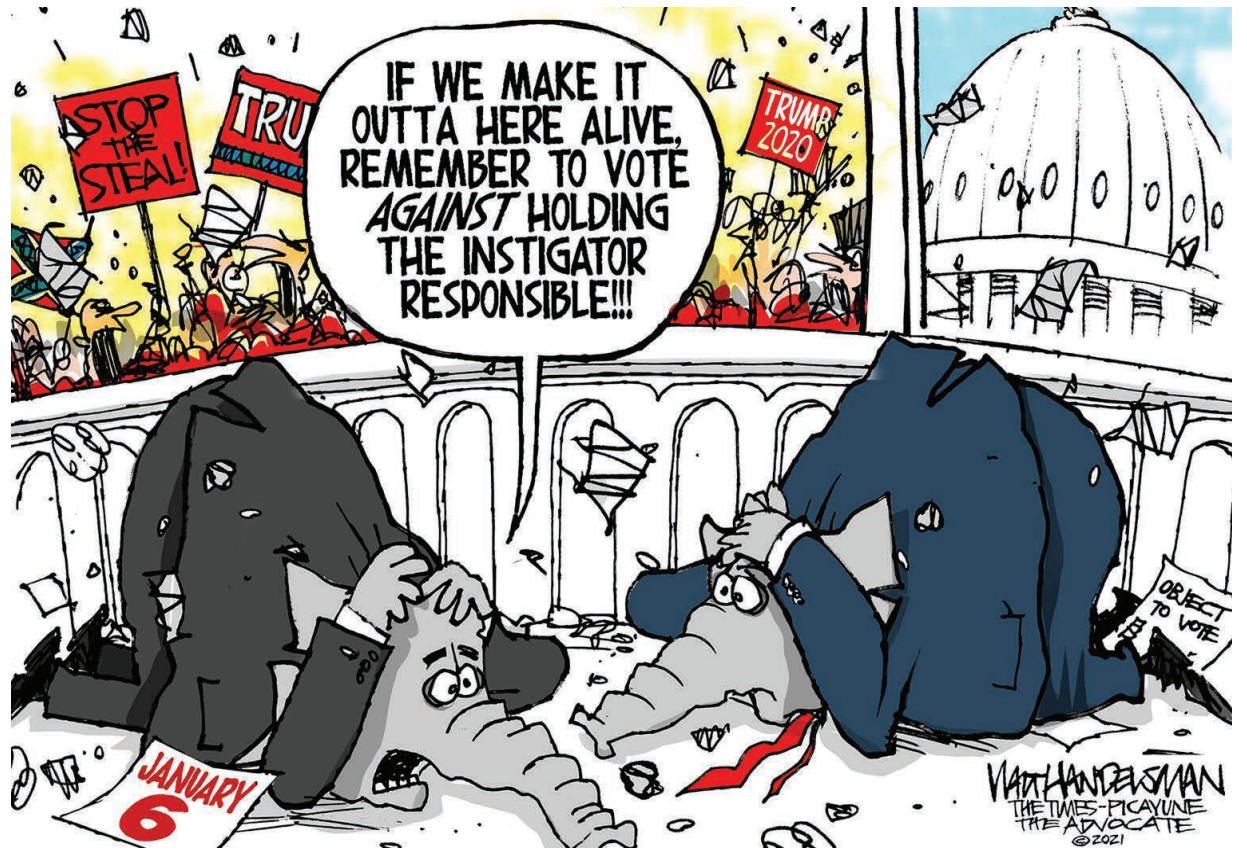
"Locked school doors are having heartbreaking consequences for our kids," he said. He pointed out some children are struggling with distance learning. Too many children have more difficulty accessing services that schools can provide

to shelter and support students. Schools have not been able to play a role in helping to identify students who may be suffering from abuse and neglect. "We are not powerless to respond," he said.

Colt Gill, director of the Oregon Department of Education, and Dean Sidelinger, the state epidemiologist, went into some detail about requirements to keep students and educators safe as they return to school.

There was some discussion about the policy at the Senate Committee on Health Care on Monday. As The Bulletin's Gary Warner reported, Sen. Tim Knopp, R-Bend, pointed out some of his constituents are upset with Brown's decision. Oregon Health Authority Director Pat Allen said federal guidelines were "advisory."

