

EDITORIALS & OPINIONS

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

State law should not punish county unfairly

When Deschutes County voted in November to prohibit new marijuana production and processing outside the county's cities, the vote also meant something else.

The vote cut the county off from what was about \$500,000 a year in revenue from the state.

That money would have gone to help fund the county health department and law enforcement. It turned out that the vote ostensibly to stop additional marijuana production in the county was also a vote that made it more difficult for Deschutes County to fight addiction and crime.

The way Oregon's marijuana laws were written excluding any type of marijuana operation meant losing all the marijuana money. It doesn't matter that Deschutes County does have existing marijuana producers. As state Rep. Jason Kropf, D-Bend, explained the law was written like an on/off switch. County voters turned it off.

Kropf and state Rep. Jack Zika, R-Redmond, have introduced a fix, House Bill 3295. It turns the funding mechanism into more of a "dimmer switch" in Kropf's words. Deschutes County would continue to get funding, according to the same state formula as before — revenue raised is divided up based on acreage and

licensing. Deschutes County or any other government entity wouldn't be cut off entirely because it prohibits new operations. Kropf, Zika and Deschutes County Commissioner Tony DeBone testified in favor of the bill earlier this month.

Two important issues came up during that hearing. Did voters know the county would lose revenue? Some did. The Bulletin wrote about it. Commissioners also discussed it during public meetings. But the revenue drop wasn't clearly explained in the voter's pamphlet.

The second issue is: The amount of money at stake will be significantly reduced by November's Measure 110. Measure 110 was the ballot measure approved statewide that provides more money for drug treatment. It will siphon off about 72% of the \$500,000. Still the county might get \$140,000 and that amount seems likely to rise as marijuana revenue increases over time.

State law shouldn't be written to punish Deschutes County unfairly. It is. If this fix doesn't pass this session, the law still needs to be changed.

County makes understanding the budget a little bit easier

Government budgets can be real snoozefests. Impenetrable. Lacking context. A flood of numbers.

It doesn't mean they aren't important. If you want to find something out about how, say, Deschutes County spends its money or where its money comes from, it's probably there. Somewhere. Deschutes County's budget document has a pretty cover, a good overview and lots of charts and lots of numbers. For more than 300 pages.

But what the county has done recently is provide what it calls its "Popular Annual Financial Report." A new one came out this week. You can see it at tinyurl.com/9j5jpwsv.

It's a very clear 14-page short summary of where the county gets its money and where it goes. For instance for a resident of Bend, the county is the property tax collector. But it only keeps about 17 cents on the dollar. About 48 cents goes to schools. Another 21 cents goes to the city of Bend. The Bend Park & Recreation District gets 10 cents. The Deschutes Public Library gets

4 cents.

The county earns most of its money in taxes and spends most of its money on public safety. It's level of debt has substantially declined over the last 10 years from \$94 million to \$46 million. That's happened as it has paid off projects such as county buildings. Because of the county's growing population there is a need to expand the county courthouse, which will likely mean an increase in indebtedness.

Deschutes County isn't the only government agency making an extra effort to make information about it easier to understand. The city of Bend has in recent years provided dashboards on its website that show where it is at in meeting city goals and budget information. The cool thing is that they update often.

Of course not everything is hunk-dory when it comes to governments being forthcoming about what they are doing. But we complain about that so much it only seems right to point out some examples where governments are trying hard to get it right.



My Nickel's Worth

Oregon needs tighter mink regulations

Thank you for pointing out that we at the Center for Biological Diversity are absolutely aiming to reshape how Oregon treats animals by seeking to end beaver trapping and hunting last year and this year improve how mink farms are regulated.

Here's why: COVID-19 can and has been passed back and forth between humans and mink (this has already resulted in a viral mutation). COVID-19 has ravaged mink farms in Europe and the U.S. At least three mink escaped an Oregon mink farm that was quarantined following a COVID-19 outbreak (and two tested positive for COVID-19).

In addition to the threat of mink becoming a reservoir for COVID-19 mutations that may undo our human vaccination efforts, we're concerned that farmed mink could spread COVID-19 to wild mink and their relatives, like otters, fishers, martens and badgers, potentially decimating wild animal populations.

We've been through a lot this past year. A lot has changed. Many of us are thinking about what we want to keep changing. If we want to stop the next pandemic and get this one under control, we need to make changes to the facilities that provide ideal breeding grounds for pandemics.

Oregon's mink factory farms are a threat to public health and wildlife. Our petition to add mink to ODFW's prohibited species list and Senate Bill 832, the bill to close Oregon's mink farms and shift their workers to new employment, would reshape our relationship with animals to provide us all a safer future.

— Lori Ann Burd is the environmental health director for the Center for Biological Diversity.

Support the bike bill

In response to your editorial on March 7, I am writing on behalf of The Environmental Center to voice our strong support for SB 395, "The Bike Bill", on the 50th anniversary of its original passage.

Bend was much smaller in 1971 when an initiative was passed to direct 1% of state transportation improvement funds to biking and walking routes. Since then, Bend's population has ballooned from 13,700 to nearly 100,000. SB 395 would boost funding to 5%.

SB 395's extra funds could help Bend ensure safer walking and biking routes. Last fall, Bend voters approved a transportation bond. But the bond only pays for a portion of the total investment we need to make in our transpor-

tation system over the next 20 years. Some additional resources from the state would go a long way to helping our community meet that need.

