

EDITORIALS & OPINIONS

The Bulletin
AN INDEPENDENT NEWSPAPERHeidi Wright
Gerry O'Brien
Richard Coe
Publisher
Editor
Editorial Page Editor

Should Oregon prohibit pepperoni in hospitals?

At least one of us on the editorial board has dined on the hospital food at St. Charles Bend. Other restaurants in Bend probably aren't shaking in fear, but it was good.

Now comes before the Oregon Legislature what we would like to call the "prohibit the pepperoni bill." Rep. Marty Wilde, D-Eugene, would require through House Bill 2348 that hospitals not serve any processed meat. According to Wilde's bill, that means no hot dogs, no sausages, no bacon, no turkey bacon. Although he does not call it out specifically, it also means no pepperoni. The definition in the bill includes any meat or poultry "that has been transformed through salting, curing, fermenting, smoking or any other process other than cooking." The bill also requires hospitals, long-term care facilities and prisons to make available plant-based meals.

Hmm. If your mom told you to eat your vegetables, she was right. We can't find any reliable statistics on how many Oregonians eat a super-healthy diet, but we'd guess many people could benefit by eating more fruits and vegetables. Depending on how they are prepared, it can be the healthy way to go. Some of those new plant-based burgers can pretty much trick you into thinking you are eating ground chuck. They also can be an assault of salt.

Should the state, though, dictate what people can and can't get served for dinner? It would be one thing if a doctor recommended a strict diet for a patient. But this would be the state of Oregon carving out processed meats from hospitals. Of course, eating unhealthy meals can help get you to the hospital in the first place. And someone stuck in a hospital could perhaps order takeout or have

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a friend smuggle in some sausage. Doesn't it seem downright unfair to treat patients like children who get restricted choices of what they eat? What if a person is dying and would really like a pepperoni pizza or some slices of bacon? The state of Oregon is going to tell hospitals no?

Thom Pastor, manager of food services for St. Charles Bend, told us it already offers 100% percent plant-based meals. Processed meats are available and they are very popular. Without them, "our patient and customer satisfaction would suffer greatly," he wrote in an email.

Hospitals, long-term care facilities and prisons do all receive some public money. So the public does have an interest in how that money is spent. But is there some reason we can't trust that hospitals don't offer healthy options? Tell your legislator what you think or write us a letter to the editor.

Child Welfare Division shows some progress

Lawsuits and state investigations have repeatedly shown Oregon needed to improve how it cared for its most vulnerable children.

Gov. Kate Brown declared a crisis at the state's child welfare agency in 2019 and stepped in with more oversight. Nobody would suggest the problems are gone. Working with families and abused or neglected children is not going to go well every time. But there has been notable progress:

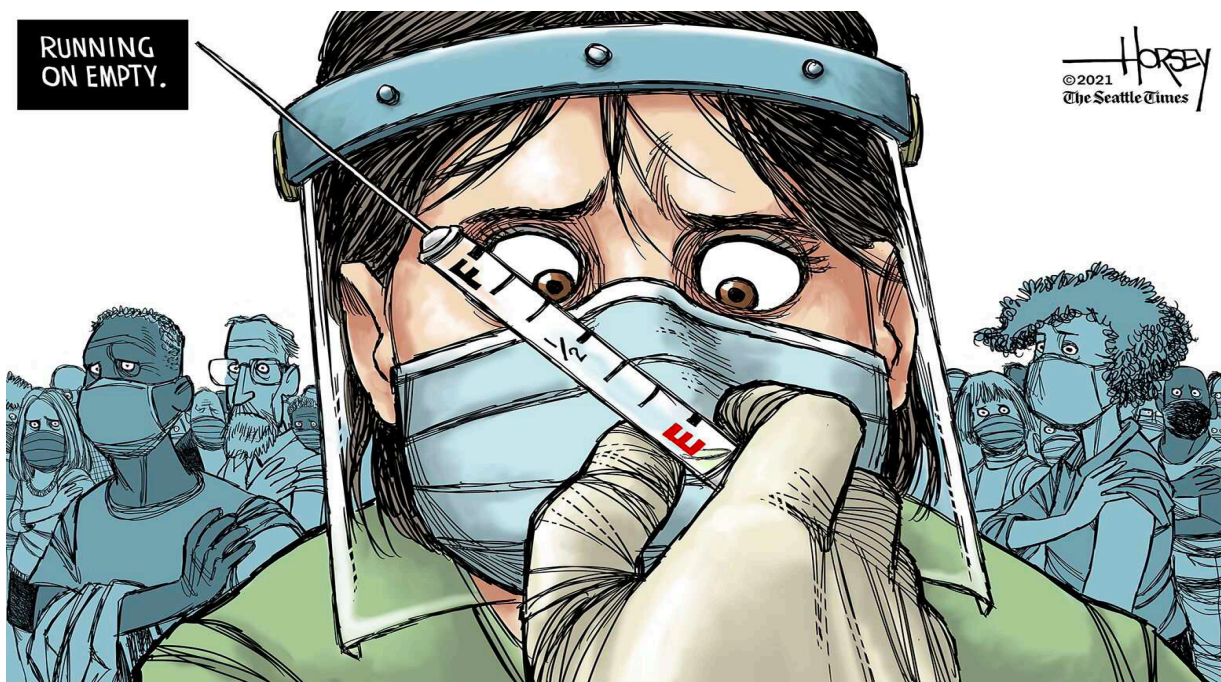
- The number of children in foster care is the lowest it has been in 15 years.
- All children placed at out-of-state residential treatment facilities are back in Oregon.
- The state has also decreased the

