

EDITORIALS & OPINIONS

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

Should Oregon make police disciplinary records transparent?

The Associated Press laid it out starkly last year: “Officer Derek Chauvin had more than a dozen misconduct complaints against him before he put his knee on George Floyd’s neck.

Daniel Pantaleo, the New York City officer who seized Eric Garner in a deadly chokehold, had eight. Ryan Pownall, a Philadelphia officer facing murder charges in the shooting of David Jones, had 15 over five years.”

Those disciplinary records weren’t made public until after the deaths of the victims. Complaints against police officers are mostly kept secret. It can be a requirement of state law. It can be a requirement in union contracts.

It’s hard to imagine a time when there has been more pressure on the police to make disciplinary records transparent. House Bill 3145 would essentially do that in Oregon. It would create a public database of information including complaints, allegations, charges, proceedings, determinations, disciplinary actions taken and more. And, yes, the public safety employees would be identified by name.

Law enforcement disciplinary records are public in about a dozen states. There is some availability of the records in about a dozen more. They are confidential in the rest, including Oregon.

Many law enforcement organizations oppose the bill as written. The Oregon Coalition of Police and Sheriffs opposes it. The Oregon Sheriff’s Association opposes it. As does the Oregon Association of Chiefs of Police.

Many arguments were made against the bill in testimony on

Monday. It will make it more difficult to hire officers. It could have a chilling effect on officers reporting on other officers. It will increase legal costs and staffing requirements to comply with the law. It will create more allegations of grievances and unfair labor practices by officers. And it could be ripe for abuse with people submitting complaints so they show up in a public database.

We don’t dispute there is truth in those arguments. The question is: Does the importance of transparency in police discipline outweigh those concerns? There is a strong public interest in how law enforcement uses the authority granted to it by the public.

The other question is: Would making the records transparent improve the quality of policing? We would argue the sunlight would make it more likely that problem officers are properly disciplined or terminated.

The debate over this bill is far from over. And we have only just summarized some of the tricky issues involved. Please read the bill and the testimony for yourself. Let your legislator know how you feel or write us a letter to the editor.

Bill targets concealed carry in public spaces

Should people be able to walk into schools, colleges, city hall or other public buildings or other public spaces carrying concealed guns if they are properly licensed?

Senate Bill 554 would allow many public bodies to ban them.

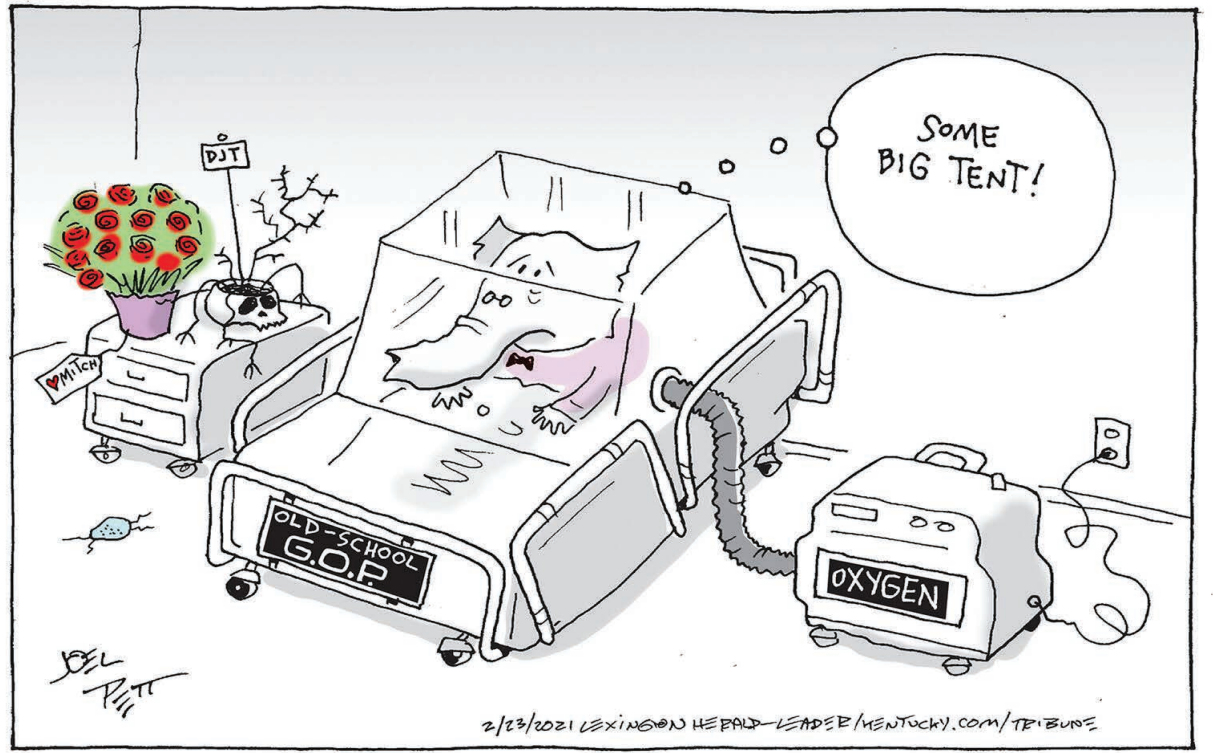
In the right place in the right time and with the right training a person with a concealed weapon could maybe — maybe — stop something terrible from happening. That said, we would rather leave intervention with a gun to trained professional

