

Draft a wish list for your legislators

Today we'd like you to draft a multimillion-dollar wish list and send it off to your Oregon state senator and state representative.

Each of Oregon's 30 senators can spend \$4 million in federal funding — almost as they please. And each of the 60 members of the House has command of \$2 million.

Who knows better than you where it should be spent? Or at least, they should listen to your suggestions and thank you for them.

The total \$240 million comes courtesy of the federal American Rescue Plan Act. This deal for spreading around the money was struck to keep Democrats and Republicans in the Legislature focused on passing legislation, not fighting. State Sen. Tim Knopp, R-Bend, told us he has until May 10 to come up with his list. All the lists submitted may well be rounded up into what they call a Christmas tree bill, so everybody's goodies are rolled into one. That way the bill will surely pass.

Now you could be a penny pincher and tell your Oregon legislators not to spend a penny. You have to know, though, other legislators won't let the money sit around. They will spend it. Might as well take local control of the money. The overall state budget is in good shape. The early session pandemic financial fretting melted away with the spring, because the total Oregon is expected to get from the federal rescue plan is some \$2.6 billion.

One-time spending of \$4 million or \$2 million can't fix affordable housing in Bend. It can't fix wildfire risk in Sisters. It won't build a new runway in Redmond. It won't make La Pine's industrial park take off. It

won't fix the water supply issues on the Warm Springs Reservation. And it won't bring logging jobs back to Prineville. Some targeted dollars, though, can change lives.

It perhaps makes sense not to spend it on hiring people for new jobs or to start up new programs. How do you pay for them next year? That said, it might make sense to spend it on a pilot program if there's a good idea that needs testing out.

There's such a big need for so many things it's not going to be easy to divvy up a few million. Are some needs more acute right now? Would it help to spend some more to encourage more people to get vaccinated? Is there a program in the schools that could make a real difference for students who lost learning because of the pandemic? Could something be done to help keep businesses operating? Is there anything needed for public safety training? Affordable housing, fighting child abuse, homelessness and so many more ideas that we have not mentioning also are deserving.

It's not going to be so easy for legislators to pick. You may have a good idea that your legislator never thought of. You may have a good idea that your legislator is on the fence about. Let them know.

If you are not sure who your legislator is, you can enter your address at this website oregonlegislature.gov/FindYourLegislator/leg-districts.html and it will tell you. Click on their name and their email address should pop up. Then plan your wish list.

Shouldn't they need a warrant to track you?

Data available for purchase from the apps on the phones of American special forces in Syria could be used to track them, The Wall Street Journal reported Monday.

That's unsettling. And though your movements around Central Oregon don't likely require the same level of secrecy, you are exposed by a similar loophole in the law. Law enforcement and intelligence agencies can buy your personal information from data brokers. They can track you without the need to get a warrant. All they need is cash.

Oregon Sen. Ron Wyden, a Dem-

ocrat, and 19 other senators have introduced a bill to close the loophole. The Fourth Amendment was written to protect Americans from unreasonable search and seizure. This bill essentially makes it clear that the government needs to get a court order to compel data brokers to release data — similar to the way the government needs a court order to get information from tech and phone companies. It only seems fair.

There's more detail and nuance to this issue than we have room to go into here. More information is available at wyden.senate.gov. Search for "Fourth Amendment."



My Nickel's Worth

Hubbard for La Pine fire

I am running for re-election for director, Position 1, board of directors at La Pine Fire because my career in financial management has already helped the district improve its financial situation. Additionally, I have developed plans to proactively deal with the district's future, and have worked diligently to improve the dialogue between board members, fire district personnel, and the public.

During my term I have helped the district by: facilitating the third board of directors development of a five-year strategic plan; preparing a long-term revenue and expense study; analyzing the district's emergency medical services program resulting in increased revenue and community involvement in addressing La Pine's need for 24/7 medical services; developing the long-range plan to improve facilities including the 2021 addition of additional restrooms at two stations; supporting the addition of new dorms for students at station 103; representing the district at various community events; attending fire district and board of director conferences resulting in new policies and actions to strengthen the district.

My previous experience in managing multimillion-dollar budgets has given me the background to help the board and the fire chief move the district forward in a financially responsible way. With your vote I can continue to serve all of the fire district's residents and guests through cost effective management of the district's resources.

— Jerry Hubbard, La Pine

Lopez-Dauenhauer should debate publicly

A political mailing arrived from one of the "Gang of Four," Maria Lopez-Dauenhauer. This is the group that has refused to meet with The Bulletin or to appear at the customary candidate forums in our community. This is both ironic and disturbing given they are running to represent us as school board members. The mailer endorses the other three "ghost" candidates. Furthermore, it slings harsh accusations at her opponent. It's like firing from the safety of a bunker, or acting like a sniper. Very strange, and I'm not sure how my name got on her mailing list. Like many others, I take a dim view of this negative campaigning and find it hard to vote in good faith for candidates who engage in it. What worries me more in this climate, where we are being made aware of the fragility of our democracy, is this attempt to run a covert campaign. If Maria Lopez-Dauenhauer has such strong feelings about her opponent, she should meet her in public. If she has such strong feelings about how the school district has acted in this unprecedented time of the COVID pandemic, please show up and debate that publicly. The behavior of the "Gang of Four" is both reprehensible and undemocratic.