We know the Democrats that control the Legislature may not want to challenge the governor. But Oregonians do deserve a serious policy debate over Brown's choice. Where is that going to happen?



## Fossil fuel disinformation playbook

BY SCOTT CHRISTIANSEN

Contributing columnist

**P**lastics, coal, oil and gas are all economically important but environmentally damaging. Fossil fuel producers have generated public relations strategies to distract and misinform the public about the link between their pollutants and global warming. We all know how dependent we have been on these products — perhaps that is why we looked the other way for so many decades. Not all companies use disinformation, but it is far too widespread.

A 2019 list of top global polluters identifies the 20 companies responsible for 35% of fossil fuel emissions since 1965. The top six polluters were Saudi Aramco, Chevron, Gazprom, Exxon, BP and Shell. Disinformation was a key ingredient of oil industry success and profitability across the past six decades. How is disinformation deployed?

"Dark Money" by Jane Mayer is a book that traces a trail of billions of dollars spent by the Koch brothers' network, revealing a conglomeration of think tanks, academic institutions, media groups, courthouses and governments that have fallen under their sphere of influence to mislead the public. The story tells how money can make disinformation come out of a corrupted ally's mouth.

The most recent revelation of misleading the public features the plastics industry. Renewables now compete with gas, oil, and coal as sources of energy, but plastic remains a central product for fossil fuel companies.

We like plastic because it is so useful; therefore, we readily agree to recycle. NPR reports that, "Used plastic is not valuable, and it never has been. And what is more, the makers of plastic — the nation's largest oil and gas companies — have known this all along, even as they spent millions of dollars telling the American public the opposite."

In "Blowout" by Rachel Maddow, she tells how fracking leads to earth-

### Climate Changed

#### CENTRAL OREGON CROSSROADS

By Scott Christiansen



quakes — more than 100 measuring a magnitude of 3.0 or higher in the state of Oklahoma — in February 2016 alone.

She also describes how the oil and gas industry has weakened democracies in developed and developing countries, fouled oceans and rivers and propped up authoritarians like Vladimir Putin. The jacket cover says, "Blowout is a call to stop subsidizing the wealthiest businesses on earth, to fight for transparency, and to check the influence of the world's most destructive industry and its enablers."

#### Diversions: Hey, look over here!

Nearly all the fossil fuel companies are now investing in new carbon capture and storage (CCS) technologies. Yes, we want to believe CCS will work. It sounds wonderful but CCS is an expensive and immature technology. It will take decades to become scalable, longer than the time available for us to reverse course on climate disruption. According to the New Republic's reporting, the public is influenced to conclude that investments in CCS by fossil fuel producers represent a change of direction, when in reality, it is meant to direct attention away from profit-taking at a time when the public is becoming more concerned about causes of climatic tragedies.

#### Discriminating good from bad behavior

The following are recommended indicators of good behavior that should be adopted by the fossil fuel industry in dealing with the climate crisis: (a) publicly renounce disinformation on climate science; (b) develop business models that limit

global warming from rising above pre-industrial temperature more than 2°C (3.6°F); (c) support climate policies to reduce emissions of greenhouse gases; (d) fully disclose to shareholders climate-related risks faced by their business; and (e) pay their fair share of the costs for climate-related damage and adaptation.

#### Red flags

What you need to guard against: The disinformation playbook undermines science by manufacturing doubt and creating uncertainty, which can be used to block regulations or minimize corporate liability. The Union of Concerned Scientists outlines some methodologies:

1. Using counterfeit science — planting articles in journals or commissioning scientific studies that use methods designed to find "the right results."
2. Defunding research, interfering with promotions, transferring staff to other positions, tarnishing reputations, muting scientists with nondisclosure agreements or litigating.
3. Fronting alleged independent trade associations to undermine science, influence public opinion, and indirectly influence policymakers.
4. Buying credibility through alliances with academia or professional societies, using this screen to influence research and spread misinformation that serves corporate interests.
5. Lobbying to help enact legislation favorable to company interests; using connections to reach top officials.

People are busy so we need to ensure they can be accurately informed. We need to support both education and journalism. A proper education combined with verified, trusted information are the antidotes to disinformation and misinformation.