law enforcement than amateurs.

The bill would undoubtedly create problems for people with concealed carry licenses who believe they need it. As some testimony on the bill suggested, it could create a maze of prohibited zones to essentially make the license useless.

To say there are strong sentiments about this bill would be an understatement. You can check out the testimony yourself by searching out the bill on the Legislature’s website.

Tell your legislator what you think or write us a letter to the editor.



Livestock, hay, water and climate change

The publication, *Livestock’s Long Shadow*, shows how rapidly growing populations and incomes increase demand for livestock products. Livestock are important, accounting for 40% of agricultural gross domestic product and globally employing at least a billion people; however, livestock require a significant number of natural resources and they are responsible for about 14.5% of greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions. Consider these global livestock interactions:

- The cattle sector in Brazil is burning the rain forest to clear it for grazing, which is responsible for 80% of the deforestation in the Amazon.

- Livestock production is shifting from rural to urban and peri-urban areas, moving closer to consumers and trade hubs where feed is imported to serve Concentrated Animal Feeding Operations (CAFOs). CAFOs create serious environmental issues. Manure management is at the heart of CAFO operations, including solid-liquid separation, anaerobic digestion, and frequent manure removal for treatment, energy production and by-product recycling.

Water — The livestock sector accounts for over 8% of global water use, mostly for the irrigation of feed crops. The major sources of livestock water pollution are from animal wastes, antibiotics and hormones, chemicals from tanneries, sediments from eroded pastures and fertilizers and/or pesticides used for feed crops. Livestock also affect the replenishment of fresh water by compacting soil, reducing infiltration, degrading the banks of watercourses, lowering water tables, increasing runoff, and reducing dry season flows.

Biodiversity — Livestock production occupies 30% of the world’s land surface, once habitat for wildlife, and livestock use 70% of the planet’s agricultural land. Scientists suggest that the sixth major mass extinction is happening now and grazing plays a part because early and heavy grazing seri-

Climate Changed
CENTRAL OREGON
CROSSROADS
By Scott Christiansen

ously affects plant flowering and seeding. About 20% of the world’s grazing land (including 73% of rangelands in fragile dry areas) have been degraded by over-grazing, compaction, and erosion, contributing to loss of biodiversity.