number of children in temporary lodging.

If that reads a bit like a news release from the state's Child Welfare Division, that is because it is in fact from a news release from the Child Welfare Division. That doesn't mean it isn't worth noting.

The Bulletin's community editorial board also recently interviewed the director of the division, Rebecca Jones Gaston. It's a mistake to extrapolate too much from a 45-minute interview, but the division certainly does seem to be in good hands. She has spearheaded an effort to refocus the agency with a racial equity lens and center its vision. We don't think that will necessarily represent a sea change at the agency — but it could help.

RUNNING ON EMPTY.



My Nickel's Worth

Happy for teachers first

I wish The Bulletin and Oregon news agencies would interview those seniors who are not mad that teachers were put ahead of seniors. Many of us were happy to step aside and let the teachers go first. I'm tired of hearing from only the naysayers on this.

—Carla Fox, Bend

Teachers should be first

I would like to publicly thank Gov. Kate Brown for allowing teachers to receive their vaccinations before some seniors. Children desperately need to be back in class. From the experiences of my grandchildren, I know how difficult online classes have been for families. Even children who are normally good students have struggled to stay motivated. Those of us over 65 can wait a few more weeks for vaccinations.

—Margaret Wyman, Bend

Honored to follow teachers

Wednesday, this 88-year-old senior received her first COVID-19 vaccine at the well-organized effort at the fairgrounds in Redmond. I feel honored to follow the teachers who need to guide our children toward a positive future. In my lifetime, I've had many shots, literally and figuratively, to make my contribution. I grieve the losses we've recently endured but refuse to live in fear. I celebrate the increased efforts of our government, nationally, statewide and locally, to improve our physical and economic health and look forward to a joyful tomorrow. Cheers!

—Jacqueline Thea, Bend

Excellent vaccination effort

Good news for this senior who received her first COVID-19 vaccine at the Deschutes County fairgrounds this afternoon. The experience was flawless from start to finish and took less than an hour. The coordinating

agencies — Deschutes County Health Department and St. Charles, assisted by the National Guard — have been so successful in delivering the vaccine that appointments are running ahead of the state's schedule. It probably helps that the 75+ age group are a hardy bunch who quickly signed up to be vaccinated, happy to do battle with the virus.

—Marion Davidson, Bend

Well done on vaccinations

Many thanks to the St. Charles staff, volunteers and Army personnel at the Deschutes County fairgrounds COVID-19 vaccination event. They were patient, polite and professional to a very large group of seniors. Everything was well-organized, and the lines all moved smoothly. It was only an hour from the time I arrived to an appointment for a second dose. The shot (Pfizer version) didn't hurt and, for me, had no side effects. You need to make an appointment ahead of time and should arrive early since there may be a line for parking. Some of the queue is outdoors, so dress appropriately. I brought a book for the 15-minute observational period after the vaccination. We recipients appreciate the time and effort everyone put into this event.

—Larry Cole, Redmond

Thanks for the help

Sunday, while walking my dog in a snow-filled part of southeast Bend, I dropped my driver's license.

Of course, I did not know this until I got home. I want to thank the person or persons who found it and took the time to return it to my home. What a relief! Having lived in Bend for over 20 years, this reminds me why this is a great place to live. Again, thank you!

—Dorothy Wright, Bend

Credit to the vaccination effort

Kudos to Deschutes County Health Department. This weekend, I was lucky enough to receive my first vaccine shot at the fairgrounds in Redmond. It was easy, well-organized, efficient. The workers were very friendly. Thanks to the medical professionals, the volunteers and the National Guard who made this possible. Thanks for helping us along the path to a normal life!

—Peg Fisher, Bend

Expel them from Congress

For weeks, I pondered whether the best way to unify the nation would be to avoid further legal action against Donald Trump. Then, Trump's effort to overturn a fair democratic election with lies emerged, as did the domestic terrorist attack Jan. 6. Ignoring the destructive behavior of Trump and his followers would be more divisive than holding them accountable.