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Editorials reflect the views of The Bulletin's editorial board, Publisher Heidi Wright, Editor Gerry O'Brien and Editorial Page Editor Richard Coe. They are written by Richard Coe.

## Everyone in the country should be wearing N95 masks by now

BY JOSEPH ALLEN

Special to The Washington Post

**W**e are rightly grateful to the front-line health-care workers who put their lives on the line each day. Their relative risk of death rose 20% in 2020 over previous years.

We should also be grateful for the bakers and cooks, whose risk of death rose more than 50%. And for maids and truck drivers, who saw a 30% increase in death risk. And construction workers and shipping clerks, up more than 40%.

Those numbers come from a new report out of California that shines a light on the shocking risk to the novel coronavirus by occupation. It also shows how necessary it is that we ramp up protections for essential workers. The best way to do that: better masks.

In the scrambling for information and tools in early days of the pandemic, it was acceptable to just say any cloth mask will do, because it's true. Any face covering is better than none.

But we've learned so much since

then, and we need to adjust our strategy. A typical cloth mask might capture half of all respiratory aerosols that come out of our mouths when we talk, sing or just breathe. A tightly woven cloth mask might get you to 60% or 70%, and a surgical mask can get you to 70% or 80%.

But there's no reason any essential worker — and, really, everyone in the country — should go without masks that filter 95%.

The masks I'm referring to, of course, are N95s. These are cheap — pre-pandemic they cost about 50 cents — and easy to manufacture. Yet our country has failed to invoke the Defense Production Act to produce enough masks for health-care workers and other essential workers. That needs to change, as my colleagues at Harvard University's medical school have said.

To see the true power of masks as a public health tool, we have to examine them in the context of everyone wearing them, where the power of each mask doubles. That's because the particles have to pass through the material twice — once after being emitted

and again before someone breathes them in. Take the example of two 70% efficient masks, which combine to reduce 91% of particles. Not bad. But two N95s result in greater than a 99% reduction in exposure.

We could reduce exposure by 99% for what should be \$1 a mask. (Prices are higher now because of the failure to produce an adequate supply.) Throw in better ventilation and some distance between people and you have hospital-grade protections.

How well a mask works isn't just about filtration; it must also fit well. A mask with a good set of filters doesn't do much good if your breath can escape out the sides or top. The mask needs to go over the bridge of your nose, down around your chin and be flush against your cheeks.

Americans should become familiar with ways to test a mask's fit. Every time you put on a mask, do a "user seal check." Put your hands over the mask to block the air moving through it, and exhale gently. You shouldn't feel air coming out the side or up toward your eyes. Then, test to make sure it stays in place by moving your

head side to side and all around. Read passages of text, such as the "Rainbow Passage" that's commonly used for respirator fit testing, and see whether the mask slides around too much when you talk.

Beyond the basics of filtration and fit, consumers will need to navigate a confusing market. Is a KN95 mask acceptable? How about KF94? Does country of origin matter? What about counterfeits? A formal federal program could help by offering clear guidance on high-quality masks.

Until that happens, here's my cheat sheet: If you can find an N95, go for it. These are certified in the United States. Barring that, I'd go for the certified mask used in South Korea, the KF94. Next I'd choose KN95s, but there is a catch: The government reports that KN95s out of China might not meet standards unless the manufacturer holds a "NIOSH (National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health) Certificate."

If you can't find one of these masks, or if you're not sure whether they meet the standards, there's something you can do right now with confi-

dence: Double-mask with a surgical mask and a cloth mask. The surgical mask gives you good, certified filtration, while the cloth mask on top helps improve the fit. Research shows this can achieve greater than 90% filtration.

Many people ask whether they need an N95 on their morning runs or while sitting on a park bench. The answer to both is no. Choose masks based on the level of risk for that activity. If you're out for a jog with no one around or on a walk outside with a friend, a simple two- or three-layer cloth mask is fine. But use a high-quality mask or double-mask if you head indoors. If you're an essential worker, a high-quality mask is critical.

I'm not alone in calling for better masks, and certainly not the first. But I am joining the chorus calling for them. This could be the key to slowing the pandemic and limiting spread from the new more transmissible variants until we all get vaccinated.

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