Cattle in Oregon — The May 2020 livestock report for Oregon shows that most cattle ranches are in Malheur, Morrow, Harney, Klamath and Lake counties. In these counties, cattle graze on private land, federal rangelands and timberlands, where land is arid and unsuitable for farming.

Livestock and hay are nearly always among the most important agricultural commodities in Oregon. Water is needed to produce both. In Eastern Oregon, water is unsustainably pumped for hay production, lowering water tables and affecting the availability of drinking water for local citizens. Closer to home in Deschutes County an intense debate pits agricultural water use against aquatic life in the Deschutes River. The root cause of the problem is related to unsustainable water allocations to agriculture starting when Bend was settled, over 100 years ago.

Economic transitions — The population of Bend has grown by 31% in the last decade, from 76,660 in 2010 to 100,421 in 2019, but this growth is not related to agriculture. Statistics from the 2017 Census of Agriculture, comparing changes from 2012-2017 in Crook, Deschutes and Jefferson counties, show the number of farms increased by 13% and 16% in Crook and Deschutes counties while falling 16% in Jefferson County. Jefferson County farms are getting bigger to capture efficiency gains while farms are being subdivided in the other two counties.

The net cash income per farm (and percent change compared to 2012) was \$7,408 (-25%) for Crook, \$12,866 (-12%) for Deschutes, and \$31,281 (+209%) for Jefferson counties. High value crops in Jefferson County are contributing to Oregon’s state revenues while agriculture is shrinking in the other two, especially in Deschutes County where data suggest that farming is more a lifestyle choice than a commercial activity that sustains livelihoods.

During the past three decades, Oregon made the transition from a resource-based economy (think timber) to a more mixed manufacturing and marketing economy.

Across Oregon in 2017, beef cattle and calves brought in \$977 million, with Crook, Deschutes and Jefferson counties contributing \$49 million or 5% of the total. Now compare the values for cattle production with total direct spending for travel in Oregon, which was \$12.8 billion in 2019. In Central Oregon (Crook, Deschutes, Jefferson, and south Wasco counties) the total was \$935 million or 7.3% of the state total. This was the 10th consecutive year of growth in travel spending — contributing to local employment and the tax base.

The reality is that our natural resources bring more visitors to Deschutes County than agriculture. It is therefore critical to prioritize the conservation of its natural resources like water, fish and frogs to sustain other productive sectors like tourism and recreation.

Animal agriculture and hay production are part of Oregon’s identity and history, and should remain so, but stewardship should guide decision-making. We need to keep agricultural water use within natural sustainable recharge rates so that other sectors are not negatively affected.

■ Scott Christiansen is an international agronomist with 35 years of experience. He worked for USDA’s Agricultural Research Service and the U.S. Agency for International Development.

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.

Having vaccines alone isn’t enough to defeat a worldwide pandemic

BY JOYCE CHAPLIN

Special to The Washington Post

“No one is safe until everyone is,” the United Nations has cautioned about the COVID-19 pandemic, a warning now amplified by coronavirus variations able to dodge vaccines that are, in any case, too few and too concentrated in wealthy parts of the world. That a global pandemic requires a global response is a lesson firmly rooted in medical history. It took over 200 years of international effort to eradicate smallpox. The very first attempt showed that a vaccine was necessary, but not sufficient. Ending the global transmission of deadly disease also requires international travel that is safe and global relations based on terms of equality, two conditions that remain difficult to ensure.

History’s first global health initiative was Spain’s Royal Philanthropic Vaccine Expedition, which sailed around the world from 1803 to 1813, delivering smallpox vaccinations. The venture astonished people at the time. Such maritime circumnavigations were associated with death, not health, and doing anything good on a planetary scale was unprecedented.

Indeed, the effort was mostly driven by Spain’s imperial and economic con-

cerns, not philanthropy or humanitarianism.

Beginning with the Canary Islands in the 1490s, Spanish overseas imperialism had blended military conquest, enslavement and commercial monopoly.