— Robert Currie, Bend

Disappointed in Bend City Council

I was disappointed but not surprised at the editorial in the Sunday paper regarding the Bend City Council leaning towards removing parking minimums. If you bothered to

read the survey last week on this very subject, this flies in the face of reality and ignores what the citizens of Bend overwhelmingly are against. Just another example of city councilors ignoring their constituents for their narrow-minded agendas.

— Gardner Williams, Bend

Bend loses again

Recently, I like most others in Bend I'm sure, found out for the first time any real and detailed information about a plan to remove the present Pine Ridge Inn and surrounding covering of natural trees and ground covering, situated above the dramatic bluffs and popular Deschutes River recreational area and along the busy Century Drive on Bend's west side. The lack of any real attempts to adequately inform the public about such a major change to eliminate/alter yet another of Bend's natural attractions, is apparently already on the drawing board and advanced planning. This poses major traffic concerns along the Century Drive retail area and the congested Reed Market Road, which borders the proposed development, along with the loss of another piece of Bend's natural attractions. This proposed development would dramatically change the nature of biking, hiking, floating and just visually enjoying this break in retail creep that Bend is experiencing. The city of Bend and the City Council must put any further action on this development on hold and then bring a meaningful public information campaign to us in order to get direction on this major change.

— Jack Godlove, Bend

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.

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. Writers are limited to one letter or guest column every 30 days. Email: letters@bendbulletin.com

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.

Supreme Court ruling could be bad news for gun regulation advocates

BY AMANDA HOLLIS-BRUSKY

Special to The Washington Post

On Monday, the Supreme Court announced that it would hear a National Rifle Association-backed challenge to laws about concealed guns. The challengers in New York State Rifle & Pistol Association v. Corlett claim that New York's 100-year-old permitting process for carrying a firearm outside the home violates the Second Amendment. The timing of the announcement is conspicuous. With gun violence and mass shootings returning to the daily news, President Joe Biden has signaled that he intends to push Congress to pass gun-regulation measures.

The case the Supreme Court agreed to hear could throw a wrench in those plans. Here's why we can expect a pro-gun ruling from the court.

The Supreme Court's 2008 pro-gun ruling has been applied narrowly by lower courts

In 2008, the Supreme Court decided in D.C. v. Heller that the Second Amendment protects an individual's right to keep and bear arms for self-defense. Many constitutional scholars saw this as a dramatic shift. For 70 years, the court had consid-

ered Second Amendment rights to be confined by the text's opening phrase, "a well-regulated militia," and treated it as a collective right. However, in Heller, writing for a five-justice majority, Justice Antonin Scalia insisted that "the right secured by the Second Amendment" was robust enough to warrant striking down the District of Columbia's handgun ban. Scalia stressed that the amendment's right "is not unlimited" and could be subject to some regulation.

Many conservatives and libertarians praised the decision as a landmark victory for the Second Amendment. Others, such as Nelson Lund, feared that the opinion left too many gaps and loopholes. Lund predicted that lower courts would apply Heller in a limited way. He was right.

Lower courts have applied Heller in a way that has upheld a broad range of gun regulations. This has prompted gun rights activists to urge the Supreme Court to take up the issue again and to clarify the scope of the Second Amendment right established in Heller.

The Supreme Court receives close to 8,000 petitions to hear cases but has space for about 80 on the docket each

Since Heller was decided, five of the six conservative justices have telegraphed their disappointment in how narrowly lower courts have applied it.

term. To sort through these, the court has some informal rules to help decide what to hear. The most important is the "rule of four," which means that at least four justices have to agree to take up a case. Since it typically takes five justices to form a majority voting bloc, this encourages what political scientists have called "strategic behavior." The four who vote to take up a case must be reasonably certain that they can convince at least one colleague to join them, so they don't accidentally end up on the losing end of a case they voted to take.

With only three liberal justices remaining on the Supreme Court since the death of Ruth Bader Ginsburg, the fact that at least four of the current justices voted to take a Second Amendment challenge is a reliable signal that they believe that a majority will agree to expand the right to bear arms established in Heller.

But we don't need to rely on the

case grant alone to make this prediction. We can listen to the conservative justices themselves. Since Heller was decided, five of the six conservative justices have telegraphed their disappointment in how narrowly lower courts have applied it.

Justice Clarence Thomas has been the most vocal, issuing scathing dissents from the Supreme Court's refusal to take up Second Amendment cases. In one, Thomas lamented that his colleagues' "continued inaction" on these cases proved that the Second Amendment has become "a disfavored right." In another, joined by Neil Gorsuch, Thomas wrote that "the time has come" to decide whether the Second Amendment protects more than the right of an individual to carry a "gun from the bedroom to the kitchen."

Often, "judicial signals" that communicate a majority's readiness to revisit or alter the law are subtle, perceptible only to those paying close at-

tention to the court. When it comes to the Second Amendment, the conservative majority's signal is being broadcast loud and clear.

But a sweeping pro-gun Second Amendment decision from the Supreme Court could backfire for conservatives. It is no secret that the Supreme Court's six-justice conservative supermajority is under intense scrutiny from the left, with some Democratic activists and lawmakers calling for "court-packing" — adding new seats for Biden to fill — and/or "court-curbing" — stripping the justices of jurisdiction, life tenure or both. So far, the president has committed only to a bipartisan court commission to study court changes.

Most Americans support gun regulation. In New York State Rifle & Pistol Association v. Corlett, the NRA wants the court to vastly expand individual gun rights and limit government's ability to regulate their use. If the conservative Supreme Court delivers such a decision, liberal activists might have the ammunition they need to prompt reluctant Democratic lawmakers to change the court.

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