Trump and his traitors orchestrated an insurrection that cost five lives and extensive carnage as the Nazi, racist and white nationalist terrorists looted the Capitol in search of perceived enemies to capture, try and execute. Chief among these was the vice president. This was not a peaceful First Amendment protest; this was a violent attempted coup against our democracy. The idea that treason (at worst) or sedition (at best) should go unpunished is unconscionable. Anyone present on the Capitol grounds and party to this action should have known what they were endorsing since the plans were obvious to everyone for weeks. These terrorists should be prosecuted, convicted and imprisoned. Then we can discuss reconciliation. Members of Congress who abetted this action by falsely claiming there was massive fraud in the November election should be expelled from Congress and precluded from holding public office again.

—Trisha Vigil, Medford

Letters policy

We welcome your letters. Letters should be limited to one issue, contain no more than 250 words and include the writer's signature, phone number and address for verification. We edit letters for brevity, grammar, taste and legal reasons. We reject poetry, personal attacks, form letters, letters submitted elsewhere and those appropriate for other sections of The Bulletin. Writers are limited to one letter or guest column every 30 days.

Guest columns

Your submissions should be between 550 and 650 words; they must be signed; and they must include the writer's phone number and address for verification. We edit submissions for brevity, grammar, taste and legal reasons. We reject those submitted elsewhere. Locally submitted columns alternate with national columnists and commentaries. Writers are limited to one letter or guest column every 30 days.

How to submit

Please address your submission to either My Nickel's Worth or Guest Column and mail, fax or email it to The Bulletin. Email submissions are preferred.

Email: letters@bendbulletin.com

Write: My Nickel's Worth/Guest Column
P.O. Box 6020
Bend, OR 97708

Fax: 541-385-5804

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.

OSU-Cascades bill is for fairness, not fiefdoms

BY REP. PAUL EVANS

I read your recent "Legislators shouldn't put higher educational fiefdoms first" editorial with great interest. It was a fascinating read. Accordingly, I feel compelled to respond to the fallacious mischaracterizations your organization printed.

I am curious if you will publish my rebuttal.

To begin with, the intention of House Bill 2888 is not to defend fiefdoms — it is to expand fairness — to defend the opportunities of students throughout the state of Oregon that are suffering because of the growth of Oregon State University-Cascades.

The editorial advanced an argument: House Bill 2888 was introduced to defend Western Oregon University. Unfortunately, your editorial board knowingly omitted the rest of the nar-

rative for the apparent sake of simplicity.

Eastern Oregon University, Oregon Institute of Technology, Southern Oregon University and Western Oregon University are all struggling to survive. This is not about one TRU (Technical and Regional University); it is about all of them. House Bill 2888 is not about a defending a fiefdom, it is about protecting students (many of them from Central Oregon) from the unanticipated consequences of unsustainable growth at OSU-Cascades. TRUs exist to serve students who may not be able to learn at larger facilities. TRUs serve a critical function throughout Oregon, as many students can't afford to relocate.

OSU-Cascades is directly and indirectly subsidized by the main campus in Corvallis. OSU-Corvallis employs

GUEST COLUMN



Rep. Evans

an army of adjunct (part time, temporary) instructors and graduate teaching assistants. This allows for cheaper overhead that can be, and often is, passed along to

OSU-Cascades to subsidize the price of instruction. In simplest terms, the 4% growth in enrollment (at a time of statewide reductions) is the product of a "fixed game" period.

TRUs are not legally allowed to offer doctorate degrees. TRUs must not compete with community colleges offering "applied baccalaureate" degrees. TRUs are required to provide

the wrap-around services necessary for maintaining accreditation, internal assessment and all the other legally required functions of a stand-alone institution. TRUs are on the brink of survival during the best of times, and this is far from the best of times.

OSU-Cascades was originally justified as a "regional" institution. Many of us supported this initial effort because of a shared commitment to the ideals of fairness — no student should have to travel far from home for the educational opportunities to compete in the 21st century. As a career college educator, I still support a campus in Bend.

However, over the past six years OSU-Cascades has expanded in scale, scope and size. It has done so at the expense of existing universities; it has done so without regard for system

need (the Higher Education Coordinating Commission study concluded there was no need for additional capacity).

The continuing attacks upon my character for offering Central Oregon the opportunity to establish a stand-alone institution may sell newspapers, but it cheapens the public dialogue about how we steward scarce resources in a challenging time.

I believe in fairness not fiefdoms. I believe the people of Central Oregon deserve access to affordable post-secondary education.

And I believe the OSU-Cascades campus is an important regional asset. I just don't believe that any one campus should grow at the expense of all the others.

■ State Rep. Paul Evans is Democrat from Monmouth.