Imperialism brought Spain profits and prestige. It became the model for all European empires, even though the human cost of these invasions was appalling. Some American Indian populations may have diminished as much as 90%, in part from contagions new to them. The worst malady was smallpox, a 3,000-year old Eurasian disease that could kill up to 30% of the infected and disfigure and blind survivors. European invaders globalized this ancient horror, carrying it into West Africa, the Americas and the Pacific.

But in the early 1700s, Europeans and American colonists learned, from Ottoman Turks and West Africans, a miraculous remedy: inoculation, in which material from smallpox pustules was inserted into the uninfected, triggering a milder form of the disease — and lifetime immunity. In the 1790s, English physician Edward Jenner made inoculation even safer by using pus from sores caused by cowpox, a related though milder disease. Cowpox vaccine (vacca is Latin for cow) would be what the Spanish carried around the

world, scant years after Jenner had reported his experiments in print.

For the first time, a circumnavigation to bring health seemed credible, if barely. Indeed, the Spanish plan was ambitious: to perform vaccinations, organize local medical boards and seed stocks of vaccine in multiple places, thousands of miles apart. From Spain, the team stopped in the Canaries, Puerto Rico and Venezuela. Deputy surgeon José Salvany then covered territories in present-day Colombia, Ecuador, Peru, Bolivia and Chilean Patagonia, while commanding surgeon Francisco Xavier de Balmis went to Cuba and Mexico. Balmis next sailed to the Philippines (aboard the *Fernando de Magallanes*, no less), continuing to China, St. Helena and back to Spain.

By some measures, the mission triumphed. Hundreds of thousands of people were vaccinated, nearly 200,000 in Peru alone. These people, mostly children, were directly protected and their immunity helped prevent epidemics.

Such results, however, required some dubious practices. Preserving the vaccine outside a warm body was still difficult. So, the expedition took on, as wards of the state, 22 Spanish foundlings, abandoned boys raised in char-

itable institutions, 3- to 9-years old. On departure, they were vaccinated in sequence as symptoms prompted transfer of the vaccine, arm-to-arm, to keep it alive. Twenty-six new boys were added in Mexico, and others subsequently, for a total of 62. The Spanish foundlings were placed for adoption in Mexico City and the parents of recruits compensated. But there were casualties: four boys (6%) died at sea.

And why trust these newest Spanish invaders, anyway? Indians in Peru distrusted Salvany so much they called him the anti-Christ. “They doubt everything,” he complained, “which the White Man proposes.”

They had good reason: vaccination was intended to maintain Spanish rule over them. Carlos IV’s philanthropy was perhaps sincere, atoning for the sins of his ancestors. But his ministers and colonial officials backed the expedition to protect the empire’s labor supply, particularly among Indians. The expedition thus resembled the forced inoculations or vaccinations of enslaved people that were also taking place, medical interventions, without consent, to protect plantation economies.

Smallpox would continue to ravage populations without access to vaccination — it killed an estimated 300 mil-

lion people in the 20th century — and eradicating it required a more equal global society. Only after the dismantling of European empires in the 20th century could international medical authorities inspire confidence in vaccination and medical tracing. The World Health Organization (WHO) began its historic anti-smallpox campaign in 1967 and declared victory in 1980.

The year 2021 isn’t like 1803, and it isn’t like 1980. Yet again, we have a new vaccine. But if empires have faded, imperialism’s effects haven’t, as highly unequal access to vaccination demonstrates. Meanwhile, Brexit and “America First” show the erosion of global solidarity.

And worldwide airline travel is now both solution and problem.

It distributes vaccines, but it’s also spreading novel diseases in the first place, from AIDS/HIV to COVID-19. It’s easier than ever to travel around the world, but also to bring death back home. That threat won’t end with vaccination. Instead, identifying outbreaks early and monitoring travelers from affected regions is critical — until everyone cooperates in doing that, no one is safe.

■ Joyce E. Chaplin is the James Duncan Phillips professor of Early American history at Harvard University.