Our vision is a transportation system in Bend that moves people and goods safely and efficiently, and that meets the needs of all users, whether they walk, bike, take the bus, or drive. Safety is especially important for walkers and bikers — people won't get out of their cars if they don't feel safe. Walking and biking are also good for our health and they reduce car trips on our streets and highways, resulting in less congestion and carbon emissions.

Now is the time to pass the Safe Routes for All act, SB 395, and achieve our vision of safer, less congested streets for all.

— Neil Baunsgard is a program manager at the Environmental Center in Bend.

Unfair advantage

Over the years, women's sports have incorporated important changes. There was a time when girls' sports had physical exertion limits. An example was the special rules for girls' basketball. Each team had six players rather than the normal five. Three played only offense and three were just defensive players; they couldn't cross the half court line, apparently to limit excessive running.

Today girls and women's sports such as soccer, volleyball and basketball are played under the same rules as males. The removal of activity restraints was an acknowledgment that girls are capable of and benefit from strenuous competition provided there is player equality.

The Duke University did a study of male and female performance in various track and field events. The study found that biological males were physically dominant in all events evaluated. One example: the 400 meter world champion woman's best time in 2017 was exceeded by 285 boys aged 17 and under; 4,341 adult male sprinters bested her time.

Redmond city Councilor Krisanna Clark-Endicott's support for the South Dakota legislature's bill allowing biological girls only in girls' events is entirely reasonable. Those whose frame of reference is gender ideology, identity politics, cancel culture and group think, however, find the councilor's position unacceptable, or as this newspaper implied (Mar. 11), transphobic. Putting aside the unfortunate name calling, the basic question is this: should a small group of competitors be given unfair advantage while casting aside the wishes and desires of a much larger group of competitors? South Dakota correctly says no.

— Jared Black, Bend

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.

Want to fix the filibuster? All it takes is guts

BY KAREN TUMULTY
The Washington Post

The problem with the Senate filibuster is not that there are too many of them. It is that there are too few.

President Joe Biden is on the right track when he says he wants to see a return to the old days, when senators who wanted to block a bill had to take the floor and keep talking, like a reprise of Jimmy Stewart's famous scene in the 1939 movie, "Mr. Smith Goes to Washington."

The legislative ideal behind the filibuster, a maneuver almost as old as the Senate itself, is to encourage the culture the founders intended. It was set up to be an institution lubricated by deliberation and compromise, and a place where the views of the minority are given a hearing.

That explains why, despite the liberal cry to do away with the filibuster, only about 1 in 5 Democratic senators say they want to see it abolished,

according to a survey done by the Washington Post's Power Up team.

But for the filibuster to work the way it is supposed to, rather than as a means of blowing up the legislative machinery, the Senate needs to go further. It must make the filibuster painful enough to exact a price on the entire Senate. If one senator wants to obstruct a bill by talking it to death, the 99 other senators should have to be present in the chamber as well, foregoing whatever fundraisers or other events they may have scheduled.

One of the reasons the faux filibuster has become so common is that it imposes no penalty, except on the idea that a majority should be able to work its will in a democracy.

If you go by the frequency of cloture motions — the procedure by which 60 votes are required to cut off debate on a measure — it is clear that senators who are in the minority use procedural gambits to gum up the

works far more frequently than they did in the past. In the Congress of 2019 and 2020, there were 328 cloture motions filed; back in the 1950s, this generally happened one or two times at most during a session.

What passes for a filibuster in modern times usually consists of a weary clerk reading a roll call over and over to an empty chamber while the senators themselves go on about their business. Every so often, a majority leader orders an all-nighter in which metal cots are rolled out for the senators to rest. Then-Senate Majority Leader Harry Reid, D-Nev., pulled that stunt in 2007 when Republicans threatened to filibuster a resolution calling for troops to begin leaving Iraq. Reid gave in the following day.

Senate Majority Leader Bill Frist, R-Tenn., also hauled out the cots when Democrats were blocking judicial appointments in 2003. That no one took any of this seriously became clear when Sen. Tom Harkin, D-Iowa,

held up a sign in the early evening announcing that he planned to head home to watch "The Bachelor."

Occasionally, grandstanders in the Senate's ranks stage a pointless talkathon simply for the attention it can draw. (See: Cruz, Ted.) That no doubt would still happen if the "speaking filibuster" became the norm, but it would be less likely to be tolerated if it meant that all of a senator's colleagues had to sit there and listen.

The beauty of doing it this way is that it would require no change to the Senate rules at all, just a leader with the guts to demand the presence of senators in the chamber.

We saw that happen in 1988, when Majority Leader Robert Byrd, D-W. Va., a parliamentary master, got frustrated over a GOP filibuster of campaign finance legislation and called for a quorum of 51 members to appear. When Republicans boycotted the quorum vote, Byrd ordered the sergeant-at-arms to round up and

arrest the absent senators. Sen. Bob Packwood, R-Ore., attempted to barricade himself in his office during the midnight manhunt and was carried onto the Senate floor feet first.

"The knock on the door and the forced entry smack of Nazi Germany, smack of communist Russia," Sen. Arlen Specter, R-Pa., sputtered, claiming that senators were treated more roughly than "even those accused of the most heinous crimes." For his part, Packwood said: "I rather enjoyed it."

It is worth noting that even after all of that, Byrd failed to get a vote on the campaign finance bill. But he made his point about the obstructionism of those who were blocking it, and he probably made the Republican minority think twice about using the tactic again. The next Congress saw the number of cloture motions drop dramatically, from 54 to 38.

— Karen Tumulty is a Washington Post columnist covering national politics.

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